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Planning Development

Planning Statement: Barnside Farm, Barnside Lane, Hepworth, HD9 1TN

Site Description

Barnside Farm comprises one farmhouse, three agricultural buildings and associated land. The application site involves a parcel of land located between two of the agricultural buildings. This area currently forms part of a larger field and is grassed over. Access to the site is via a tarmac driveway from Barnside Lane. The site is situated within a rural location and is largely surrounded by open fields and countryside.



Application Site – Barnside Farm

Planning History

2021/90799 – Erection of agricultural building – Approved

2020/94040 – Change of use from agricultural barn to bunk barn tourist/leisure accommodation – Refused and Appeal Dismissed

2020/90168 – Change of use from agricultural barn to bunk barn tourist/leisure accommodation – Refused

2013/90611 – Erection of first floor extension and external alterations (modified proposal) – Approved

2012/90566 – Erection of first floor extension and internal alterations - Approved

Policy Designation

The application site is located within the Green Belt in accordance with the Kirklees Local Plan Policies Map. The site is also located within the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan area (HVNDP).

The Proposals

This application seeks planning permission for change of use of land for the stationing of one No. shepherd's hut for self-catering holiday accommodation with associated parking and landscaping.

The proposed shepherd's hut would be located adjacent to two existing agricultural buildings. The hut would measure 7.4m (l) by 4m (w) by 3.7m (h). The hut would include internal living accommodation and an outdoor decking area. The hut would be situated on moveable wheels and would be constructed of timber.

The site would also include a path leading from the existing hardstanding / yard area and native planting along the northern and western perimeter. One car parking space would be provided in the adjacent hardstanding / yard area.

Assessment of the Proposals

Green Belt and Principle of Development

Paragraph 154 in the NPPF states:

'Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.'

Local Plan Policy LP56 also states that:

'Proposals should ensure that:

- a. The scale of the facility is no more than is reasonably required for the proper functioning of the enterprise or the use of the land to which it is associated;*
- b. The facility is unobtrusively located and designed so as not to introduce a prominent urban element into a countryside location, including the impact of any improved access and car parking areas.'*

It is noted that the Council have previously approved applications for camping pods under clause b) of paragraph 154 (see examples below) due to such facilities being used in connection with outdoor

recreation e.g. walking, cycling and general enjoyment of the local countryside. The proposed development is therefore being applied for under the same clause as this too would provide accommodation for couples / friends wanting to visit and experience the great outdoors.

2020/93619 – Erection of 4 camping pods with associated access and parking at Field off Bank Lane, Upper Denby, Huddersfield, HD8 8UT

2021/90109 – Use of land for siting 6 camping pods and mobile amenity block at Crossley Farm, Crossley Lane, Mirfield, WF14 0NX

The proposed development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it in accordance with paragraph 154 b) in the NPPF and Local Plan Policy LP56 for the following reasons:

- The proposed shepherd's hut would be discreetly located between two existing agricultural buildings. As a result, the development would be inconspicuous and not clearly visible. Any impact on the openness of the Green Belt is therefore considered to be minimal.
- The shepherd's hut would be located close to the existing built form on site and within the existing building envelope. As a result, the countryside would be safeguarded from any additional encroachment.
- The shepherd's hut is relatively small in scale - 7.4m (l) by 4m (w) by 3.7m (h). The siting of the hut between the two large agricultural buildings further reduces the visual impact of the hut in terms of Green Belt openness.
- The proposed shepherd's hut is a moveable structure with no foundations. This also limits its overall impact, both visually and environmentally, as the land can easily be returned to its current state in the future should the hut no longer be required.
- The existing access from Barnside Lane would be used to serve the development and the parking space would be provided on an existing area of hard standing. As such, Green Belt openness would not be affected in this respect.
- The development would include one small footpath for pedestrian access for which the applicant is happy to agree to appropriate materials for this. The proposed native planting would not be overly domesticated or urbanised but would provide visual interest and some screening for future occupants, as well as providing the necessary 10% biodiversity net gain.

Given the above, the proposals are considered to be acceptable and accord with paragraph 154 in the NPPF and Local Plan Policy LP56.

Supporting the Rural Economy

Paragraph 88 in the NPPF states:

'Planning Policies and decisions should enable:

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.'

Local Plan Policy LP10 also states:

'The economic performance of the rural economy will be improved by:

d. supporting and increasing tourism related development, including encouraging new facilities and accommodation for tourists;

f. supporting farm diversification schemes, where the proposal would not adversely affect the management and viability of any farm holding.'

Policy 7 in the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan (HVNDP) also encourages tourist and visitor facilities.

The applicant is applying for the proposed development, which they consider essential for diversifying their agricultural activities and enhancing the farms' profitability. They are a family of five with three sons, the youngest of whom has a strong passion for farming and aspires to make it his lifelong career.

In order to support him in building a viable and sustainable farming business, the applicants recognise the need to implement new income-generating ventures. Currently, the applicants are expanding their sheep flock, which now includes 150 ewes. This growth is part of their strategy to breed quality replenishment stock to ensure the longevity and health of their herd. In addition to sheep, they also maintain six breeding pigs and a small number of other animals, which contribute to their overall farming operation.

The addition of a shepherd's hut would allow for farm diversification and create an inviting space that can be used for short-term tourist accommodation, thereby attracting visitors to the local area and generating additional revenue.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of supporting the rural economy and accords with paragraph 88 in the NPPF, Local Plan Policy LP10 and Policy 7 in the HVNDP.

Design and Visual Amenity

Local Plan Policy LP24 states that, *'Proposals should promote good design by ensuring:*

a. the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape.'

Paragraph 135 in the NPPF sets out various design objectives, including the need to ensure that developments: function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character; and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.'

The proposed shepherd's hut is relatively small in scale measuring 7.4m (l) x 4m (w) x 3.7m (h). It would therefore not result in an overbearing or intrusive feature. The proposed hut constructed of timber would also be in keeping with its rural setting. The proposed native planting would also enhance the overall visual amenity of the site, providing a contrast between the built and the natural environment. In any case, the inconspicuous location and siting of the hut close to, and between the two existing agricultural buildings would largely screen the development from view. As the hut is a moveable structure, it could also be easily removed from the site in the future if required and the site be returned to its former state as a part of a field.

The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and comply with Local Plan Policy LP24, paragraph 135 in the NPPF and the aims of Policies 1 and 2 in the HVNDP.

Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy LP24 states that, *'Proposals should promote good design by ensuring:*

b. they provide a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers.'

This is echoed in paragraph 135 f) in the NPPF.

Paragraph 198 in the NPPF also states:

'Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location ... In so doing they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.'

The only residential dwelling within close proximity of the proposed development is the farmhouse at Barnside. The farmhouse is located over 35 metres away from the proposed siting of the shepherd's hut. As a result, the development would have no impact in terms of outlook, privacy or daylight for existing or future occupiers.

In terms of noise, the farm is a working farm. However, the development would provide short-term tourist accommodation only and part of the attraction for visitors would be to holiday on a working farm. As such, any noise associated with the farm would not cause undue harm to future occupiers of the shepherd's hut.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in relation to residential amenity and complies with paragraphs 135 and 198 in the NPPF and Local Plan Policy LP24.

Highway Matters

Local Plan Policy LP21 states that:

'New development will normally be permitted where safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and where the residual cumulative impacts of development are not severe.'

Access to the proposed development would be via the existing tarmac driveway used to serve the existing farm. Visibility onto Barnside Lane from the access is reasonable in both directions. However, as the road is a narrow, rural and bendy lane, traffic speeds and the number of vehicles using the lane tend to be relatively low.

One No. parking space is proposed to be provided in the existing hard standing area adjacent to the shepherd's hut. The number of parking spaces and its location is considered to be suitable in serving the development. There is also ample turning space within the farmyard for visitor vehicles to turn within the site and exit in a forward gear.

The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of highway matters and accords with Local Plan Policy LP21 and the aims of chapter 9 in the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Government Guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain states at Paragraph 002:

“The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain has been designed as a post-permission matter to ensure that the biodiversity gain objective of achieving at least a 10% gain in biodiversity value will be met for development granted planning permission. Once planning permission has been granted, unless exempt, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of that development.”

As the Guidance also confirms (Para 024), “the biodiversity gain condition has its own separate statutory basis, as a planning condition under paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England.”

In accordance with Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the minimum information needed to accompany the application is contained within the application form accompanying this application.

In terms of addressing the issue of biodiversity net gain, the pre-development biodiversity value of the site is 0.08 habitat units which comprises of existing modified grassland. It is proposed that areas of mixed shrub and 3 new trees are planted within the red line boundary, which would result in a post-intervention biodiversity value of 0.10 habitat units or a 27.81% biodiversity net gain.

As such, the information provided with this application is considered to address relevant statutory requirements and complies with Local Plan Policy LP30 and the aims of Chapter 15 in the NPPF.

Drainage

Surface water drainage is proposed to be taken to a soakaway in the adjoining field with foul drainage to connect into the mains drains if available or to a septic tank. It is considered that a suitably worded condition could be attached to this permission concerning further drainage details.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable and complies with Local Plan Policy LP28.

Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission for change of use of land for the stationing of one No. shepherd's hut for self-catering holiday accommodation with associated parking and landscaping.

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs of this report, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of national and local Green Belt policy. The proposals would cause minimal harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Furthermore, the proposals would support the rural economy by allowing the applicant to diversify their existing farming business by providing tourist accommodation.

The proposals are also considered to be acceptable with regard to visual amenity, residential amenity, highway matters and biodiversity net gain.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is approved accordingly.

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