

Development Management Delegated Decision Report

B/20/0234



SUMMARY OF APPLICATION			
Application Reference	B/20/0234		
Application Type	Outline Planning Permission		
Proposal	Outline application for one dwelling with all matters (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale) reserved for later approval		
Location	Land adj to Abbey View, Fenhouses Lane, Fenhouses, Swineshead, Boston		
Applicant	Alex Laird, WP & H Laird & Sons		
Agent	Andrew Hey, AM Hey FRICS		
Received Date:	07-Jul-2020	Consultation Expiry Date:	17-Sep-2020
Valid Date:	18-Aug-2020	Statutory Expiry Date:	13-Oct-2020
Date of Site Visit:	26-Aug-2020	Extension of Time Date:	
Objections received?	Yes		
5 day notification record:			
Councillors notified	Date	Response received – date	Ok to continue
Councillor Cornah	24/09/20	No response received	Ok
Councillor Trafford	24/09/20	24/09/20	Has a relationship with the applicant and has declared an interest.
Recommendation	REFUSE		
Report by:	Grant Fixter		
Date:	02/10/2020		

OFFICER REPORT

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The application site comprises a parcel of agricultural land off Fenhouses Lane, Fenhouses, Swineshead. As such, the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2019 identifies the site to be outside the settlement boundary and is deemed to be in the open countryside. The north, east and west boundaries comprise part of a larger agricultural field, with the southern boundary defined by Fenhouses Lane. The application site is surrounded by agricultural land. East of the application site is a small piece of agricultural land, beyond which is a residential dwelling and then the farmstead which is under the applicants ownership. There are also further dwellings to the south east and south west of the farmstead.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL:



This is an outline application with all matters reserved for one dwelling. There has been lengthy correspondence between the agent and Council regarding a number of aspects of this application and where relevant, details of this will be stated in the report.

The most important to note now is that the application did not make it clear that this would actually comprise an agricultural workers dwelling, so the application will be assessed on the grounds it constitutes an agricultural workers dwelling.

The following plans were submitted as part of the application:

- Location Plan
- Laird 3 – Block Plan
- LB4 – Access Plan

RELEVANT HISTORY:

There is no relevant planning history.

RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS:

The following policies contained within the **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011-2036)** (i.e. SELLP) are relevant to this application:

- Policy 1: Spatial Strategy;
- Policy 2: Development Management;
- Policy 3: Design of New Development;
- Policy 10: Meeting Assessed Housing Requirements;
- Policy 11: Distribution of New Housing;
- Policy 30: Pollution;
- Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS / LEGISLATION / GUIDANCE:

At the heart of the **National Planning Policy Framework (2019)** is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following sections are relevant to this scheme:

- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development;
- Section 4: Decision-making;
- Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Section 11: Making effective use of land;
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

In particular, paragraphs 77-79 of the NPPF that relates to rural housing is specifically relevant.

Paragraph 77 indicates amongst other things that *‘in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs’*.

Furthermore paragraph 78 states, in part that ‘to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.’

Paragraph 79 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

*a) **there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;***

b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”

The application site is located within an isolated location and part (a) of paragraph 79 (in bold) specifically applies to this proposal.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) - Paragraph ID: 67-010-20190722 of the PPG outlines how the need for isolated homes in the countryside for essential rural workers can be assessed through outlining considerations that may be relevant when applying paragraph 79a of the NPPF. The identified paragraph in the PPG states the following considerations:

- *“evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);*
- *the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;*
- *whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;*
- *whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and*
- *in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.”*

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM).

PPS 7 relates to development in countryside location and whilst this was replaced by the NPPF in 2012, it is often leaned upon for proposals such as this one. In particular, Annex A

which sets out the functional and financial tests which need to be satisfied in order for permanent agricultural dwellings to be acceptable.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

There was no response received from the Swineshead Parish Council.

There was no response received from the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.

Lincolnshire County Council who act as the Local Highway and Lead Local Flood Authority do not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Two letters of representation were received from the occupiers of 'Newlands' and 'Abbey View' who object to this proposal. Their reasons for objecting are summarised below:

- Open agricultural land that is not set aside for market housing and allowing this proposal would create a dangerous precedent for future applications;
- Would irrevocably change the open nature of the settlement of Fenhouses;
- No development has been permitted for some time in Fenhouse except for residential dwellings on brownfield plots;
- Application statement implies Fenhouses is a hot spot for criminal behaviour;
- They have never been aware or been contacted by Police or similar agency that any crimes have been committed in the area;
- No proof and question where the crime reports and references are to back up their claims;
- The site is left open with unrestricted access without gates so question how crime can be that much of a concern;
- Proposed development is in an open agricultural field in the countryside and not on the farmyard so the applicants contradict themselves as they say a dwelling is needed on site but the application site is some 100 metres away;
- Distance from farmstead to application site and the fact there is a dwelling inbetween the two means they would not see or hear any activities in the farmyard;
- Take issue with lack of housing being available as their property was on the market for two years before they purchased in 2018 and 'Abbey View' was recently on the market. Also been properties for sale within sight of the farmyard;
- Concerns regarding the flood risk of the site and how the site spent much of last year under water;
- Failed to demonstrate an overwhelming need for the development and there are better areas for this development;
- Loss of agricultural land;
- Effects on natural habitats;
- Visual impact to the Fenhouses would be detrimental for current and future residents;
- Ventilation equipment for storage on site is controlled by atmospheric pressures – more efficient to have cereal crop ventilation equipment controlled via timers/ sensors so there is no need for a dwelling in open the open countryside;
- Believe the site is Flood Zone 3 and a Flood Risk Assessment should have been prepared;

- As dwelling is adjacent to the farmstead, they have never been asked to provide information around suspicious activity to the applicant or the Police;
- Loss of privacy and overlooking;
- Struggling to comprehend how a dwelling further away from the farmstead would provide any further security than the objectors dwelling which affords to the farmyard
- They purchased their property in September 2019 and it is immediately adjacent to the farm
- Following properties have been on the market in the last 2/3 years:
Abbey View, Fenhouses Lane – Sold 27th Sept 2019
Golden Ball Cottage, Fenhouses Lane – Sold 1st Aug 2018 (now being redeveloped as a replacement dwelling)
Newlands, Fenhouses Lane – Sold 9th Jan 2018
Clare Cottage, Fenhouses – Currently on the market
South View, Fenhouses – Currently SSTC (adjacent to the applicant's farmyard eastern boundary)
- Approval would cause a negative visual impact on the open characteristics of this location;
- Unacceptable urban sprawl eroding the distinction between the settlement and village;
- Provides no information on the sites context and relationship to the grade 2 listed Swineshead Abbey;
- Erode rural character of the area and be unduly prominent on the landscape;
- Outside of any settlement boundary and the Fenhouses have no amenities;
- Additional vehicle movements on a single track 60mph road and may impact road safety.

Where appropriate and form material planning considerations, the above points have been considered and are covered within the evaluation section of this report.

The points regarding flood risk are not deemed to be material planning considerations as the Flood Map for Planning clearly identifies the site to be within Flood Zone 1. In addition, it is deemed Swineshead Abbey would not be effected by this proposal hence the reason for no heritage impact assessment as part of this proposal.

EVALUATION:

Timeline of the application

As stated earlier in the report, there has been lengthy correspondence between the agent and Council regarding this application. It is deemed this is important to highlight so it is demonstrated when the additional information was received, that it was considered as part of the application and that the Council worked in a proactive manner.

Following the Officer's site visit, the agent was emailed on 01/09/20 to say there were fundamental concerns with the application and all the points raised in this section of the report will highlight these and when they were mentioned to the agent. As a result of the concerns, the agent was invited to withdraw the application so they could clearly state the proposal was for an agricultural workers dwelling and submit a more detailed justification for the proposal using Annex A of PPS7 as the starting point. It was highlighted that albeit PPS7 has since been replaced, the tests are often leaned upon for applications such as this.

The agent responded on 02/09/20 saying they would not withdraw the application and provided the following new additional information:

- Acknowledged points regarding PPS7 but went on to highlight new policy, specifically paragraph 79a of the NPPF and the supporting paragraph in the PPG (para ID: 67-010-20190722) which states security is now a consideration;
- It is a whole time presence that is required;
- Matters are working at present but does not see this as an argument to withhold support;
- How succession should be considered as the applicant will eventually retire and will have to live on the farm to carry out managerial duties;
- The farmstead is the only parcel with buildings on in the 520 acres farmed around Swineshead so this is a logical location but would consider relocating closer to the buildings;
- PPG is very clear that living on site is necessary in some cases;
- Presence on site will alert to the breakdown of drying equipment;
- House will deter from casual theft, nosiness, vandalism and ensures a speedy response to any emergencies;
- Clarified the application is in fact for an agricultural workers dwelling;
- Stated they felt the functional test was now satisfied and asked if they should now provide information for the financial test in regards to PPS7.

On 03/09/20, the Council responded to the agent stating the points raised again, failed to provide adequate justification for the proposal and the additional information does not address any of the concerns. As the Council still deemed the proposal was not justified they did not invite the agent to prepare the financial reasoning as this would be unnecessary especially when the first test was not passed. It was also again highlighted by the Council the application should be considered on the information supplied and it was not best practice to keep providing additional information in a 'drip-fed' manner as this was timely to both parties.

The agent then responded on the 14/09/20 and tried to submit a revised site to the east of the farmstead under the same application.

The Council replied on 15/09/20 highlighting this would constitute a whole new application and cannot be accepted, in addition to the fact the concerns were still not addressed. It was again stated this was not best practice and that the Council have tried to assist the agent throughout, therefore, would not be inviting any further amendments as part of this submission.

Main considerations

The main considerations for this application are:

- Principle of development;
- Justification for the development and functional need appraisal;
- Design and layout;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Impact on the character of the area.

Principle of development

There is no SELLP policy that relates to new agricultural workers' dwellings. Nevertheless, given the application site is outside of a settlement boundary and within countryside SELLP Policy 1 does permit certain developments providing that it is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.

In the absence of a specific policy, Paragraph 79 of the NPPF is a material consideration, which states, '...that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside...' The site can be viewed as unsustainable for planning purposes.

In the absence on defining essential need in the NPPF, advice can be gleaned from paragraph 67-010-20190722 of the PPG, in addition to the former PPS 7 (relating to development in countryside locations) and Policy C04 in the superseded Boston Local Plan (adopted April 1999) which are solely used as guidance when determining this application. This required applications for agricultural workers dwellings to be accompanied by an agricultural assessment that demonstrates why it is essential for the functional needs of the farm for a new dwelling to be located on the site rather than in the nearest settlement. This assessment normally takes the form of a functional test and the financial test, which is required to ensure that the farm business is viable, and is likely to remain so.

The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement and although it is not explicitly stated, the information contained within the statement and the contents of the agents email dated 02/09/20 form part of the agricultural appraisal which is discussed below. This will then show whether the principle of development is acceptable.

Justification for the development and functional need appraisal

The farm business

The submitted Planning Statement indicates the farm business as a whole covers some 2,400 acres in wide spread locations, with 520 acres of that being farmed around Swineshead. This land is split into a number of parcels and it is claimed the farmstead to the east of the application site is the effective management headquarters.

The farm buildings at Fenhouses comprise of temperature controlled storage facilities which accommodate approximately 1,600 tons of potatoes and 650 tons of grain. Additional storage on site is mainly used to house large machinery during the winter months such as combine harvester, beet harvester and potato harvester.

The crop stores are attended twice a day by the applicant to check the temperatures and switch on/ off the ventilation fans. It states in the planning statement that the current system works but is not the most efficient way to farm.

The above is the extent of the information provided to the Council surrounding the farm business. The Planning Statement provided no details on the financial sustainability of the farm holding, as well the operations that are relevant to this application. The extent of the details given for operations were initially to eliminate the need for two visits to the site each day to attend to the crop storage facilities, then when challenged on the application, the agent stated it was a whole time presence that was needed on site, in addition to managerial duties.

Still, the point remains that is the extent of information provided and the subsequent information that followed clearly does not provide enough detail regarding operations on site. As such, there is no way to understand if the operation is sustainable long term or whether it can support the level of employment at play.

As will be explained later, details of the dwelling are extremely minimal, so going off the information from the Planning Statement and subsequent emails there is no way of knowing whether financially the dwelling could be afforded or sustained. The financial aspects are covered later in this report.

Functional need

This section will go through each of the applicant's points regarding the functional need for this proposal and after each point the Council's appraisal will follow.

Operations

In the applicant's justification for the proposal, there is an argument for the dwelling based around operational need. It is stated at present operations require two site visits a day to attend to the crop storage and there is a risk of rot and disease should problems not be addressed promptly. The agent then informed the Council in their correspondence on 02/09/20 that the two visits were only given as an example and it is a whole time presence on site that is required to combat potential crop disease and storm damage to buildings.

Whilst it may not be the most time efficient manner of farming, it is not deemed that an agricultural workers dwelling is justifiable in order to eliminate two daily visits to the site. If this were the case, there would be an unprecedented level of agricultural workers dwellings around the country in the locality of farmsteads. Furthermore, the Council question the need for a whole time presence on site, especially as this was not stated in the original submission and only once the agent was contacted with concerns surrounding the application. There is also no additional information or justification as to why a whole time presence is needed on site.

There were no details submitted on the level of employment the farm holding can support based on its function, in addition to no thorough details on the works involved, how many employees are required and the hours worked.

Furthermore, a key aspect to highlight from the information submitted is that the Planning Statement advocates that although it is not the most efficient, the current system of operations works. If the current system works then there is no clear need or requirement for this proposal. This is a significant factor which weighs against the proposal.

Taking into account the absence of information supporting why an onsite presence is required it is considered the proposal is not justifiable on operational grounds.

Management responsibilities and succession

The Planning Statement states the applicant has a management function to perform and whilst they do not currently have majority control, they will do at some point and that this constitutes additional justification for onsite residence. The statement also says it is the applicants wish to set up house with their partner who assists on the farm.

In addition, the agents email on 02/09/20 states that when the Council first voiced their concerns, we had not considered the idea of succession and that the applicant would one day retire and need to live on the farm somewhere to perform managerial duties.

In response to the above points, it is now extremely unclear as to why the dwelling is actually needed. In the farming details section of the Planning Statement, reference was only made to the applicant having to attend site twice a day, with no mention to any other duties carried out on site. As already highlighted, the email dated 02/09/20 then goes on to say a whole time presence is required on site.

Regarding management duties, neither the statement, nor subsequent email on 02/09/20 outline in detail what management duties are actually required on site and what these entail. Therefore, as the statement only states the applicants general responsibilities encompass management needs as part of the business and that is the extent of the justification provided, it is not deemed this warrants an agricultural workers dwelling.

Doubt is also cast over the need as the statement says it is the applicants wish to set up house with their partner who assists on the farm. This is not a material planning consideration and does not warrant this proposal. Details regarding the applicant's house search are covered later in the report.

Finally, the mixed messaging from the information received and the point regarding succession when the applicant eventually retires massively contradict each other. It is claimed the proposal is needed to cater for quicker trips to the crop storage facilities, a whole time presence on site and general management responsibilities. If the applicant occupies the dwelling when they are retired to carry out managerial duties, this would contradict the entire reasoning behind the proposal, as they would be occupying a dwelling that it is claimed is required to help facilitate current operations on site.

There is no clear guidance as to what the dwelling is actually needed for and there is a lack of information and justification as to what the management duties are. The applicant will still occupy the dwelling when retired and the statement regarding wishing to set up house with their partner both raise concerns about this proposal. It is deemed, therefore, that for the reasons stated there is no sufficient or sound justification as to why an agricultural workers dwelling is needed on management and succession grounds.

Crime and house search.

In regards to crime, the agent is correct in pointing out on their email dated 02/09/20 that crime and security are now considerations within the PPG for proposals of this nature. In both the email and statement, points are made regarding crime and how the padlocks have been cut on several occasions. Albeit nothing was stolen or damaged, this is still not ideal and the argument is that a dwelling on site will help reduce the incidents happening.

The Statement then goes on to talk about a house search that the applicant undertook and that nothing had become available.

In response to the points regarding crime, whilst it is extremely unfortunate that padlocks have been broken on site, it is extremely difficult to understand how this proposal would actually

deter these incidents from happening again in the future and the reasoning behind this is stated below.

The application site is located to the west of the farmstead and associated buildings. In between the application site and the farmstead is a small piece of agricultural land and then the dwelling 'Abbey View' which immediately abuts the farmstead. The question has to be asked how will this proposal that is further away from the farmstead than an existing dwelling help to ensure no crime is committed, padlocks cut and prevent any potential stealing or damages. There is also residential development to the south west, south east and north east of the farmstead that the proposal would be in connection with, further solidifying how would an agricultural workers dwelling sited further away than existing development help increase security and reduce potential crime?

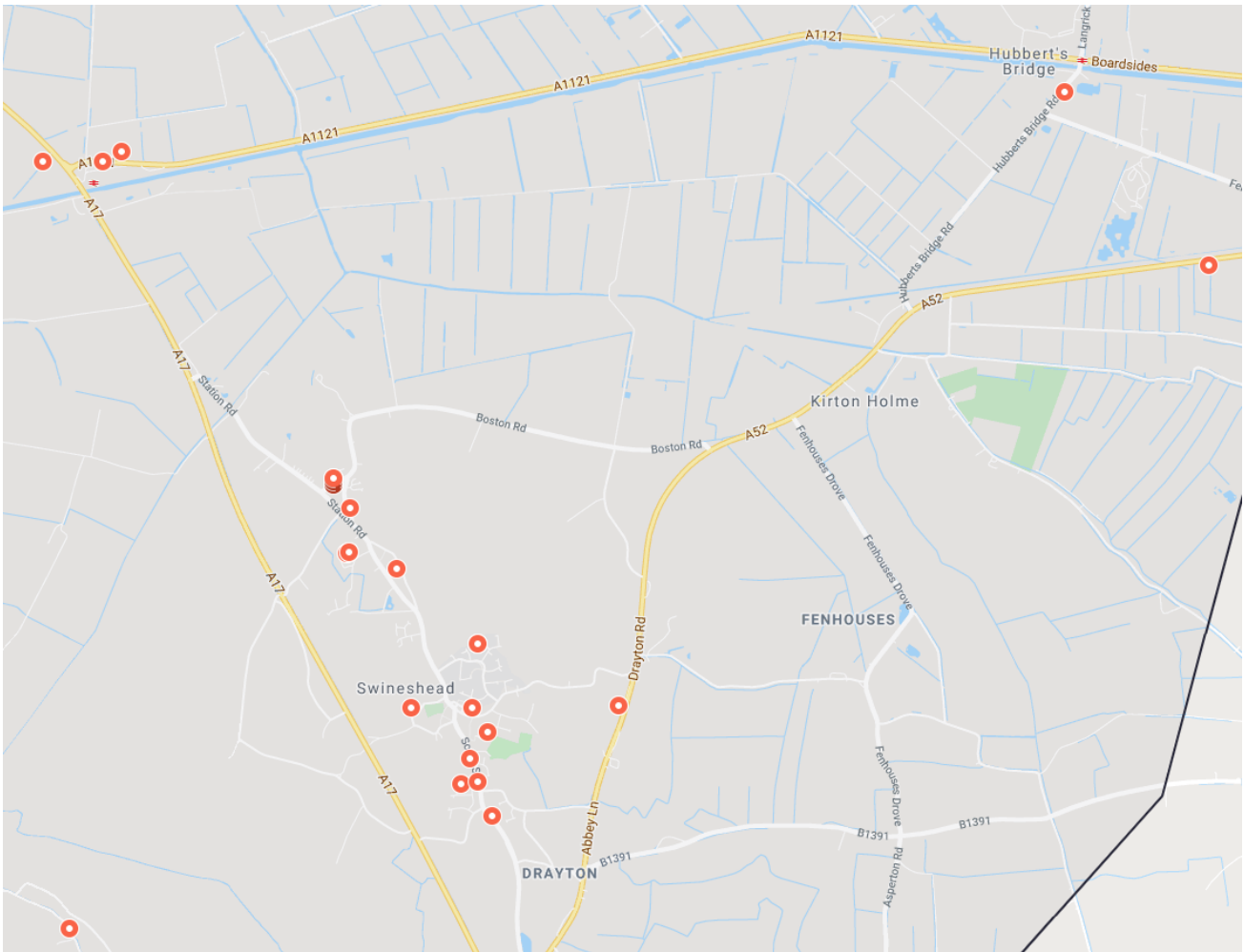
The planning statement also contradicts the proposal again but this time in relation to crime and the house search, as it states:

"The other point is that while living closer than at present, any residence that is not actually on site rather misses the point about combatting crime and reducing the likelihood of theft."

The application site is located some 100 yards away from the farmstead, therefore, the Council would agree with the above statement and the proposal misses the point about combatting crime and reducing the likelihood of theft.

It is also worth noting at this stage that whilst not entirely necessary for this application, there has been no evidence supplied for these statements. The farmstead itself is also rather open and measures could have been introduced to help increase security. Furthermore, it is claimed by the objector who is immediately adjacent to the farmstead that they have never been contacted to see if they had noticed any noise or suspicious behaviour on the farmstead. As there is no proof to this then no weight can be afforded to such a claim.

In response to the house search claim, the Planning Statement made reference to how Abbey View was on the market until recently, with the occupiers of said property who object to this proposal confirming the property was sold to them in September 2019. This would have been the obvious location for the applicants to reside in however, at the time of the application the property is not available. The agent confirmed via email on 02/09/20 that the applicants would want to site a 3 to 4 bedroom property of around 1500 square feet. Upon a quick search on Rightmove (conducted on 22/09/20) for 3-4 bedroom properties in 'Fenhouses', the below image clearly demonstrates that there are a number of properties currently for sale, especially in Swineshead which is less than 2 miles from the application site. There is also no evidence of the extent of the house search conducted by the applicant.



Rightmove search conducted on 22/09/20 showing 3-4 bedroom properties for sale near the application site – Rightmove, 2020.

There is no clear evidence of a substantial property search and the above shows numerous properties predominantly within 2-3 miles of the application site. Furthermore, the proposal is sited further away than existing development near the farmstead, with one property actually bordering. The Planning Statement even states a dwelling not on site would miss the point about combatting crime and this proposal is not on site. It is, therefore, deemed there is no sufficient or sound justification for the proposal on crime, security, or lack of nearby housing grounds.

Conclusions on the functional need

Following assessment of the information provided through the Planning Statement and emails, there is a clear lack of information, justification and detail for the proposal. The information that was provided does not justify the need for an agricultural workers dwelling. So for all the reasons stated above during the functional need assessment, it is deemed there is no functional need for this proposal and therefore, has failed the functional assessment. Through failing the functional assessment, this means the principle of development is not acceptable, meaning the proposal would not comply with Policy 1 of the Local Plan and would constitute an unacceptable form of development in the countryside.

Financial test

It is beneficial to again highlight how the Council handled this application to show they acted in a proactive manner and engaged with the applicant to assist as much as they could, with financial matters being relevant to the correspondence between both parties.

The Council contacted the agent on 01/09/20 with concerns regarding the proposal. One of which was the significant lack of detail and justification submitted for the application, meaning there were no clear and sound reasons as to why the agricultural workers dwelling was needed or could actually be sustained. For this and other concerns the Council invited the agent to withdraw the application, stating this would give them time to prepare a more thorough and sound application, demonstrating a clear functional and financial need. It was highlighted that whilst Annex A of PPS7 is outdated and should only be used as guidance, it is often leaned upon and does outline good steps on how to prepare information to demonstrate a functional and financial need. It was also highlighted to the agent that submitting additional information throughout the process is not best practice.

In the agent's initial response on 02/09/2020, they acknowledged a better detailed description of the proposal and why it is needed could have been provided. However, they stated they could not advise the applicant to withdraw the application based on the additional reasoning they provided. The additional reasoning only comprised arguments around the functional need aspect of the proposal and not financial. The agent then sent a second email some minutes later stating they believed they had satisfied the functional need element and can prepare the financial argument if the Council needed it.

The Council was of the view that the application still failed to show a fundamental functional need for an agricultural workers dwelling, therefore it was not deemed beneficial to ask the agent to complete a financial assessment and this was confirmed in correspondence to them on 03/09/2020. The agent was again reminded that it was not best practice for information to be submitted in a drip fed manner and that an application should ideally stand or fall on the information supplied and should not require repeated consultation and consideration. The Council again invited the agent to withdraw the application so a thorough assessment could be prepared but this was not to be the case.

So going off the Planning Statement, the only financial benefit that can be seen from this proposal, although not explicitly stated would be the saving of fuel costs. Furthermore, it is stated by the agent that current operations just about work, indicating there is no significant financial need for this proposal.

With no details in the Planning Statement covering number of employees, hours, actual detailed descriptions of works required and the general financial sustainability of the farm holding as a whole there is little information to assess. There is, therefore, no way of understanding if the operation is sustainable long term and whether it can support the level of employment at play.

Furthermore, with minimal information provided about the dwelling itself, there is no way of knowing whether the dwelling could be financially afforded to be built and sustained based upon the typical wages of the agricultural worker.

These are both financial tests in the previous PPS7 which many still use for guidance with these types of submissions. The proposal, therefore, fails the financial test.

Design and layout

This is an outline application for one dwelling with all matters reserved. Obviously, with the nature of the application it is hard to comment on design and layout when all matters are subsequently reserved for future approval.

These circumstances are not ideal when considering applications of this type and the agent was informed of this on 03/09/20 when it was confirmed the proposal is in fact for an agricultural workers dwelling, in addition to not helping towards the justification for the proposal.

The outline nature of the application means we have been given no indication as to the size, scale, design, landscaping of the property so concerns around potential design are going to arise. Equally, it is not possible therefore to establish whether that dwelling is of a commensurate and suitable size dwelling relative to the agricultural need. The agent then confirmed on 14/09/20 the property would be 3-4 bedroom and approximately 1500 square feet, but this was all the additional information that was provided.

It is, therefore, difficult to establish the potential design of the proposal and whether the dwelling is of a commensurate and suitable size dwelling relative to the agricultural need, especially with the lack of information and justification for the dwelling as a whole.

Impact on residential amenity

SELLP Policy 2 states that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met. These include impact on the amenity of the site itself and neighbouring sites as well as the impact upon neighbouring land uses by reason of noise, odour, disturbance or visual intrusion. SELLP Policy 3 states that development proposals will demonstrate how residential amenity will be secured.

The NPPF seeks to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Given the application is in outline form seeking the principle of development, a full assessment regarding the design, height and scale of the dwelling can only take place when all details are known i.e. at the reserved matters stage.

One can, therefore, only go off the information they have to make an informed decision regarding the impact on residential amenity. As previously stated, this means we cannot establish whether the dwelling is of a commensurate and suitable size relative to the agricultural need. The agent stated the property would be 3 or 4 bedrooms and approximately 1500 square feet. From the site visit, this scale of property is common.

Impact on the character of the area

SELLP 2 states that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met. These include size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses as well as the quality of its design and its orientation. This accords with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which contains similar provisions.

SELLP Policy 3 states that all development proposals will create a sense of place by; respecting the density, scale, visual closure, landmarks, views, massing of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area.

SELLP Policy 30 states proposals will not be permitted they would lead to unacceptable impacts upon aspects such as the amenities of the area, health and safety of the public, the natural and built environment.

There are significant concerns surrounding this proposal, one of which is the detrimental impacts on the character of the area. The application site comprises part of a larger agricultural field under the applicant's ownership. As a result of the location of the application site, it leaves a small parcel of agricultural land between this proposal and Abbey View.

As a result of the location of the application site and the nature of the proposal, they would completely change the form of development in the area. This change would see the erosion of the rural nature of the area with an inappropriately located site and proposal. In turn, this would lead to detrimental impacts on the character of the area and its amenities. Furthermore, the Local Plan identifies the application site to be outside of the settlement boundary and is defined as being in the countryside, where developments such as this that would have adverse impacts on the character of the area are not permitted. The proposal fails to comply with policies 1, 2, 3 and 30 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is for an agricultural workers dwelling in connection with the farmstead to the east and associated surrounding land. There has been lengthy correspondence between the Council and agent regarding this proposal and this has been summarised throughout this report.

The outline nature of the application is not suitable for a proposal of this type as they often need extensive consideration and as much detail as possible to be able to make an informed decision. Through providing minimal information as to the size of the dwelling, it is difficult to establish whether it is a suitable size relative to the agricultural need.

It has been established that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area as it would erode the rural nature of the area, in addition to leaving a small parcel of agricultural land between the site and Abbey View.

The principle of development has been extensively evaluated and as confirmed, the principle of development is unacceptable. Due to the nature of the proposal, extensive justification and detail was required to support the application. Of the information received, the Council used that as the basis for the functional assessment. From the functional assessment, it was made clear that the arguments provided for the need of this agricultural workers dwelling did not warrant worthy justification. As the proposal failed the functional assessment it was not deemed necessary to ask the agent to prepare the financial assessment and they were informed of this via email.

In addition, the Planning Statement and emails actually contradict the proposal, an example of this is saying whilst living closer to the site, any dwelling not actually on the site misses the point about combatting crime. The dwelling would be further away than an existing dwelling which abuts the farmstead.

There were comments made in the statement and emails which also cast doubt over the need for this dwelling. The statement says it is the applicants wish to set up house with his partner, which should not be a consideration for this proposal. The points regarding succession also raise concerns, as the applicant will reside in the property once retired, when the whole argument for this proposal is a whole time presence is needed on site.

Finally, the biggest piece of evidence the proposal is not justifiable is the fact the Planning Statement states that the current system of working works. This is the biggest indication an agricultural workers dwelling is not warranted.

The functional test was not passed and the proposal does not comply with both local and national policy, meaning sustainable development considerations are not met.

It is also worth noting as of the 31st March 2020, the Council could demonstrate a 5.2 year housing land supply, therefore, the policies can be given full weight when considering the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

CONDITIONS / REASONS			
Pre-commencement conditions?		Agreed with applicant/agent - Date:	
<p>1. The application site falls outside of a settlement boundary and is located within the countryside. There is a significant lack of information submitted to provide a sufficient and sound justification for a dwelling in this location. An essential need, therefore, has not been demonstrated and thus the development would lead to the addition of a dwelling in an unsustainable location, contrary to the spatial objectives set out in Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011-2036). The lack of an essential need being demonstrated also means the proposal is contrary to Sections 2 and 5 of the NPPF.</p>			
<p>2. The proposed dwelling, by reason of its position and characteristics of the site would result in an unacceptable form of development in the countryside. The isolated dwelling would leave a parcel of agricultural land between the site and the property to the east, in addition to causing further erosion to the rural landscape and character. In turn, the resultant development would therefore be at odds with the established character of the area and would further diminish it in an unacceptable way. The development, therefore, fails to meet the criteria of sustainable development. As such the development would be contrary to Policies 2, 3 and 30 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011-2036) and Sections 2 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to secure a high standard of design that is sympathetic to the character of an area.</p>			
<p>Refused Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location Plan • Laird 3 – Block Plan 			

- LB4 – Access Plan

INFORMATIVES / NOTES TO BE INCLUDED ON/WITH DECISION NOTICE**STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE WORKING:**

In determining this application, the authority has taken account of the guidance in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the Borough.