

Agenda Item A6	Committee Date 11 May 2009	Application Number 09/00258/FUL
Application Site Littledale Hall Littledale Road Brookhouse Lancaster	Proposal Erection of a replacement egg laying unit	
Name of Applicant Mr Stephen Leigh	Name of Agent Mr Ian Pick	
Decision Target Date 25 June 2009	Reason For Delay None	
Case Officer	Mrs Jennifer Rehman	
Departure	None	
Summary of Recommendation	Grant planning permission subject to conditions.	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site that is the subject of this application lies within the grounds of Littledale Hall in a remote countryside location within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is accessed via Littledale Road approximately 2 miles south of Brookhouse. The application site lies in a valley bottom well screened by dense woodland to the south, alongside Foxdale Beck. North of the site is a relatively steep banking and open undulating landscape beyond, with no other buildings or structures within close proximity, other than Littledale Hall approximately 240m east of the site. The Hall is currently used as a short term residential care home and run by a Charity.
- 1.2 The site currently accommodates a large poultry building measuring 78.5 metres by 18.8 metres constructed in timber boarding to the walls and a stark white profile clad roof. The site is accessed via Littledale Hall's private estate road with three separate accesses and parking areas running alongside the building.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The applicant currently operates an agricultural business from Littledale Hall Farm, which extends to 320 acres of land, comprising of a sheep enterprise, a pullet rearing enterprise and an egg laying unit with 8,000 laying hens. The latter takes place in the existing building on site.
- 2.2 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a replacement (larger) poultry building, following demolition of the existing, measuring 103.63 metres by 20.1 metres. The increase to the size of the building is purely functional for its proposed use as a free range egg laying unit. The height of the building will be approximately 2.75 metres to the eaves and 5.45 metres to the ridge. It shall have a steel frame construction with external polyester coated profile sheeting to the walls and roof, coloured Vandyke Brown. The proposal also involves the relocation of the feeding bins to the eastern end of the structure rather than being positioned centrally on the north side of the building.

2.3 A comprehensive Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application outlining details of the agricultural enterprise and the purpose of the development in context with national rural planning policy. It also addresses key environmental issues, such as odour, dust and rodent control which are matters often associated with poultry development.

2.4 Details of the existing and proposed traffic movements associated with the use of the site have also been provided and will be discussed in section 7.0 of this report.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The only relevant planning history relates to planning permission 03/01370/FUL which granted consent for a replacement poultry building measuring 97.5 metres by 20.1 metres. This previous consent has not been implemented and has now expired. The submitted proposal is a resubmission of this 2003 permission with a minor increase to the size of the proposed building.

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
County Highways	Initial concerns over the potential increase in heavy goods vehicle movements along the narrow road accessing the site. Requested further details in respect of the traffic movements associated with the current level of use in order to fully assess the impact of the submitted proposal. This information has now been submitted. Further comments from the Highways Department shall be verbally presented to Committee.
Environmental Health	No objections.
Parish Council	No objections.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 Neighbouring residents have been notified of the development and a site notice posted at the junction of the private access road and Littledale Road. To date no representations have been received. Any representations received shall be verbally presented to Committee.

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 The relevant planning policies include the following:

Lancaster District Local Plan (LDLP)

Policy E3: Development affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Policy E4: The Countryside Area both seek to ensure new development does not adversely affect the special rural character and appearance of the landscape or compromise existing services and infrastructure. Development proposals should be appropriate to their surroundings in terms of siting, scale, design, materials and landscaping.

Lancaster District Core Strategy (LDCS)

Policy SC 5 Achieving Quality in Design – This policy seeks to ensure and encourage developers to work with the Council, stakeholders and communities to maintain and improve the quality of development particularly in sensitive locations, such as the AONB.

Policy SC 7 Development and the Risk of Flooding – This policy requires development proposals to be assessed inline with national Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk.

7.0 **Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The existing building is aging and inefficient for modern practices. The replacement building will provide a modern egg laying unit for 16,000 birds, which will allow the applicant to extend their enterprise, together with providing more efficient and improved facilities within the building. The principle of replacing the existing building raises no significant planning issues. The main issues are visual amenity, traffic, flooding and environmental nuisance.

7.2 Visual Amenity

Where development is proposed within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the primary objective is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape.

7.3 With this in mind, it is accepted that the new building is larger in scale than the existing structure and effectively increases its length by approximately 25 metres and its width by approximately 1.9 metres.

7.4 However whilst the landscape policies are generally restrictive, the increase in scale of this building will be acceptable in return for the use of more appropriate external colours befitting the sensitive landscape setting. Removal of the stark white roof would be considerably beneficial in terms of visual amenity, especially when viewed from the Hall. The topography of the site is such that the increases in length and width will have little visual impact.

7.5 Access & Traffic

County Highways initially raised concerns over a potential increase in heavy goods vehicle movements along the narrow road accessing the site and requested further information. This information has now been submitted and concludes:

The proposed development will result in one additional HGV bird delivery and one additional HGV bird collection every 60 weeks (14 month flock cycle). The weekly and fortnightly traffic movements will remain the same as existing, which amounts to two 18 tonne lorries per week and one 32 tonne lorry per fortnight.

7.6 Two additional HGV movements every 60 weeks is unlikely to cause a highway safety problem in this instance. However County Highways have still to provide their final comments. This will be presented verbally to Committee.

7.7 Flood Risk

The application site is situated adjacent to Foxdale Beck, close to where it converges with Ragill Beck. Subsequently part of the application site falls within Floodzone 2 and 3. However in this instance there is already a substantial building on the site which is used for agricultural purposes. It must be noted that agricultural land and buildings are classified in PPS 25 as less vulnerable uses. Less vulnerable uses are considered appropriate within Floodzones 2 and 3, and so the proposal is acceptable in terms of flood risk.

7.8 Environmental Impacts

The Design and Access Statement also includes details for the control and management of odours, dust and flies and rodents. The proposed development shall be built to modern standards ensuring the building and use of the site complies with relevant environmental health legislation and good practice. The application raises no objections from the Environmental Health Service and is therefore considered acceptable development.

8.0 **Conclusions**

- 8.1 Subject to the final comments from the County Highways, it is considered that this proposal is compliant with the relevant development plan policies. It represents an increase in footprint when compared to the existing building, but this increase is acceptable given the surrounding topography of the land. The opportunity to remove the white colour of the roof from the agricultural landscape is beneficial and as such Members are advised that this proposal can be supported.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard three year condition
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
3. Colour of the profile cladding to be Vandyke Brown
4. Use of the building to be that of agriculture (including poultry)

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.