

Agenda Item	A7
Application Number	20/01020/FUL
Proposal	Erection of an agricultural building for livestock/storage and creation of an area of hardstanding
Application site	Telegraph Field Pump House, School Lane, Wray, Lancashire
Applicant	Mr John Staveley
Agent	Mrs Melanie Lawrenson
Case Officer	Mr Sam Robinson
Departure	No
Summary of Recommendation	Refusal

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, the applicant is related to an elected member and as such must be determined by the Planning Regulatory Committee.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

1.1 The application site is an open agricultural field located at the end of an access track off School Lane in Wray which is surrounded by dry stone walls. There are no existing buildings on site. The site forms an area of land forming part of the Hoskins Farm holding which is located on Main Street in Wray. The site remains relatively well screened but remains visible from certain viewpoints along School Lane.

1.2 The site and surrounding area forms part of the Caton Moor landscape which is largely characterised by its undulating form, intricate pattern of stone walls and sense of remoteness. The field is surrounded by other open agricultural open fields with a single residential dwelling to the west approximately 175m away. 50m to the east lies Roeburndale Wood which is designated as an ancient woodland. It provides a tree lined backdrop when approaching the site from the west.

1.3 The site is designated as open countryside and is also located within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.0 Proposal

2.1 This application seeks consent for the erection of an agricultural storage/livestock building. The building measures approximately 22.8m by 13.7m and features a dual pitched roof with an eaves height of 4.5m and a ridge height of 6.5m and is finished in concrete and timber boarding to the exterior walls with brown fibre cement roof sheets to the roof. The building features an open gated frontage and features an area of compacted hardcore hardstanding to the front measuring a

maximum of 9m in depth from the building to the track and matches the 22m width of the building at its widest point.

- 2.2 Access to the site will be via the existing track and gate to the field. The application does not include any new boundary treatments but does require a small cut and infill into the land in order to create a flat site for construction.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 A single relevant application relating to this site has previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. The details are as follows:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
20/00560/AD	Agricultural Determination for the erection of a storage building	Refused

4.0 Consultation Responses

- 4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
County Highways	No objection
Environmental Health	No objection
Natural England	No objection
Parish Council	No response
AONB Officer	No response

- 4.2 No representations have been received from members of the public.

5.0 Analysis

The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- EIA Screening
- Principle of development in rural areas
- Design and impact upon the landscape
- Impacts upon residential amenity
- Impacts on protected species
- Drainage

5.1 EIA Screening

In terms of screening under Environmental Impact Assessment, the scale of the development proposed clearly falls below the thresholds for Schedule 2 development defined by the Regulations. Although located within a designated sensitive area, the development is a relatively small-scale proposal when considered against the thresholds, and there would be no likely significant impacts in terms of arboriculture, heritage, archaeology, noise or complex construction. As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the proposal would have impacts upon the landscape, ecology, flooding and contamination, though neither individually nor cumulatively is it likely to result in a significant environmental impact. Therefore, an Environmental Statement is not required.

5.2 Principle of development in rural areas (NPPF paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 83 & 84, Policy SP1 of the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD (2020), Policy DM47 of the Development Management DPD (2020) and Policy RE1 the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019))

- 5.2.1 Policy DM47 of the Development Management DPD states that development proposals on greenfield sites within the open countryside will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated

through a robust assessment that no alternative suitable locations exist within local settlement areas. The Policy will support essential operations for agriculture where there is a proven and justified need. This is also reinforced by Policy RE1 of the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.2.2 In terms of the principle of development, Hoskins Farm currently operates under an agricultural use which is primarily based in the centre of Wray about 900m to the north away from the application site. The proposed building will allow for the storage of machinery, equipment and hay and other requirements of sheep husbandry and maintenance of the land and is a reasonable agricultural use in this area.
- 5.2.3 However, the proposed building remains detached from other buildings and forms of development. The nearest dwellings are approximately 175m and 225m away to the east and south east and as such, the building is not seen within the context of an existing group of buildings. While the part of Policy DM47 relating to alternative locations within local settlement areas may not be completely relevant to agricultural buildings as many of these are sited in the countryside away from settlements, to avoid the proliferation of buildings in open areas, they should be sited near existing buildings or clusters. This is considered even more pertinent given the site is located within a protected landscape.
- 5.2.4 The Design & Access Statement submitted with the application states that the existing farm within Wray cannot accommodate any further development and that the purpose of the building will prevent the requirement for the applicant having to travel to and from the site with feed and machinery. No information has been provided as to where the machinery, equipment and hay are currently stored but this is presumed to be on the main farm. While the proposed building may provide improvements for the day to day running of the farm holding, there is little justification for the building to be sited in such an isolated position. Furthermore, the applicant provided a map indicating the extent of the agricultural holding associated with Hoskins Farm which shows a relatively large area of land. Apart from referencing two pre-application submissions which relate to the main farm, little information has been included to show if any other more suitable sites (i.e. closer to buildings, settlements, less sensitive locations) have been explored.
- 5.2.5 The agent provided further reasoning for the building stating that the applicant is intending to downsize their farming operations and that Hoskins Farm has been allocated for housing in the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Plan. Unfortunately, this cannot be considered as part of this application as this proposal and the future of the main farm remain two separate issues and there would be no requirement for the applicant to relinquish ownership of the farm following the outcome of this application. Furthermore, this also raises the question on future pressures/needs for buildings in and around the application site in the future.
- 5.2.6 Given the proposal remains divorced from any other agricultural buildings and the sensitive nature of the landscape, the proposal lacks significant justification for its siting in such an isolated position. Consequently, the proposal is considered contrary to the requirements of Policy DM47.
- 5.3 **Design and impact upon the landscape** (NPPF paragraphs 124, 127, 130, 170 & 172 Policies EN2 & EN3 of the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD (2020), Policies DM29 & DM46 of the Development Management DPD (2020) and Policies OS2 and BE1 of the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019))
- 5.3.1 As stated above, the site that is subject of the application forms part of the Forest of Bowland AONB and is designated as 'Open Countryside' in the Local Plan. In accordance with the policies listed above, any development should make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape and the Council will attach great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
- 5.3.2 The application site is absent of any development with the existing open field contributing to the pastoral and rural landscape of the area. The Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment classifies the site as 'Enclosed Moorland Hills' with the key characteristics defined by its open and exposed character, strong sense of elevation with vast, key expansive skies and uninterrupted views.
- 5.3.3 The proposal will introduce a large agricultural building with associated hardstanding separated by approximately 175m in distance to the nearest buildings. As a result, the building would appear

completely detached from other existing developments and would contribute to the proliferation of buildings in the AONB. This sense of detachment from any other development, would only serve to highlight the obtrusive nature of the building in a landscape characterised by its openness. In addition, the utilitarian design and scale of the development would only add to the visual harm, further reinforcing that the proposal having failed to complement and integrate itself into the surrounding landscape. Given that this is a landscape which is highly sensitive to such visual changes, the impact of such a development would be significant. While isolated buildings can be found across the moorland hills, these tend to be historic focal points within the landscape, are significantly smaller and reflect the vernacular of the area through the use of stone and slate. As such, the resemblance between the two is considered negligible.

5.3.4 It is noted that visibility of the site from both the north west and south west along School Lane is limited but this should not be used as justification to approve unsuitable development within the AONB. Nevertheless, it is considered that views of the site will still be afforded along School Lane and consequently, the proposal would cause visual harm to the landscape.

5.3.5 For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the proposal would cause visual harm to the AONB landscape. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies EN2 & EN3 of the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD, Policies DM29 & DM46 of the Development Management DPD and Policies OS2 and BE1 of the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

5.4 **Impacts upon residential amenity (NPPF paragraphs 124, 127 & 130 and Policy DM29 of the Development Management DPD (2020))**

5.4.1 Policy DM29 seeks to ensure that with all new development, there is no significant detrimental impact to amenity in relation to overshadowing, visual amenity, privacy, overlooking, massing and pollution.

5.4.2 As stated above, the proposal is located approximately 175m away from the nearest residential property and as such, there will be no detrimental impacts in terms of overbearingness or loss of light. The building is to be used for storing machinery and equipment ancillary to the hay making and sheep husbandry in this location. Given the use of the building and that it is located within an existing farming field, it is unlikely to have any serious implications for noise or odour in the vicinity.

5.4.3 Environmental Health raised no objection to the scheme nor requested any conditions relating to the development. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal will not have any undue impacts on residential amenity for the occupiers at Hillcrest.

5.5 **Impacts on protected species (NPPF paragraphs 175 and Policy DM44 of the Development Management DPD (2020))**

5.5.1 In accordance with Policy DM44, development proposals should protect and enhance biodiversity, to minimise both direct and indirect impacts.

5.5.2 As mentioned previously, the proposed building is located in an existing agricultural field and offers little in the way of trees or any hedgerows. Roeburndale Woods lies approximately 50m to the east at its nearest point. Given the distance and intervening field and stone wall, the site is sufficiently separated so as not to impact upon the habitat of these woods. The River Roeburn lies about 300m further away. Given this distance, it is unlikely that any contamination arising from the proposed use, such as fuel, oil or dung, would pollute the watercourse.

5.5.3 As such, the Local Planning Authority can be reasonably satisfied that the proposal will not have any adverse effects on the upon the protected habitat of Roeburndale Woods or protected species and consequently is seen to comply with Policy DM44.

5.6 **Drainage (NPPF paragraph 163 and Policies DM34 & DM36 of the Development Management DPD)**

5.6.1 Policy DM34 and DM36 require the applicant to include details as to how surface water will be discharged and demonstrate that the water quality on the watercourse will not be adversely affected by the development.

- 5.6.2 The site is located relatively close to an existing watercourse with the existing surface water collecting on the shallow of the field and towards a gill to the east which connects to the River Roeburn.
- 5.6.3 The application form indicates that any additional surface water generated by the proposal would be discharged into the watercourse but that is the extent of the information. No drainage information has been submitted with the application that considers the SuDS hierarchy or rate of discharge nor does it contain any information which considers any potential impact on the watercourse. However, it should be noted that these details could be conditioned.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 For the reasons outlined above, given the isolated nature of the proposal, which is located within a protected landscape, combined with the scale, form, design and appearance, it is considered that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the landscape. While the case put forward by the applicant and agent that the proposal would allow the main farm in Wray to be freed up for development, this cannot be considered as a material consideration as part of this application. Therefore, with no other materials considerations to outweigh the visual harm on the AONB that has been identified, the application is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. The proposal by reason of its siting, scale, form and appearance, would appear as an obtrusive addition to the area causing significant visual harm to this nationally important designated landscape. Therefore, the proposed development is contrary to Policies EN2 & EN3 of the Strategic Polices and Land Allocations Development Plan Document, Policies DM29, DM46 & DM47 of the Development Management Development Plan Document, Polices OS2 and BE1 of the Wray with Botton Neighbourhood Development Plan and Section 12 & 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, in the interests of delivering sustainable development. As part of this approach the Council offers a pre-application service, aimed at positively influencing development proposals. Regrettably the applicant has failed to take advantage of this service and the resulting proposal is unacceptable for the reasons prescribed in the Notice. The applicant is encouraged to utilise the pre-application service prior to the submission of any future planning applications, in order to engage with the local planning authority to attempt to resolve the reasons for refusal.

Background Papers

None