

**REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE**

Report No.

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| Date of Meeting | 5th November 2008 |
| Application Number | 08/02096/OUT |
| Site Address | New Church Farm, Ford, Chippenham |
| Proposal | Erection of single agricultural workers dwelling with attached garage and access |
| Applicant | Mr Martin Drew |
| Town/Parish Council | North Wraxall |
| Grid Ref | 383765 175082 |
| Type of application | Outline application |

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application has been submitted to the Committee for decision under the scheme of delegation in force after the 8th April 2002 because Councillors Scott and Sturgis have requested that the application be considered by committee to assess the functional and financial need for the dwelling.

Summary of Report

This application proposes the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling at New Church Farm in Ford. The site lies within the AONB, Green Belt and Ford Conservation Area. The site lies outside any framework boundary and needs to be considered against the following issues:

- Implications on DC Core Policies C3, NE1, NE4, NE15 and H4
- Functional and financial need for the dwelling
- Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt
- Access and highways

Officer Recommendation

Planning Permission be REFUSED

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| Contact Officer | Tracy Smith | 01249 706642 | tsmith@northwilts.gov.uk |
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Proposal and Site Description

Outline planning permission is sought for an agricultural workers dwelling and attached garage on land at New Church Farm, Ford. The only matter reserved for future consideration is landscaping

The new dwelling will be two storeys in height with single storey side additions, one of which comprises the attached double garage. The dwelling will provide four bedrooms with accommodation also available in the loftspace.

The dwelling is to be located towards the rear of the site adjacent the existing agricultural building. It is elevated from the adjacent road.

The application site is located adjacent to the boundary of the Longdean, Ford and Slaughterford Conservation Area but within the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt. Access to the site is off Old Church Road which gains its access of the A420.

The site currently comprises rough grassland with trees planted to assist in screening the adjacent buildings.

Residential dwellings are located to the south and east of the proposed dwelling.

| Planning History | | |
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| Application number | Proposal | Decision |
| 08/00480OUT | Erection of agricultural workers dwelling. The application was withdrawn since there was no officer support for the proposal following confirmation from the Council's Agricultural Consultant that the proposal failed to meet the requirements of PPS7 and Policy H4 of the Local Plan 2011 in terms of functional requirement and the need to be on site for only 2.5 months of the year. | Withdrawn |

Consultations

North Wraxall Parish Council – are divided – some members believe there should be no further development in this part of Ford in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are concerned about highways impact on Old Church Road. Others feel the increase in traffic will be shortlived and that there is no problem with the erection of a new dwelling so long as there is an agricultural need for it.

Wiltshire County Council Highways - on the basis that the need is proven for the application, no objection is raised, however if this is not the case objections are raised on grounds of sustainability and highways impact.

Environmental Health – no objections

NWDC Agricultural Consultant – the PPS7 tests of functional need and financial viability have only been met on financial grounds. Based on existing circumstances, as required in Annex A of PPS7, there is functional requirement for an essential presence on the holding during the lambing period. The applicant has indicated that this lasts for approximately two and a half months. During this time the functional need can be met through the use of a temporary dwelling as happens at present.

The applicant lives in Upper Wraxall, approximately an eight minute drive from the site.

Representations

1 letter of support has been received on the grounds of the need for Mr Drew to live on the site.

CPRE object on the following grounds:

- Substantial amount of agricultural land not within applicants ownership – would it still be viable if the land was no longer available
- The applicant lives 3.5km from the site
- Functional need for lambing only 7 months (which includes Spring and Autumn) thus no need for accommodation for remaining 5 months
- A temporary dwelling would be more appropriate
- Proposal fails functional test.

Planning Considerations

Principle of development – functional need and financial viability

Policy H4 relates to residential development in the open countryside and permits only replacement dwellings and only those required in connection with the essential needs of agriculture, forestry or other rural based enterprise. National planning policy guidance in the form of PPS7 “Sustainable development in rural areas” supports this policy. In particular, Annex A of the guidance states: “New permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established units.” Such dwellings are required to satisfy tests of functional need and financial viability of the business operation.

In this instance, the dwelling satisfies the financial tests.

In terms of functional need, Annex A states: “A functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at *most* times...”

The applicant currently resides at Home Farm, Upper Wraxall, approximately eight minutes drive from the applicant site.

Based on the supporting information submitted with the application at present there is only a need to be on site for two and a half months of the year during lambing season. Lambing ewes have not yet been purchased for the autumn lambing.

It is considered that day to day management can be managed from the existing dwelling. It is on this basis that the Council’s agricultural consultant advises that the functional need for the dwelling is not met.

Impact on Green Belt

The site is located within the Western Wiltshire Green Belt to which Policy NE1 of the 2011 Local Plan relates. No new dwellings are permitted in such locations unless required in connection with agriculture, forestry. As this proposal fails to meet the functional requirements and is not considered to be required in connection with agriculture, it is ‘inappropriate development’ and fails to accord with Policy NE1 and PPG2.

Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Only that development which involves the change of use of buildings and/or is appropriate to the social and economic well-being of the area and which is desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of its amenities is permitted in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty under Policy NE4 of the 2011 Local Plan. As the proposal fails on functional grounds it also fails Policy NE4 by association.

Design and Scale of Development

No objections are raised in respect of this aspect of the development. Natural materials are proposed to be used.

Highways and Access

As outlined above, as the proposal fails to accord with Policy H4 and PPS7, Wiltshire County Council Highways find the proposal objectionable on grounds of sustainability and traffic generation on an unsuitable road.

Recommendation and Proposed Conditions/Informatives

Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. There is no proven functional need for permanent agricultural workers accommodation on this site as required by Policy H4 and PPS7. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development within the open countryside, Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Policies C3, NE1, NE4, NE15 and H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
2. The proposal located remote from services, employment opportunities and being unlikely to be well served by public transport, is contrary to the key aims of Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 and policy C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 which seeks to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys.
3. The traffic generated from this proposal would use a road which, by virtue of its function in the highway network and its inadequate width, alignment and junctions, is considered unsuitable to accommodate the increase in traffic from this development and that for which it would set a precedent contrary to policy C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

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| Appendices: | NONE |
| Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report: | 1.20 2.02 4.02 4.03 4.06 5.01 6.02 |