

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Planning Committee – 29th February 2012

E/0231/27/11

ROUNDHOUSE CONSTRUCTED IN FIELD OPPOSITE THOMAS'S HOUSE, OAKE, TAUNTON

OCCUPIER: MR R ANDERSON

OWNER: MR R ANDERSON FIELD OPPOSITE THOMAS'S HOUSE, OAKE, TAUNTON

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider whether it is expedient to serve an Enforcement Notice requiring the removal of buildings and reinstatement of agricultural land at a field opposite Thomas's House, Oake, Taunton.

RECOMMENDATION

That no further action be taken.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies along the road between Oake Manor Golf Course and the turning to the Anchor Inn at Hillfarrence and south of Oake House at National Grid Ref: 316085 124687.

BACKGROUND

A complaint was received in August 2011. A site visit was carried out, photographs were taken and a Land Registry Search was carried out but the land was unregistered. A letter was pinned up at the site in September 2011 and again in October 2011. A response was received from Mr Anderson who advised he was the person responsible for the erection of the roundhouse and various other structures that had been erected on the land.

A meeting was arranged on site in November with Mr Anderson and he explained his intentions for the site. Mr Anderson has commenced the reconstruction of an Iron Age farmstead with the intention of it becoming an educational resource for local schools and the community. The structures on site are of natural materials, with hazel and wattle walls coated with a mud/clay daub and thatched with reed. A series of activities during the summer of 2011 has seen great interest from the general public and from various education and youth groups.

DESCRIPTION OF BREACH OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The construction of roundhouses on agricultural land without the benefit of planning permission.

The buildings/structures are not for agricultural purposes and constitute operational development. They do not benefit from any permitted development rights and in order to remedy the breach of planning control, they need to be removed from the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are no other planning applications for this site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy, Guidance or Legislation

PPG18 – Enforcing Planning Control,
PPS25 – Planning and Flood Risk.

Taunton Deane Local Plan 2004

S1 – General Requirements,
S2 – Design
EN12 – Landscape character Areas
EC21 – Recreational and Tourist Development.

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The site is within the open countryside where, in general planning policy terms, there is a presumption against development. However, policy EC21 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan, relating to recreation development, permits new proposals outside of settlements provided that increased visitor pressure would not harm natural or man-made heritage; and any new buildings would be of a scale appropriate to the location of the site.

The owner's proposal is to reconstruct an Iron Age farmstead with the intention of it becoming an educational resource for local schools and the community. As such, it is intended that the main use would be by parties of school children, as has already been the case while the site was being developed last year. However, at the present time, having been advised that planning permission is required, his insurance is invalid to have members of the public on the site. As such, the site, currently a roundhouse and small ancillary structure remain without any particular use and it is considered that the only breach of planning control at the present time is the unauthorised structures.

The site is in a broadly flat landscape, although is raised up slightly from the

stream off the southern boundary. This means that it is not overly prominent in the landscape, especially when viewed against the backdrop of trees and hedgerows. The Council's Landscape Lead agrees that the proposal is acceptable in this location in landscape terms. In the event that the structures remain unused and fall into disrepair, they will simply rot into the landscape, being constructed entirely of natural materials.

Should a use as a tourist attraction/educational facility commence in the future, then this may warrant further investigation at that time. However, given the owner's stated position regarding his insurance policy, it is considered that such unauthorised use is unlikely and that should he wish to pursue his business plans, he is likely to seek planning permission beforehand. Such a use, and its impact on the highway network can be assessed at that time.

The site is identified as being in flood zone 2. However, it is clearly significantly elevated from the stream and a wide, lower floodplain to the south. Given the limited structures on the site and their open nature, it is not considered expedient to take enforcement action on this ground.

With regard to the above, it is considered that the structures that have been erected on the site do not have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenities of the area. Given the current lack of use, there is no significant impact on neighbouring property or the local highway network. It is, therefore, not considered to be expedient to take enforcement action at the present time.

In preparing this report the Enforcement Officer has considered fully the Implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998

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