

MISS P R GREENSLADE

**ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING ON LAND TO THE SOUTH OF LOWER PARK FARM, WIVELISCOMBE TO SERVE FERNICAPS PARK FARM**

08980/26230

OUTLINE APPLICATION

**PROPOSAL**

This is an outline planning application for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling on this 228 acre intensive dairy farm. The farm is 1.5 miles from Wiveliscombe. Fernicaps Farm house is a modern four bedroomed dwelling occupied by the applicant. A mobile home, which was granted temporary content in 1999 as additional accommodation for an agricultural worker, is in the garden of Fernicaps Farm house, some 15 feet from the house. This outline application for a permanent dwelling is in place of this temporary dwelling. The applicant wishes to change the site of the dwelling so that it is at the Langford Budville end of the young stock buildings. The dwelling will house the full-time herdsman required to operate the dairy unit.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY it must be largely a matter for the planning authority to determine whether or not this is suitable location for an agricultural dwelling. If it is, and there is overriding agricultural support and/or the proposed dwelling is required to satisfy the genuine local needs, then I would not wish to raise a highway objection to the proposal. However, if this is not the case and the proposal is tantamount to new dwelling in the countryside, then residents of the proposed dwelling would be solely dependent on private vehicles for their entire domestic needs, which would be contrary to policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, and to advice contained within PPG 13 and RPG10. The means of access is not reserved for subsequent approval. The current access is substandard in terms of forward visibility and there are no plans submitted to indicate, in any detail, the access that is proposed for this development. In this location the Highways Authority would require an access with visibility splays of 2.4 x 120 m with no obstruction to visibility greater than 900 mm above the adjoining carriageway level. The access should be 3 m wide and setback 4.5 m from the carriageway edge, with its sides splays at 45 degrees. The access way should be properly consolidated and surfaced, and any gates should be hung to open inwards, 4.5 m back from the carriageway. The access shall be no steeper than 1:10, and on-site parking and turning facilities should be provided. Even if the Local Planning Authority supports the siting of an agricultural workers dwelling in this location, unless detailed plans of the proposed access are submitted in accordance with the above criteria, I would recommend the refusal of this application on grounds that, on the information currently available, the Local Planning Authority is not convinced that a safe access to the site from the classified unnumbered road can be achieved.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER (Noise and Pollution) the applicant should be aware that the property is served by private water supply and any increased usage due to the agricultural workers dwelling should be notified to the Environmental Health Department. DRAINAGE OFFICER I note that a septic tank is to be used to dispose of foul sewerage. Percolation tests should be carried out to ascertain the required lengths of subsurface irrigation drainage. The Environment Agency's consent to discharge to an underground strata is also required.

PARISH COUNCIL object to this proposal because the site chosen is in open country and is exposed and visible from the east. The Parish Council accept that there is a need to house an agricultural worker but feel that a site closer to the farm house and dairy would be more sensible from a farming point of view and less intrusive in the landscape. The field immediately to the west of the farmhouse would provide such a location.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Policy STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review states that development outside towns, rural centres and villages should be strictly controlled and restricted to that which benefits economic activity, maintains or enhances the environment and does not foster growth in the need to travel. The proposed development will assist an existing farming business in the open countryside. Policy WD/SP/2 of the West Deane Local Plan states that outside the defined settlement limits, development will not be permitted unless it is for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or accords with a specific development plan policy or proposal. Policy WD/HO/1 of the same plan states that dwellings for agricultural workers will only be permitted outside the limits of settlements where various criteria are met, including that there is a proven need for the dwelling on the holding. Policy WD/HO/2 goes on to say that where agricultural dwellings are permitted, appropriate conditions will be used to retain the dwelling for agricultural occupation. Policy S8 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan states that outside defined settlement limits, new building will not be permitted unless it maintains or enhances the environmental quality and landscape of the area and meets a number of criteria including that it is for the purposes of agriculture. Policy H14 of the same plan goes on to say that dwellings for agriculture workers will be permitted outside the limits of settlements provided there is a proven functional need for the dwelling there and the farm unit for which it is sought is proven to be financially viable. Policy H15 indicates that where agricultural dwellings are permitted appropriate conditions will be used to retain the dwelling for agricultural occupation. Specific guidance relating to new permanent dwellings on agricultural holdings is set out in PPG7. The relevant points are:- (a) there is a clearly established existing functional need; (b) the need relates to a full time worker, or one who is primarily engaged in agriculture, and does not relate to a part-time requirement; (c) the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so; and (d) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The unit has been established for at least three years, and has been profitable for at least one of them, is currently financially sound, and has clear prospects for remaining so. The functional needs could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker is concerned. The labour requirements of the farm show that the farm system requires 3.85 workers, which is higher than that at the time of the previous permission for the mobile home. Indeed the applicant has added to the farm acreage and is milking 150 cows, 40 more than the previous owner. The existing siting of the mobile home is considered inappropriate given the changed circumstances since the applicant has moved to the farm. I consider that the visibility splay requirements of the County Highway Authority, which would involve the removal of a length of roadside bank and hedge, are inappropriate in this attractive rural area. The landscape is relatively flat in this area and therefore there are many sites where any new building will be visible, especially from the east. Hence, the developer is being encouraged to dig the site in and provide adequate natural screening to integrate it into this rural area.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, percolation tests, materials to be submitted, landscaping, hard standing, parking, agricultural occupation, meter box, services underground, removal of Permitted Development Rights for extensions, access, turning space, site levels. Notes re Sick and Disabled Act, energy and water conservation, design, hedge required, contact Environmental Health Officer and Environment Agency, meter boxes, Design Guide, digging site in.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356462 MRS J HIGGINBOTTOM**

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