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BMBC
Planning & Building Control Service
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26 April 2022

Dear Sir,

Little Doubting Farm Design and Access

The Little Doubting Farm free range production line has operated successfully over many years. The barns have been built at significant scale and extended twice in last decades with no technical or operational problems with no criticism from the Authority or regulatory bodies.

This year will, unfortunately, be the last year of viability for the project. The supermarket drive for much larger production units is not an option for the land owner.

The cost of bird feed has risen to a level which makes the egg production unviable. I enclose a statement from the operator which sets out the situation (A). Energy costs have risen 40% and fuel costs by 30%. A further difficulty has occurred from bird flu which has meant that the eggs could no longer claim to be free range as the hens had to be confined in the barns. Supermarkets have been reluctant to increase egg costs to consumers and the site applicant is becoming reluctant to deal now with the taxing physical requirements of the business operation.

The family are having to look at diversification routes as the farm income is no longer available from egg production and business has ceased.

Farming diversification is well recognised and supported in the NPPF (Section 6) to deal with rapid changes in economic circumstances and support a prosperous rural economy both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. Sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside is encouraged.

The re-use of buildings is supported in Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of included land.

Section 14 requires thought and development given to low carbon energy and heat plans and takes account of landform, layout, orientation and massing of landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Wider family members have experience in leisure and tourism projects and have the expertise to guide a farming diversification project to secure a future income for the applicant.

Local Plan Policy GB3 allows for the conversion of buildings subject to conditions. The current barn is agricultural in character in keeping with adjacent approved barns and many similar barns borough wide. The barn structure is steel framed, built from a standard structural pattern to BS5502 and BS EN 1090CE supplied to the land owner and assembled by his own skilled labour with any specialist services such as electrical installations by approved contractors (see specification B1 & B2) The building is clad with concrete blockwork, 150mm insulation panels and timber cladding to external surfaces. The steel roof is Kingspan insulated to protect the heated environment.

The proposed loss of the bird barn structure will not need replacement. The existing building is not abnormal for agricultural buildings and was approved for its location as were subsequent additional structures.

The conversion will be by the applicant who is a skilled builder and with other help as required. Mr. Pinson constructed all the residential uses on site and ancillary buildings. Any specialist structural advice additional to the manufacturing guarantees and calculations will be available in consultation with Building Inspectors during construction once planning is in place. This is a normal situation in conversion work.

The proposal for the conversion is quite simple and the appearance will be rural in character, particularly as it will remain timber clad and, from Hartcliffe Hill Road, the only visible elevation (west) will remain unaltered in scale or position. The rear arm of the portal frame will be removed as the residential use can be absorbed in the front half of the frame. A new steel column arrangement will be supplied and structurally designed and certified by the supplier to support the existing apex of the frame. The effect on the Green Belt will be to reduce by 50% of the building volume to allow screened parking area behind the building and the openness of the Green Belt technically will be increased. No changes are required to the access road. Chicken feed hoppers will also not be retained.

Upgrade to the cladding material will also be incorporated together with floor and roof insulation to modern climatic requirements under Building Regulations and elevational changes for light and ventilation are restricted in line with barn conversion policy and Government advice under the GDO. The building will be heated by Ground Source Heat Pump technologies and meets the NPPF (14) on Planning for Climate Change and the council's own environmental aims (see note C1 on Environmentally friendly credentials)

I enclose additional information:

D1 Demand for holiday homes

E1 Visitor Economy Strategy

F1 Final Client Report 25/04/2022

The converted barn will provide attractive domestic holiday accommodation in a safe, modern and simple architectural building in rural appropriate material finishes, in line with barn conversion advice. The accommodation will be offered at affordable rates to families in a well established location and safe access to its immediate setting and good connections to the Pennine Way, cycle routes and road networks to its immediate nearest town (Penistone).

Physical presence will be reduced in a Green Belt location and visually will be totally appropriate at a previously agreed site and scale. The benefit to the area generally will be an enhanced holiday offer to the Borough, support for a farming family in impossible economic situations, reduction of heavy traffic movements from collection and delivery vehicles on local networks and eco friendly technology.

All existing bunds and land formations will remain and no existing trees will be affected so service areas will be private and not visible.

I hope BMBC can support this initiative to the benefit of the area, the economic survival of the farm, and Barnsley's broad economic and employment opportunities.

Yours faithfully,

