Expiry Date - 24/03/2011

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0029/11 Recommendation –

Site: Erringham Farm Mill Hill Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex

Proposal: Re-siting and detailed design of farm worker's dwellinghouse (previously permitted under ADC/0184/10) with ancillary vehicle and implement shed

The Application

This application follows the granting of outline planning permission in October 2010 for an agricultural worker's dwelling (ADC/0184/10). The site lies within the South Downs National Park.

The farm is at present served by a large new farmhouse (constructed in 2006 following permissions SU/224/00 & SU/102/01), which is occupied by the applicant and his partner, and there is also No.2 Erringham Farm Cottage, on land acquired in 2001, which is occupied by the applicant's 82 year-old mother. In addition, there is an unauthorised mobile home on the farm, stated to have been in existence for 6 years, which is occupied by the applicant's daughter, who is the shepherdess at the farm, and her partner. A second mobile home on the site, located to the north of the site, is unoccupied and currently used for storage.

This application proposes to remove both mobile homes and to construct a permanent dwelling. The position of the dwelling has been centralised within the site following the refusal of the outline application for a second dwelling (ADC/0185/10), resulting in more space within the plot. As a consequence of the re-siting, the application is a full application rather than reserved matters. A separate application for a new mobile home at the farm was also submitted (ADC/0028/11) but has been subsequently withdrawn.

The proposed dwelling is to be located on the site of the existing occupied mobile home, within a former walled garden which is screened by trees and shrubs which currently also contains a number of other unlawful structures, such as a greenhouse, kennels and sheds. The buildings are well hidden from view though and are only glimpsed during the summer months in distant views from the public road (Mill Hill) to the west. The site is located to the west of the main farmhouse and to the east of a Dutch barn and other farm buildings.

Access to the site will be via a new track off the main access road which will run between two groups of trees to the east of an area of hardstanding. The hardstanding is proposed to accommodate a vehicle/implement shed and the

relocated kennel. The plans show an existing greenhouse and shed retained to the south west of the new house, with an aviary to the east of the house.

The dwelling would measure 7m high with first floor windows set within the eaves on the southern elevation. It will have an internal floor area of 150sqm, with a side porch measuring an additional 8sqm. A log store is also shown attached on the front (north) of the building. The vehicle/implement shed measures 9.2m wide, 6.3m deep and 3.5m high. It is to be open fronted and is to be used to store a number of vehicles associated with the farming activity.

Consultations and Representations

Consultations/Comments

None

Third Parties

No representations received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies):
AG1, AC1, AC2, AC3, AC7
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (ODPM 2004)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site lies within the area controlled by the South Downs National Park Authority. Adur District Council is authorised to make a decision on the application on behalf of the National Park Authority under the terms of a S101 Agreement between both authorities.

Local Plan policies (AG1, AC1) state that development will not normally be approved in the countryside. AC1 protects the countryside for its own sake from development which does not need a countryside location and resists development that is not required for quiet recreation or related to the essential needs of agriculture. It also opposes the extension of isolated groups of buildings or the consolidation of sporadic development.

In the National Park (former AONB), where there is a particular objective to prevent harm to the landscape which is of national importance, the relevant policy (AC2) states that "*only in compelling circumstances will development be permitted.....any development that would be harmful to the visual quality and distinctive characteristics of the area, particularly the opportunity it offers for quiet outdoor enjoyment, will not be permitted"* and that *"essential need for development for agriculture..... may exceptionally be regarded as compelling"*.

AC2 also states that, where circumstances are regarded as compelling, development will need to be of a particularly high design standard, must be in keeping with the locality and sited so as to minimise noise and visual intrusion. AC3 states that it should conserve and enhance the landscape character having regard to landform and appearance and be sympathetic to traditional forms and materials; the removal of buildings and features which are detrimental will be encouraged.

AC7 states that residential accommodation required in connection with agriculture will only be approved if the Council is satisfied it is essential to the needs of agriculture and, if permitted, will be subject to a condition restricting occupancy to persons employed in agriculture.

The above policies accord with PPS7 which states that new building in the open countryside or outside areas allocated for development in development plans should be strictly controlled; the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, so it may be enjoyed by all. Isolated houses will require special justification (including where they replace existing non-residential buildings) and, where the case is made on the basis of essential need for an agricultural worker to live permanently on the site, the advice in Annex A to PPS7 should be followed and the applications scrutinised on the basis of the needs of the agricultural enterprise, not personal preferences or circumstances. Permanent dwellings should not be permitted unless there is a clearly established existing functional need; the need relates to a full-time worker; a financial viability test is met with the unit/agricultural activity have been established for at least 3 years, profitable for at least one of those years and currently financially sound with a clear prospect of remaining so; and the functional need could not be met by an existing dwelling in the area.

PPS7 states that nationally-designated areas such as National Parks and AONBs *have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.....The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas.*

Agricultural Justification

The issue of justification was considered in detail at the time of the outline application. The Council's independent advisers did not consider that there was any functional requirement for further agricultural dwellings at the farm but Members of the Planning Committee took a different view and allowed one dwelling. Consequently, there is no need to repeat the justification arguments here.

Visual amenity and impact on character of National Park

The proposed site of the new dwelling is reasonably well screened, particularly in the summer months when the trees are in full leaf. The existing buildings on the site can be glimpsed in distant views from the road at the top of the hill to the west. The dwelling will be two storeys in height but has been kept relatively low with windows within the eaves on the south elevation. It will be more prominent then the mobile home due to its extra height but the site is considered to be a good position for such development, being naturally screened and close to a number of farm buildings. The site is less prominent than that of the main farmhouse which is quite exposed in views from the south and west.

The dwelling will have a slate roof and rendered blockwork walls. Solar panels are indicated on the southern roofslope. Its size accords with the 150sqm (measured internally) as required under the previous outline consent.

The land level rises to the north and a ramped path and steps are proposed to the north (front) of the dwelling leading to the hardstanding where the implement shed and kennels are to be sited. This area is screened from the north by a belt of trees and the shed is to have a profiled metal roof and timber 'hit-and-miss' panelled walls. It will have a similar appearance to other farm buildings in the vicinity and will not be unduly prominent, being 3.5m high.

It is not considered that the proposed development will harm the intrinsic quality of the National Park setting.

Residential amenity

The proposal would have minimal impact on adjoining residential amenities. The adjacent land is in various ownerships, with The Pump House to the south west and New Erringham Farm to the north west being in separate ownership. However, the new dwelling will not result in any adverse impact on amenity.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that:-

There is considered to be a functional need for an agricultural worker to be located at the site and the proposed dwelling and ancillary buildings will be

sited so as to cause least harm to the visual qualities of the South Downs National Park or the amenities of neighbouring properties. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AC1, AC2, AC3, AC7, AH2) and PPS7

Subject to:

1. C1Ci
2. C3A (amended reason – the site lies within the countryside and South Downs National Park……)
3. The access road hereby approved shall not be constructed until details of its proposed level in relation to existing ground levels and proposed surface material have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The road shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
   Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the landscape character of the National Park having regard to Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan
4. C11Ai Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the landscape character of the National Park having regard to Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan
5. C12Aii Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the landscape character of the National Park having regard to Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan
6. C18Aii Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the landscape character of the National Park having regard to Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan
7. C18B Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the landscape character of the National Park having regard to Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan
8. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until details of the proposed drainage and means of disposal have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and the building shall not be occupied until all drainage works have been carried out in accordance with such details as approved by the Local Planning Authority. There shall be no discharge of contaminated drainage into either ground water or any surface waters whether direct or via soakaways. Reason - To ensure adequate drainage and to comply with policy AP4 of the Adur District Local Plan
9. Within one month of first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved, both existing mobile homes on the site shall be permanently removed from Erringham Farm.
   Reason - To ensure adequate drainage and to comply with policy AP4 of the Adur District Local Plan
10. This permission relates to the following approved plans date stamped received 27 January 2011:
    Drawing No. 2007/26B/31 (Proposed Site Plan (but not including the proposed mobile home), proposed vehicle and implement shed elevations and plan, proposed kennels elevations and plan)

Expiry Date - 24/03/2011

Drawing No. 2007/26B/32 (Proposed dwelling elevations, plans and sections)
Reason– For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

Case Officer Peter Barnett Date 20 April 2011