Proposed Development: Erection of agricultural shed

Location: Adjacent to Oak Field Crookdake Aspatria Wigton

Recommendation: REFUSE

Summary/Key Issues

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<th>Issue</th>
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<td>Siting</td>
<td>The proposal is an isolated structure in the open countryside, poorly related to the existing structures on the farm.</td>
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<td>Landscape Setting</td>
<td>The applicant has taken some measures to screen the building; however, as an isolated structure with splayed access, the building would be visually prominent against the open setting.</td>
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<td>Highways</td>
<td>The applicant has amended to scheme to counter objections received from the Highways Department through a previous application. These measures would however reduce the level of screening originally proposed and increase the visual prominence of the building, to the detriment of the surrounding landscape.</td>
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<td>Scale/Design</td>
<td>The proposal is of a standard agricultural scale and design.</td>
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<td>The proposal would not have any adverse impact on residential amenity.</td>
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Site

The development site is situated in the open countryside, to the north west of Fletchertown.

The site is agricultural land, bounded to the west by an agricultural workers dwelling approved under 2/2008/0514, to the south by the highway linking Watchill to the A596 and agricultural land to all other sides.

Proposal

The proposal involves the erection of a livestock building with a footprint of 13m x 7.6m, maximum height to eaves of 3m and total height of 4.05m. The building would be finished
with tin clad walls above concrete panels and slate blue box profile sheeting to the roof incorporating 6 roof lights. The building would be open fronted to the north.

The site has been subject to three previous applications under 2/2014/0259, 2/2014/0478 and 2/2015/0054, all of which related to the erection of a general purpose agricultural building of similar proportions and siting. These former applications were refused as the proposals were considered to form an isolated and visually obtrusive form of development, poorly related to other buildings at the adjacent farmstead, which would detract from the character and appearance of the area.

**Relevant Policies**

**National Planning Policy Framework**
Paragraph 7
Paragraph 17
Chapter 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy

**Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) July 2014**
Policy DM6 - Equestrian and agricultural buildings
Policy S14 - Rural economy

**Relevant Planning History**

2/2014/0259 – Erection of a livestock building at Croft House, Crookdake, Aspatria – Refused 05/06/14


2/2015/0054 – Erection of agricultural shed at Croft House, Crookdake, Aspatria – Refused 01/04/15

**Representations**

Parish Council – No objections

Highways – No response to date

Environmental Health – No response to date

The application has been advertised on site. No resulting representations have been received to date.

**Assessment**

**Siting**

The application has been submitted as an application relating to Oak Field, an
agricultural workers dwelling to an adjacent farmstead at Croft House, located to the north west of the site. The applicant submits that the building is to be sited on land falling adjacent to an agricultural workers dwelling, separated from the farmhouse at Croft House and the surrounding farm buildings. The agent submits that the applicant is the tenant and occupier of Croft House and is prohibited from constructing new buildings on this land. The development site has been chosen as the applicant is the owner of this land. The building would be used for general agriculture including general purpose storage and livestock housing during calving/lambing. It is not indicated why the existing buildings at Croft House are insufficient.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out in its agenda to achieve sustainable development, a desire for the planning system to plan an environmental role in protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 7). The core planning principles contained within paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies the importance of protecting the character and beauty of the countryside.

Policy DM6 of the Allerdale Local (Part 1) specifies that agricultural development will only be permitted where development is ‘closely related to existing farm buildings or other groups of buildings….‘ Policy S14 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) supports ‘proposals for appropriately designed and related agricultural development and buildings’.

The siting of the proposed building remains unchanged from that proposed in the previous applications. The siting would result in an isolated agricultural building, being surrounded by open countryside, separated from the existing farming activities and structures located at Croft House, approx 100m to the north west.

The proposed building would not be sited adjacent to an existing range of agricultural buildings. Despite the applicant’s submission that they are prohibited from erecting new sheds at this farmstead, it remains that the existing farm buildings and practices are located at Croft House and there are no existing farm buildings within the immediate vicinity of the application site. There are no details to suggest that the existing buildings at Croft House are unsuitable or to indicate why the additional building is required.

The siting of the proposed building is therefore considered to be contrary to current policy guidelines.

**Landscape Setting**

The building is proposed to be sited directly adjacent to the highway. The buildings position would mean it would be visible above the separating field hedge.

The applicant proposes landscaping measures to screen the building to include sinking the south western corner of the building into the ground by approximately 0.6m, erection of a bund topped with a hedge to the north of the building and additional trees to be planted between the hedge and the field. The height of the hedge adjacent to the highway is to be cut back to 1m high, 12m to each side of the access.

Policy DM6 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) 2013 stipulates that agricultural buildings should be ‘closely related to existing farm buildings or other groups of buildings, and where this is not possible, development …. (should be) designed and sited to minimise
impact on the landscape setting’.

Taking aside the siting issues referred to above, the applicant has incorporated measures into the proposal to try to alleviate the visual prominence concerns that the building would create in this landscape, raised under the previous applications (2/2014/0259, 2/2014/0478 and 2/2015/0054). Whilst these measures would go some way to alleviating landscaping concerns, it remains that as a stand-alone agricultural building (visible in particular on approach from the north over the 1m hedge), the structure and any associated screen would draw the eye when travelling along this stretch of highway so as to have a detrimental visual impact upon this area of open countryside.

Highways

An existing field access is in situ to the north east of the site. The applicant proposes to use this existing access for the proposal.

Under previous applications, the Highways Department raised an objection to the proposal on the basis that the applicant’s plans to recess the field gate would not provide enough space for a vehicle to pull off the highway and that should the hedge exceed 1m in height it would obstruct visibility.

The applicant has since amended the proposal to incorporate a 4.5m recess between the highway and the gateway and proposes to reduce the hedge to 1m in height for 12m either side of the access point. No comments have been received from the Highways Department in relation to the current application, however, this amended element of the proposal met with no objections from the Highways Department when considered as part of the previous application.

Whilst these measures tackle the concerns of the Highways Department, they would in turn impact upon the prominence of the building and ‘undo’ the screening proposed by the applicant. Thus the building would appear as an isolated and prominent structure in the open countryside which could be readily viewed from the main highway. Likewise, the proposed splayed access would be at odds with the surrounding landscape character so as to have a detrimental impact upon this area of open countryside.

The proposed access arrangements are considered to impact upon the visual prominence of the building which in turn would detract from the character and appearance of the area.

Scale/Design

The proposed building is of a scale and design commensurate with other agricultural buildings in the area. It is also considered to be suitable for the proposed use.

The scale and design of the proposal are therefore considered to be in compliance with current policy guidelines and would be considered acceptable if the building were to be located in a more acceptable location.

Amenity
The adjacent dwelling is an agricultural workers dwelling, associated with the farmstead. The nature of the agricultural tie would mean this building is not categorised as sensitive or protected in relation to farm buildings. No objections have been raised by the Environmental Health Department.

The proposal's impact upon the residential amenity of the area is considered to be in compliance with current policy guidelines.

**Local Financial Considerations**

Having regard to S70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act the proposal would not result in any local financial benefits.

**Conclusion**

It is considered that the limited justification provided for the building at the site does not demonstrate an essential need for an agricultural building in a location that is isolated from existing agricultural structures and in a prominent visual location. It is therefore considered that the proposal would constitute non-essential development in the open countryside contrary to well established planning policy principles.

The proposed building is considered unacceptable in terms of its siting in isolation and harmful visual impact upon the open countryside.

The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Chapter 3 of the NPPF, paragraphs 7 and 17 of the NPPF, Policies S14 and DM6 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1).

The application is recommended for refusal.
Annex 1

Conditions/Reasons

The proposed agricultural development, by reason of its siting, would form an isolated and visually obtrusive form of agricultural development, poorly related to other buildings at the adjacent farmstead, which would detract from the character and appearance of the area within which it is located. The proposal is therefore contrary to Paragraphs 7 and 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies S14 and DM6 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) July 2014.

Proactive Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying planning policies, constraints, stakeholder representations and matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the Applicant. However, the issues are so fundamental to the proposal that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which has been clearly identified within the reason(s) for the refusal, approval has not been possible.