

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AREA2 DC COMMITTEE – AGENDA ITEM 6: LIST OF PLANS.

DATE: 14 December 2004

PLAN: 08	CASE NUMBER: 04/04631/FULMAJ
APPLICATION NO. 6.71.102.F.FULMAJ	GRID REF: EAST 440260 NORTH 461560
	DATE MADE VALID: 17.09.2004
	TARGET DATE: 17.12.2004
	WARD: Claro

APPLICANT: P Hutton Ltd

AGENT: Jacksons C & P L

PROPOSAL: Erection of replacement building & retention of existing building to form meat cutting, processing & packing premises with the seasonal killing & preparation of poultry and game, 2 storey extension to existing dwelling & vehicular access.

LOCATION: Rougham Farm Great North Road Arkendale Knaresborough North
Yorkshire HG5 0RA

REPORT

SITE AND PROPOSAL

The application site is located at Rougham Farm Great North Road Arkendale. The site itself is situated on the eastern side of the A168 road and forms part of an established livestock farm enterprise. The farmhouse fronts the A168 with a range of modern and traditional agricultural building located to the rear which are serviced by two vehicular accesses to both the north and south side of the dwelling. The site is situated in an open countryside location.

The applicants propose to construct a new building and utilise existing buildings on the site to form a meat cutting, processing and packing premises with the seasonal killing and preparation of poultry and game. In order to be able to develop the facility it will be necessary to demolish a number of existing structures at the site. A new vehicular access is proposed to the south of the site to serve the new facility with an associated parking area to the south of the site. This access will replace the existing southern access.

The applicants also propose the construction of a two-storey extension to the dwelling including raising the roof height to incorporate new bedroom accommodation in the roof space. The two-storey extension would be attached to the new meat cutting facility to the rear.

The meat cutting and packing plant is described as a partial replacement of the applicants existing facilities at their Castle Ings site in Knaresborough. Members will recall that planning consent was granted for the residential redevelopment of that site in 2003 (plan

reference 6.100.156.M.FUL).

Meat to be cut and prepared at the site (other than poultry and game) will be slaughtered elsewhere, and the applicant initially indicated that 15-20% of the animals to be processed through the facility will be reared at the farm itself with the balance from other farms within the locality. Subsequently the applicant has provided further stocking figures, and predicts that projected levels of animals to be finished at Rougham Farm would far exceed the initially quoted figures. The applicant intends to continue the butchery business supplying meat to commercial and public authorities and through its retail outlet in Knaresborough.

In addition to producing cattle and sheep at Rougham Farm, the applicant also rears poultry for the seasonal market. The poultry will be slaughtered and then prepared for sale within the facility on a time separation basis. The killing of poultry would not be an all year round operation but restricted to seasonal markets at Christmas and Easter.

Members will note that a separate application for temporary permission has been submitted under Planning Reference No.6.71.102.G.COU to allow for the killing and preparation of poultry and game, and the cutting processing and packing of meat until 31 December 2005. This operation would take place within an existing building on the site.

It is anticipated that, under the current proposal, 5 people will be employed at the premises. Hours of operation are given as Monday to Friday 6am -6pm plus 2 hours daily for cleaning and Saturday as 6am to 2pm plus 2 hours cleaning. Sunday would be utilised for maintenance of the facility. During peak times, such as Christmas, Easter and bank holidays, the site could be operational 24 hours Monday to Sunday.

Waste materials will be stored on site as will water used for washing down. Designated licensed waste removers will take this material from the site. Storage of liquids and solid waste will be in tanks and sealed containers respectively.

MAIN ISSUES

1. Land Use
2. Visual Impact And Landscape
3. Residential Amenity
4. Highway Safety
5. Pollution Prevention
- 6 Wildlife

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

6.71.102.PA- erecting building to house chickens for broiler production and a bulk feed bin and gas tank PER 18.09.1992

6.71.102.A.PNA- erection of agricultural building for livestock and straw storage Prior Approval Not Required 31.08.1995

6.71.102.B.FUL - Erection of two storey kitchen extension PER 12.09.2000

6.71.102.C.PNA - Erection of extension to existing livestock building with lifting of roof REFUSED 03.09.2002 and currently the subject of an enforcement notice and appeal.

6.71. 102.D.PNA - Erection of 1 No agricultural building for the storage of livestock feed
PER 04.03.2002

6.71.102.E.EIAMAJ - Demolition of existing buildings with erection of abattoir and associated buildings including waste water treatment plant, altered vehicular access, parking/turning areas and landscaping scheme. Erection of agricultural buildings
REFUSED 01.04.2004.

6.71.102.G.COUCOU - Temporary planning permission to allow the use of an existing building for the killing and preparation of poultry and game, and the cutting , processing and packing of meat until 31 December 2005. PENDING CONSIDERATION

CONSULTATIONS/NOTIFICATIONS

ARKENDALE PARISH MEETING (78)

Arkendale

English Nature

Required further information regarding the impact of the soakaways on the Marton Carr SINC site. On the receipt of amended plans no objection but require a bat survey

Countryside Agency

Given the Agencies strategic priorities, the agency will not be making any comment on the proposal.

Environment Agency

No objection subject to the imposition of conditions

Policy Dev Unit NYCC

No objection subject to the imposition of conditions covering highway matters (see highways response).

H.B.C Land Drainage

No comments

Environmental Health

Recommend the imposition of conditions. Licensing of the plant will be dealt with by The Foods Standards Agency.

Highway Authority

This matter is being dealt with by the development control section at County Hall

DOT - Highways Agency

No objection in principle to the development.

Claro Internal Drainage Board

Soakaways need to be proven effective and the rate of run off should be restricted to the agricultural rate of 1.4 litres per second per hectare. All surface water from hardstanding should be passed through an oil interceptor.

Landscape Officer

See assessment

Local Plans Policy

See assessment

MOD Safeguarding and Byelaws

No safeguarding objections

Yorkshire Water

A water supply can be provided. The proposal is not served by the public sewerage system and should be referred to the Environment Agency and Environmental Health for comment.

Heritage Unit of NYCC

No known archaeology constraints

Conservation and Design Section

See assessment

MARTON-CUM-GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL (71)

Marion cum Grafton

APPLICATION PUBLICITY

SITE NOTICE EXPIRY: 22.10.2004

PRESS NOTICE EXPIRY: 22.10.2004

REPRESENTATIONS

MARTON CUM GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL - Object to the development - A summary of the initial objection is highlighted below and additional comments are attached at APPENDIX 1

1. The application is not in conformity with the provisions of the Harrogate Development Plan,
2. The scheme is for industrial activity on agricultural land in the open countryside. It is not a simple farm diversification. It is an attempt to transfer an existing industrial activity to agricultural land in a sensitive part of the Vale of York.
3. There are a number of industrial sites in the District which could accommodate the proposed activity
4. It is contrary to NYCC Structure plan policy E2
5. It is contrary to HDLP Policies A1D, C2 C11, C15,C16 and E8
6. The applicant has relied on policy E8 but does not satisfy the criteria
7. The application does not fall within the type of schemes envisaged by PPG7 and PPS7
8. The scheme is inappropriate in an area where the landscape sensitivity of the area was assessed medium to high by HM Inspector at the 1999 MSA Public Inquiry and where the HBC Landscape Character Assessments 90 and 91 also categorise the landscape as

sensitive and describe it as beautiful and appealing.

9. The proposed buildings are of an urban industrial nature rather than agricultural. They would be very significant seen from the A168 local lanes, bridleways and footpaths and properties and therefore the proposed development would diminish the quality of the views for receptors.

10. The proposed buildings would be a focal point bringing discord to the rural foreground and the panoramic views of The Howardian hills and the White Horse at Kilburn, seen from the A168 and the Arkendale bridge and dwellings in Arkendale.

11. The applicant has not submitted an adequate environmental analysis

12. The application is incomplete and does not have sufficient detail to support a full planning application.

13. To grant planning permission would open the door to ribbon development on the A168.

14. The applicant has not demonstrated any exceptional circumstances or overriding need which could justify setting aside the provisions of the Harrogate Local Development Plan in order to grant the application.

ONEYTHORPE AND CLARETON PARISH MEETING Object to the development on the following grounds:

1. Conflicts with policies of the Harrogate District Local Plan

2. Conflicts with policies of the North Yorkshire County Structure plan

3. It attempts to put industrial activity in a sensitive area of countryside

4. The site is not zoned for industrial activity

5. There are other sites available in the Harrogate District which are zoned for industrial use

6. This will be a step towards ribbon development on the A168, which is discouraged by HBC and NYCC policies

7. There is no environmental assessment with this proposal and we believe that there is a risk of light, odour and noise pollution

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS - 102 letters of OBJECTION have been received expressing the following concerns

1. Non compliance with Harrogate District Local Plan Policy and North Yorkshire Structure Plan Policies.

2. Contravenes the Public Enquiry statement rejecting the Motorway Service area application for Marton and Arkendale on the grounds of conserving the countryside.

3. Contravenes recently published Harrogate Borough Council Guidance on Landscape sensitivity in the area.

4. Approval will result in the reclassification of agricultural land to industrial with a significant detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

5. This industrial unit should be sited on an area zoned for industry.

6. The proposals will set a precedent for further future expansion.

7. Other more suitable sites already zoned for industry in Harrogate District.

8. This application appears to be phase 1 of the original application and concerns are that the applicant is trying to obtain the original scheme by stealth. A strategy to wear everyone down.

9. Will result in ribbon development along the A 168.

10. The proposed development is not farm diversification as the applicant is not a farmer but a butchering business centered in Knaresborough which has been closed.

11. The question of whether the existing management have the background and knowledge to manage such an operation.
12. The application is not supported by an Environmental Assessment.
13. Concern that brownfield site alternatives have not been explored.
14. Application is lacking in detail.
e.g. the seasonal slaughtering of game. Definition of game and what season?
15. Source of meat and what state it will be in on arrival.
16. Will poultry be slaughtered on site all year round.
17. Query the need for such a large canteen facility for so few workers.
18. Having previously refused a planning application for an abattoir can see no reason why the Council should grant permission for the building of this industrial site for meat processing and packaging.

19. The proposed large buildings will have a major impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.
20. Detrimental to the residential amenity of the area.
21. Concern at the high risks of pollution associated with this proposal both to the villages of Arkendale and Grafton and to own property.
22. Adverse effect on the views to and from the village, footpaths and roads.
23. Light and noise pollution from 24 hour working.

24. The proposals do not meet the criteria for sustainability due to the inappropriate location away from major services.
25. Will not benefit the rural economy, as the area is already one of low employment.
26. There is no evidence of significant rural unemployment in the area.
27. No proven requirement for an additional meat packaging plant in the area.
28. Lack of benefit to farmers.
29. Detrimental to the tourism industry in the district.

30. The proposals will result in an increase in traffic congestion.
31. The proposals will result in an increase in traffic accidents.
32. Staff movements will increase traffic movements at peak times as there is no public transport available.
33. Possible pollution from odours and from the disposal of waste and the products of washing down the site.
34. Volume of water going through the plant and its impact on Bawter Carr which runs through the bottom of the village.
35. Possible threat to Marton Carr nature conservation site.
36. Lack of IPPC certificate and concern over possible contamination of an aquifer providing drinking water.

37. Planners and councillors are our custodians and stewards. We expect you to do your duty.

In addition to the above 8 letters have been received in SUPPORT of the proposal

1. The scheme represents a practical and viable diversification of the applicants existing farm business adding value to his produce and ultimately increasing local employment opportunities.
2. Proposal would have a positive impact for local producers helping sustain developing

farm businesses in the area

3. There is a lack of facilities for organic meat production in the Yorkshire region and this scheme should be supported

VOLUNTARY NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION - None.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- PPG1 Planning Policy Guidance 1: General Policy and Principles
- PPG4 Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms
- PPS7 Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG9 Nature Conservation
- PPG13 Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport
- SPE2 North Yorkshire County Structure Plan Policy E2
- SPA5 North Yorkshire County Structure Plan Policy A5
- LPE08 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy E8: New Industrial and Business Development in the countryside
- LPC14 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy C14: Farm Diversification
- LPC13 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy C13: Agricultural and Forestry Development
- LPC02 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy C2: Landscape Character
- LPNC03 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy NC3: Local Wildlife Sites
- LPH15 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy H15: Extensions to Dwellings
- LPHD20 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy HD20: Design of New Development and Redevelopment
- LPA01 Harrogate District Local Plan (2001, as altered 2004) Policy A1: Impact on the Environment and Amenity

ASSESSMENT OF MAIN ISSUES

1. LAND USE - The proposed development represents the establishment of a new industrial development within the open countryside (the scheme is a partial relocation of the applicants existing facility located at Castle Ings Knaresborough). The proposal involves the operation of meat cutting, processing and packing facilities together with the seasonal killing of poultry and game. The killing of poultry and game will be restricted to a 6week prior to Christmas and 4 weeks before Easter to meet the seasonal market. It is stressed however that the killing within these periods will not be a daily activity.

It is also proposed to construct domestic extensions to the existing house. The extension will include a two storey rear extension and associated outbuildings (sited to the front of the meat cutting facility). It is also proposed to extend into the roof space requiring raising the roof ridge height. HDLP Policy H15 is relevant to this aspect of the development. H15 requires new extension to have no adverse impact upon adjacent property, no adverse loss of parking or garden/amenity space, no adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the dwelling/surrounding area and that the extension should not be designed to facilitate the sub-division of the unit into separate units.

It is considered that Harrogate District Local Plan (HDLP) Policies E8 and C15 are relevant in consideration of the industrial aspect of the scheme. HDLP Policy C15 seeks to conserve the rural environment identifying that existing land uses are expected to remain for the most part undisturbed. The policy does however permit development where it would be appropriate to a rural area and contributes towards the rural economy in compliance with HDLP Policy E8.

The applicants have indicated that they would anticipate that 5 people will be employed at the premises. The premises itself adding value to the applicants produce at the farm, helping sustain the existing agricultural enterprise. This would, in the opinion of your officers help sustain the rural economy (albeit tempered by the fact that the scheme represents the partial relocation of facilities from the Castle Ings site).

HDLP Policy E8 is permissive towards new industrial development that would involve inter alia a proposal for farm diversification or other small scale proposal requiring a countryside location for operational reasons; is well related to the classified road network and would not have a significant adverse effect on the character, appearance or general amenity of the area.

HDLP Policy C14 provides specific advice on farm diversification repeating the criteria of E8 but also indicating that wherever possible the proposal should re-use existing buildings. In the event that existing buildings not being capable of conversion any new structures should conform with HDLP Policy C13.

HDLP Policy C13 provides guidance upon agricultural and forestry buildings stating that an adequate buffer distance should be provided between the development and non agricultural development; that there should be no pollution of existing or potential water or fishing resources; the proposed development should be sited and designed so as to minimise any harmful impact on the rural landscape and built heritage.

The above local policy advice is reflected within the more strategic policies of the Structure plan, namely Policy E2 and A5.

2. VISUAL IMPACT - The scheme has been amended following the initial submission, although the broad principle of the re-use of two existing buildings and demolition of existing sheds and replacement by a new facility remains the same.

In this respect the applicants propose to utilise the existing buildings that were the subject of the prior notification application submitted under 6.71.102.C.PNA that was refused consent in 2002 and are now the subject of an appeal against an enforcement notice.

The buildings are intended to remain in situ, although the rather stark brickwork will be clad in timber cladding. These building will accommodate much of the administration and changing facilities proposed as part of the scheme. Attached to these building would be the newly built main cutting and preparation building. This structure would be approx dimensions 25m x 18.5m and 9.5m in height (to ridge -7.5m to eaves), with a smaller waste building attached. The building would be constructed on the site of existing farm buildings presently used to house poultry that would be demolished.

To the south of the site a new access and parking area will be constructed.

Both HDLP Policy E8 and C14 identify that new development should not have a significant adverse effect on the character, appearance or general amenity of the area. This is reflected within structure plan policy E2.

The proposed new buildings are sited within the existing historical farmyard associated with the complex. It is noted that the applicants also intends to utilise existing brick built buildings that do not have the benefit of planning consent (refused consent on the grounds of 'the design and construction of the building as erected is unrepresentative of agricultural development and in this open location it appears as an alien, incongruous feature detrimental to the visual amenity of the area...'). The buildings will however be adapted for the new use and will be clad in timber to reduce their rather stark appearance. In the context of the proposed use, the bulk of the combined building is more akin to the scale of local farms and is broken up by the massing of the different elements of the build and use of materials.

The Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (HDLCA) identifies the site and surrounding area as 'Marton Rolling Arable farmland'. Relevant issues raised by the HDLCA regarding the landscape include;

- * Pressure for development due to the proximity of the A1 and the perceived capacity to accommodate development.
- * Lack of tree cover making the area sensitive to development.
- * Scattered farmsteads are characteristic, but many have increased in size to the point of becoming discordant within the landscape.
- * The need to resist large scale development due to the openness of the area.
- * Promote woodland and tree planting linked to farmsteads, as well as individual trees, hedgerows and boundaries around farmsteads.

The proposed scheme in its revised form and within the currently developed farm area is considered to be at the limit of acceptability within the surrounding landscape, provided that appropriate landscape mitigation works are carried out in order to satisfy policies A1, HD20 and C15. In this respect the applicant has included earth mounding, woodland and tree planting and new hedgerow planting which would comply with HDLP Policy C2 by reinforcing landscape elements. The comments of the landscape officer are however awaited on the latest revised landscaping scheme.

In consideration of the impact of the development, it should however be noted that this is based on the current proposal alone, the applicant has indicated that in order to stock the farm, additional buildings would be required. No details of such structures form part of the application before Members.

In terms of the residential extension, the scheme is large and extends the property beyond the previously approved scheme granted consent under 6.71.102.B.FUL. The scheme does however propose the addition of a farm office and additional accommodation within the roof. Such extension clearly has an impact upon the massing of the dwelling and would in the opinion of your officer clearly result in an overly large projecting rear extension. Such extension would adversely effect the character of the original building. The scheme is therefore contrary to HDLP H15 and HD20. Regard does however have to be taken in respect of the context of the extension. In this respect the scale of the structure would be

mitigated against the backdrop of the meat cutting plant and existing farm building to the north of the farmhouse, which acts as a screen to the development. Given the site circumstances the impact of the scheme is lessened by the proposed development of the complex.

3. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY - The site is located within an isolated location in the open countryside and beyond the development limits/built up confines of nearest settlements (Marton-cum-Grafton and Arkendale). The nearest residential properties to the site are Holly Bank Farm and Hollins Farm located approximately 550metres to the south and north west of the site respectively (both of which are also situated in isolation).

Clearly, in this instance, there are no immediate neighbours abutting the site. The scheme has however attracted opposition from residents living in the area regarding the impact of the scheme upon the residential environment .Of particular concern are issues of light and noise pollution.

It is noted that the scheme incorporates a number of high-level louvres (mainly on the meat cutting and packing plant). Clearly such features have the potential for light breakout and concern would be expressed if the site were operating on a permanent 24-hour basis. No details of the proposed external lighting details have however been submitted as part of the scheme. Whilst any source of external lighting has the potential to add to existing levels of light pollution, measures can be taken to mitigate such impact i.e low level down lighters, bollard lighting etc. It is considered that should members be minded to approve the scheme a condition should be imposed to secure details of a lighting scheme prior to the commencement of the development.

In terms of noise pollution, ambient noise levels are dominated by road traffic on the adjacent A1(M) and A168. Following consultation with the Environmental Health officer it is considered that conditions to secure sound attenuation measures could be imposed to mitigate against impact upon any noise sensitive premises.

4. HIGHWAY SAFETY - The applicants propose to close the existing southern access and construct a new access to the meat cutting and packaging plant. The northern access would be retained in situ.

It is stated that the estimated daily commercial traffic movements to and from the site would be six together with employee movement. The scheme provides for a vehicular car park consisting of 13 spaces and a commercial vehicle yard accessed from the new southern access.

The Highway Authority have been consulted and have no objection to the development subject to the imposition of conditions.

5. POLLUTION PREVENTION - The applicants have stated that in terms of trade effluent /waste that liquid waste from the manufacturing process would be stored in tanks and removed weekly with solid waste stored in lidded containers and removed daily. The Environment Agency has been consulted and has no objection to the scheme subject to the imposition of conditions.

English Nature expressed concern that the development may impact upon the Marton Carr

Site of Importance for Nature conservation (SINC). Such sites are protected from development that may have an adverse impact under HDLP Policy NC3. Following the receipt of further information supplied by the applicant in relation to the provision of a soakaway system with the existence of a petrol interceptor, English Nature have no objection to the development (in terms of pollution control).

6. WILDLIFE - As the scheme proposes the demolition of existing farm buildings within the site, both English Nature and the Heritage Section of North Yorkshire County Council have identified that the structures are of a type and in a location which may well provide important roosting sites for bats and nesting sites for birds such as the barn owl. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides special protection for all species of bat and for the barn owl. Bats are further protected under regulation 3991) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994

In view of the above the applicant has been requested (in conjunction with a Bat Group) to assess whether bats are present at the site prior to assessment whether a full bat survey would be required. At the time of writing this report your officer is awaiting the outcome of such an assessment.

CONCLUSION - The process of killing seasonal poultry and game reared at the farm is considered to represent farm diversification adding value to existing produce. Such activity would be limited to approximately 10 weeks of the year (mainly at Christmas and Easter). The killing and preparation of poultry is both logical and sustainable, limiting the need for the transportation of live birds and keeping the economic benefit of the activities on the farm itself.

The process of red meat cutting , processing and packing is less clear cut in terms of meeting the provisions of HDLP policies E8 and C14. Of particular concern are the scale of activity that is being proposed and the ability of the applicant to meet the stocking demands of the facility to justify the development as farm diversification. Failure to meet such a requirement ensures that the development should be considered as an industrial activity that is situated in an open countryside location for which there is no operational requirement or need (other than the applicants own preference).

The scheme was originally submitted on the basis that 15 to 20 % of animals to be processed would be reared and or finished at Rougham with the large majority of the rest brought in from farms within 15 miles or less of Rougham. Such activity would not in the opinion of your officer represent diversification of the existing activity at the site but the establishment of an industrial unit.

The applicant has however provided further information to state that the plant would be a low throughput plant producing less than 4.5 tonnes per week with the capacity of the plant dictated by the size of the chillers. On this basis the applicants state that the facility would operate with an annual throughput of:

Cattle 144 head
Pigs 600 head
Sheep 450 head
Poultry 2000/2500

This equates to a weekly throughput of approx 2.88 cattle, 12 pigs and 9 sheep with poultry processed on a time separation basis (to meet hygiene regulations) and to meet seasonal markets.

Figures supplied by the applicant indicate that the initial figure of 15-20 % provision has been derived from figures produced at Rougham during the past 12 months. It is the applicants intention to increase the throughput of animals reared and/or finished at Rougham and achieve organic status (in the case of cattle and sheep this would be by increases in the herd and flock sizes respectively). The increase in pig numbers would be achieved as a consequence of the retirement of an existing supplier who previously bred and finished pigs for the applicant. A new supplier will breed pigs to be finished at the Rougham site.

Not all of the animals spend all their lives at Rougham as the applicant also works in conjunction with Swillington Organic Farm. The stocking rates are as follows and are based to Soil Association Standards which means that stocking rates are lower than for non-organic farms. Projected figures for animals to be finished at Rougham are 100 cattle (kept for age 12 months to 24months) at a stocking rate of 3.8 per hectare, 400 lambs at 140 per hectare. Pigs will be brought to the farm at 12 weeks and slaughtered at 24/26 weeks. Poultry will be reared at the farm. Both pigs and poultry will be housed in buildings at the farm.

It is stated that the recent history at the farm (the applicant sought consent for an abattoir and meat packing facility) has reduced the recent stocking rate at the farm and historically figures have been greater than that produced over the last 12 months.

By its very definition farm diversification dictates activity outside that of agriculture and that the current proposal (i.e food processing) at an appropriate, scale involving the applicants own produce could be construed to fall within both E8 and C14. In this instance concern is expressed regarding the ability of the applicant to produce the livestock to meet the requirement of the facility. The throughput is based upon projected figures of animals, with the exception of poultry, that would be finished at the site. The farm itself extends to some 29 hectares. The scheme in terms of landscape impact is at the limit of acceptability and based upon information supplied by the applicant will require further (albeit agricultural) buildings to house the projected livestock.

In the absence of certainty as to the applicants existing and proposed farming enterprise the proposal cannot be considered to represent farm diversification but rather the establishment of an industrial activity in the open countryside. No justification has been forwarded for the need for the facility to be located at the farm rather than an industrial site, other than to reduce traffic movements of poultry and the ability to add value to the applicants' own produce. Animals will be reared elsewhere and finished at the farm prior to slaughter elsewhere. The proposed development is however based upon projected stocking levels at the farm and it is on this basis that the scheme fails to meet C14.

HDLP Policy E8 is permissive to small-scale proposals requiring a countryside location for operational reasons. The building, although of agricultural scale cannot be considered as small scale. The scheme has a total floor area of approx 989 square metres. Whilst it may be beneficial to the applicant to site the facility upon the farm, there is no operational requirement for it to do so. On this basis the scheme fails to meet the provisions of E8.

In terms of the remaining issues considered as part of E8, it is accepted that the development is well related to the classified road and on the basis of the figures supplied by the applicant would not generate significant volumes of traffic.

The proposal, by reason of its general design and siting would not have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the locality, subject to appropriate screening and landscape detailing. The scheme is however at the limit of acceptability within the landscape, notwithstanding any further requirement for building.

It is recognised that PPS7 identifies that local planning authorities are encouraged to facilitate healthy and diverse economic activity in rural areas, including the promotion of diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors providing quality products that public wants. The PPS identifies that local planning authorities should be supportive of well conceived farm diversification schemes for business purposes that contribute to sustainable objectives and help sustain the agricultural enterprise and are consistent in their scale with their rural location. Such an approach should not it is identified result in excessive expansion and encroachment into the countryside. The PPS does however balance such development against the need for such sites to be accessible in accordance with PPG13 with a priority given to previously developed sites. New build development in the open countryside away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; with the overall aim to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty.

On the basis of the submitted scheme, the development in the opinion of your officer falls outside the definition of farm diversification and is more akin to a new industrial development in the countryside. Concern is expressed that the development is based on projected figures to be produced and finished at the farm, which may in itself require the further provision of buildings within the landscape. In view of the scale of the development and in the absence of any operational need to site the business in this location the scheme fails to meet the provisions of Policy E8 and refusal of the application is recommended.

CASE OFFICER: Mr A Hough

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be REFUSED. Reason(s) for refusal:-

- 1 The proposed development as a consequence of its size and scale would not represent farm diversification under the provision of the Harrogate District Local Plan policies E8 and C14. The resulting industrial operation would in the absence of any proven operational requirement to be sited in the open countryside be contrary to the provisions of Harrogate District Local Plan Policy E8 and North Yorkshire County Structure Plan Policy E2.

