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Chief Planning Officer
Hambleton District Council
Civic Centre
Stone Cross
Northallerton
DL6 2UU

Chairman: Cllr Robert Wainwright

Contact: Paul Jackson

My Reference: 3.1

Your Reference: 07/03199/FUL

Date: 11 November 2007

Dear Sir

Construction of an agricultural building; North Moor Lane, Yearsley

I am responding on behalf of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee to your consultation regarding the above proposal.

This application involves the construction of a new farm building at Dale Plantation House.

I visited the application site on 31st October and would wish to make the following observations:

General

- The Joint Advisory Committee, in its 2004-2009 Management Plan, has re-iterated its support for the continuation of traditional agriculture and rural industries in the AONB. It is likely that, in order to thrive, businesses will need to develop their facilities and premises. Objective AG4 of the Management Plan suggests that the Committee should support applications for new buildings, "where these use high quality standards of design, careful siting and good landscaping measures".
- There has been extensive consultation and discussion prior to the lodging of this application, due to the presence nearby of the Scheduled Long Barrow. Although I have only entered the process at a relatively late stage, I have been involved in steering the location of the proposed building towards this location. Without the presence of the Long Barrow I would probably have preferred a location more closely associated with the existing yard area. The setting and context of the Long Barrow is however of paramount importance here and previous proposals would, in my opinion, have compromised its setting to an unacceptable extent.

Landscape

- The proposed building is approximately the same height as the conifer hedge to the north, which should ease its assimilation into the landscape. The dark green colour of the wall and roof panels should help to ensure that it will blend into the conifer hedge when viewed from the south.

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- I would make the following observations about the proposed landscaping/screening planting:
 - The proposed planting around the building itself will break-up the outline of the building when viewed from the south east.
 - The proposed clump of trees and shrubs to the west is imaginative and builds on the existing feature of the mature birch tree.
 - The view from the west will also be restricted by both the existing young roadside hedge and its proposed westwards extension, due for planting this winter. It is suggested that this hedge should be allowed to grow to a minimum height of 2m – this would help to screen the building, but without unduly restricting views in what is an open and ‘airy’ part of the AONB. Individual trees are included in the planting specification for this new hedge, which will be receiving grant assistance from the AONB Project Fund.
 - All the species chosen are appropriate to the location – I would not object if smaller planting stock was used, so as to aid establishment in what is likely to be quite an exposed location.
 - I would however like to see an additional clump of trees and shrubs provided at the north west corner of the application site, to further break up views from the Yearsley road. A clump approximately the same size as the one proposed for next to the existing birch tree would be appropriate.

Biodiversity

- Our records do not indicate any constraints on the application site, which is grassland recently converted from arable land.

Historic Environment

- As mentioned above, the location of the proposed building has been changed so as to prevent any impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument to the north. I am content that the location does not impact on the visual setting of the Long Barrow, but English Heritage may wish to make their own observations.

Recreation

- The new building will be visible from the footpath at High Farm to the south. However, it will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing conifer hedge and its outline will be broken-up by the screening planting.

In conclusion my Committee would not wish to object to this application. The building is located so as to minimise any further impact on the setting and integrity of the Long Barrow, whilst the use of dark coloured materials and screening planting will help to integrate it into the landscape.

Yours sincerely

PAUL JACKSON
AONB Officer
Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee