

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Application: **2016/0274/FUL**
Proposal: Construction of a three-bay barn, which is required for our developing sheep holding for the storage of fodder, equipment and lambing/severe weather protection of animals.
Location: Field south of Bennett's Lane, Binegar, BA3 4UG
Applicants: Mr Philip Blatchford
Agent: Mr Matthew Williams, Brimble, Lea & Partners, Gillingham, Dorset
Type: Full

The Council considered the application at its 1 March 2016 meeting and reached the following decision:

Binegar Parish Council will support the planning officer's decision

Comments

There are four points, however, to which the Parish Council wishes to draw attention:

DESIGN AND SITE

The Council notes the reduced length of the barn compared with withdrawn application 2015/2204/FUL. It notes, however, that the width and height are unchanged. The design is a barn frequently built for use as a livestock building, in this case, a sheep shed.

Responding to 2015/2204/FUL, the Council commented on the proposed site. The applicant defends this site by claiming that it is not in a "valued landscape" and the landscape is of "unremarkable quality". The applicant's direct financial interest in the barn must be borne in mind when judging these opinions.

The Council takes a different view on the quality of the landscape. Views from Bennett's Lane take in the *Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*. The site lies in an area judged aesthetically fit to include in a future extension of the AONB. Agricultural buildings in view sit comfortably within the landscape.

The proposed barn – concrete walled, Yorkshire boarded, roof ridge over 20 feet high – is a solid, highly visible structure. It will dominate rather than merge with the view.

The proposed site, beside a lane on the crest of a ridge, will make the building incompatible with the pattern of natural features in the landscape. The visual impact will be detrimental to the local landscape, contrary to policies DP1, DP4 and DP7.

USE

The covering letter to this application states that the flock is *Ryeland* sheep, a breed described in the letter as "susceptible to severe weather conditions" with covered space **required** "to minimise mortality rates, which can have a devastating impact on productivity".

On the Mendip Hills, it is usual to farm hardier breeds as the weather can be very severe. The applicant's holding is 230m (750 feet) above sea level while *Ryeland* is a lowland breed. *Ryeland* sheep will require a livestock building for much more of the winter than usual Mendip stock. In addition, the building is for 25 ewes to lamb.

The choice of breed makes the use of the barn much more a livestock building. Its use will be more frequent than occasional. Its use will be for prolonged periods in winters. The application states that the District "Council must take a precautionary approach". This is because planning law forbids the construction of a building for the accommodation of livestock within 400 metres of a "protected building", such as a house. The proposed barn is just 100 metres from *The Oaks*, the nearest dwelling. Not least, some parishioners have pointed out that noise will be an issue for such near neighbours. Several other dwellings are within 400 metres.

The Planning Authority, if it grants permission, must state categorically why it has allowed a livestock building so close to housing and so far inside the usual exclusion zone for livestock accommodation.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Council understands that the proposed location is over a Roman road that ran from Whitnell Corner to Midsomer Norton. Roman and Neolithic artefacts, housed at the University of Bristol, have been discovered close by. In light of the considerable interest of the sites and road, the Planning Authority should consider whether an archaeological survey should be required.

RISK AND MITIGATION

This is a barn that can be used as a livestock building. In this case, it would be a sheep shed. A sheep shed is suitable, amongst other things, for fattening sheep. The law prohibits such a use, however, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a "protected building".

If the Planning Authority approves this application, it must set out in detail how it will prevent the barn's use for prohibited purposes, either by the current owner or by a future owner, were the land sold.

Finally, if the Planning Authority approves this application, the Parish Council recommends that planting of an appropriate, evergreen screen of trees be a condition to protect the amenity of the neighbouring house.

The site of this application is formally in St Cuthbert Out Parish. However, the location is part of the community of Binegar and is but yards from the parish boundary.

For Binegar Parish Council
Richard Higgins
Chair

6 March 2016