

**Excerpt from 12 May 2018 Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**

**ITEM 8: SDNP/17/03717/FUL BLAKEHURST FARM AND MAGGOT FARM, BLAKEHURST LANE, WARNINGCAMP**

1092. The Case Officer presented the application, referred the Committee to the changes to the reasons for refusal detailed in the 10 May 2018 Update Sheet. A verbal update was given with regard to the page references in the Update Sheet.
1093. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Lee Scott spoke in support of the application as the agent for the application.
  - Nigel Draffan spoke in support of the application as the applicant.
  - Alex Lock spoke in support of the application as the tenant farmer of Blakehurst Farm.
1094. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC26/18), the public speakers' comments and requested clarification on the following:
- The impact of the windows and roof lights in the Threshing Barn on Dark Night Skies.
  - The number of dwellings required to make the application viable.
  - If the viability assessment had considered the ability for the scheme to contribute to affordable housing or solely for the provision of the agricultural barns.
  - The reasons for refusal regarding landscape and historic buildings.
  - Whether the current route of the footpath could remain should the application be approved.
  - If deferral was an option for this application, to allow further negotiation with the applicant to achieve an acceptable scheme.
1095. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- All roof lights and windows in the threshing barn were new elements and the rooflights would be covered with mesh to comply with Dark Night Skies.
  - The viability assessment suggested that the optimum number of dwellings was 7, which could provide an affordable housing contribution
  - The conversion element of the application had been proposed in order to enable the agricultural barns at Maggot Farm. The reason for refusal on the grounds of affordable housing had been removed based on the limited weight that could be given to emerging Local Plan policy. The viability assessment had considered matters such as the existing tenancy as a working farm and the substantial payment that would need to be made to terminate this.
  - The route of the footpath needed to be changed to accommodate the proposed extension and amenity areas provided on the southernmost barn.
  - The Conservation Officer advised that whilst the current farmstead buildings were not fit for purpose retention and sympathetic conversion was desirable. The current proposal did not preserve the character of the building. There was scope to further improve the design in order to preserve the buildings and retain their character.
  - The Landscape Officer clarified that the assessment should focus on the farmstead as a whole, rather than as individual buildings. The primary objection was around the loss of agricultural character along with design concerns and the impact of residential buildings on the historic narrative of the farmstead. The current nature of the farmstead was typical of the local landscape which would be lost with the proposed redevelopment.
  - A decision was required as significant and exhaustive discussions had taken place at all stages of the application. Discussions had now reached an impasse with regard to the issues and aspirations of viability.
1096. The Committee moved into the debate and commented:
- If the 1960's barns were demolished this would open up the farmstead and return it to a pre-1960's condition.
  - Changes were needed to the site to prevent it falling into disuse.
  - Investment such as this was needed to accommodate modern arable farming.
  - There was further opportunity to discuss the viability issues.

- The input of the Landscape and Heritage officers was critical to this application.
  - This application had a lack of sensitivity with the design, character and history of the farmstead and did not reflect the design potential and opportunity the site presented.
  - The design of the proposed agricultural building cluster was commended
  - There was a commitment by the applicant to retain the historic buildings.
  - Concern was expressed over refusing the application and the further degeneration of this site over an extended period of time.
  - The footpath was currently impassable so any change would be beneficial as would secure the footpath for future use.
  - There was still scope for further discussions to take place.
  - A viable scheme was required in order to ensure the continuation of farming on the area.
  - The addition of domestic gardens could give the area an urban feel.
  - The Director of Planning advised the Committee that the removal of the second reason for viability relating to affordable housing potentially altered the viability equation. Regardless of the viability there was still concern over the sub-division of the Threshing Barn into 4 units. It would be possible to still have positive discussions should the Committee be minded to refuse the application.
  - There was a motion to defer the application which was proposed and seconded for the following reasons; that there was an element of change of circumstance on viability and the potential further exploration of landscape and design impacts.
1097. The Director of Planning suggested that if deferred a three month time limit would be imposed. This was incorporated into the motion under debate.
1098. The Committee voted on the motion for deferral and came to a split decision. In line with internal guidance the Chair requested that the Committee discuss the proposal further. The following points were made:-
1099. It was commented that whilst there was desire for the project to succeed there was a need for the applicant to recognise that this was a development in the countryside and in the setting of a listed building which needed to be of a high standard and respect the landscape and historical background. This was currently lacking.
1100. The Director of Planning advised the committee that there was a need to sub-divide the elements of viability; whether it was viable to carry out works and get a return and whether there was enough return to support the farm buildings being proposed as part of the application.
1101. The Committee voted again on the motion for deferral and came to a split decision. The Chair of the Committee exercised his casting vote and the motion to defer was lost.
1102. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the Officer's recommendation. The Committee came to a split decision and the Chair of the Committee exercised his casting vote. The Officer's recommendation was carried.
1103. **RESOLVED:** That the application be refused for the reasons set out in the 10 May 2018 Update Sheet.