

<b>Parish:</b>	<b>Pentney</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Change of use from agricultural to holiday log cabins</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Little Abbey Farm Golden Gym Pentney Norfolk</b>	
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Mr Ben Howlett</b>	
<b>Case No:</b>	<b>19/00053/F (Full Application)</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Clare Harpham</b>	<b>Date for Determination:</b> <b>9 May 2019</b> <b>Extension of Time Expiry Date:</b> <b>5 August 2019</b>

**Reason for Referral to Planning Committee** – The Parish Councils views are contrary to the officer recommendation

**Neighbourhood Plan:** No

**Case Summary**

The application is for the change of use of agricultural land immediately adjacent to a working farm with associated yard and an existing bed and breakfast business to provide two holiday 'log cabins' which would effectively constitute two additional bedrooms with ensuite for the existing bed and breakfast business. It is considered that the proposal complies with national and local development plans policies, as it promotes tourism and rural diversification and does not harm the landscape.

**Key Issues**

- Principle of Development
- Visual Impact
- Impact upon neighbour amenity
- Highways Issues
- Other material considerations
- Crime and Disorder

**Recommendation**

**APPROVE**

**THE APPLICATION**

The application is located within an existing agricultural field to the south of the applicant's dwelling (farmhouse) and to the south-east of the existing farm buildings. The access track is to the north of the farmhouse with parking made available within the farmyard to the rear of

the farmhouse. The site is currently bound to the western side by a drainage ditch and native hedging and to the north by an existing pond. To the west the site currently has post and wire to separate this land from the adjacent farmland which is being used to keep animals.

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of two 'log cabins' which would be for holiday use in conjunction with the farms existing Bed and Breakfast.

## **SUPPORTING CASE**

The main house of Little Abbey Farm was built in 1714 with stone from Pentney Abbey when it was dissolved. The hundred acre farm has paddocks, a pond and marked farm trails for a rustic walk. Children are particularly welcome and there is plenty for them to do at Little Abbey Farm, including motorized tractors, and lots of animals for them to see.

Tourism is incredibly important to West Norfolk. The 'staycation' is increasing year on year. The figures compare well with overall growth in England – the 12.1% increase in the number of overnight trips to Norfolk is against a background of a 3% increase in the same statistic across England as a whole. King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council continues to pursue and support projects backing the tourism industry through their Destination Management Plan.

The present bed and breakfast accommodation at Little Abbey Farm is practically at full occupancy from Feb/Mar through to October. Bookings are already being taken for next year. This is the reason why the decision has been made to expand the available accommodation. The proposed additional accommodation would also result in additional employment of two local people. The main facilities already exist at the farm. The log cabins provide sleeping accommodation only.

Little Abbey Farm is situated between two very successful wedding venues. Furthermore, due to the success of these venues they too are increasing their available wedding days to include weekdays, which will in turn lead to more bookings for Little Abbey Farm. Little Abbey Farm also provides an important educational function giving people an insight into a fully working farm. People love the idea of staying and being involved with a traditional working farm.

The breakfasts provided at the Farm use all local produce which provides valuable income to the local economy, along with recommending other local businesses such as pubs and restaurants. The breakfasts receive hundreds of excellent reviews.

"It was wonderful to stay on an authentic English farm. We were very excited to see sheep right outside our window in the evening! Diane was very welcoming and recommended dinner at the Carpenters Arms which was probably only a 5 minute drive from the farm. After a peaceful night's sleep, we ate a delicious breakfast (the best on our two week trip throughout the UK!)." Trip Advisor May 2019.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council are investing in maintaining, improving and expanding tourist facilities. They are striving to increase the facilities for visitors to enjoy and encourage them to stay longer and increasing all year round trade, which will offer greater employment opportunities in the area.

Little Abbey Farm is a success. It is that success that drives the need for sympathetically designed additional overnight accommodation. The demand is there and is an extension of a well-established business. We believe this is congruent with current planning policies.

The fact that the increase in overnight trips is four times the growth compared to England as a whole reflects Norfolk's unique visitor offering such as Blue Flag beaches, nature and a wide choice of places to stay and things to do.

The trend of holidaying at home, enjoyment of natural beauty as well as authentic experiences, has increasingly attracted people to Norfolk all year-round. Little Abbey Farm fits the bill.

## PLANNING HISTORY

17/02120/F: Application Permitted: 08/01/18 - Retention of existing cattle shed & proposed extension. - Little Abbey Farm Golden Gym Pentney

17/01756/AG: Application Refused: 12/10/17 - Agricultural Prior Notification: Steel framed cattle shed - Little Abbey Farm Golden Gym Pentney

09/00976/F: Application Permitted: 13/08/09 - Single storey extension to existing dwelling - Little Abbey Farm Golden Gym Pentney

2/91/0755/CU: Application Permitted: 19/01/94 - Conversion of redundant farm buildings into 5 units of residential holiday accommodation - Little Abbey Farm Golden Gym Pentney

## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

**Parish Council: OBJECTION** The proposal will increase traffic flow on a road already heavily used and with limited width. There are concerns at the already well provided holiday accommodation in the village becoming excessive.

**Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION** It is my understanding from you that the application would be limited to the two units, which would generate only light levels of traffic. On that basis I would not be against the principle of the application.

**Community Safety & Neighbourhood Nuisance: NO OBJECTION** Following the receipt of additional information I consider that we have no grounds to object subject to conditions being imposed relating to foul and surface water drainage and the use in conjunction with Little Abbey Farm.

**Environmental Health & Housing - Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION** subject to condition.

The application includes a pre-determination questionnaire which shows the current land use to be grazing for livestock such as pigs and chickens. The land appears to consist of rough grassland and may contain some waste materials in the near surface soils. The questionnaire states that it is 'proposed to remove top 200mm of existing topsoil and replace with 200mm topsoil and seed for grass'. The NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking into account ground conditions and any risks arising from contamination. This includes risks arising from former activities and any proposals for mitigation. Further site investigation is not considered necessary as the site can be made suitable for the proposed use with the proposed mitigation measure. Therefore a condition is required to ensure that the mitigation takes place.

**Natural England: NO COMMENT** refer to standing advice.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

No third party representations received.

## **LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES**

**CS06** - Development in Rural Areas

**CS08** - Sustainable Development

**CS10** - The Economy

**CS11** - Transport

**CS12** - Environmental Assets

## **SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016**

**DM2** – Development Boundaries

**DM11** – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

**DM15** – Environment, Design and Amenity

**DM17** - Parking Provision in New Development

## **NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main issues to consider when determining this application are as follows:

Principle of Development  
Visual Impact  
Impact upon neighbour amenity  
Highways Issues  
Other material considerations  
Crime and Disorder

## **Principle of Development**

The application site is within the parish of Pentney which is classed as a 'small village and hamlet' within the settlement hierarchy established by Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2011 and is therefore within the countryside as there is no development boundary.

The application site is adjacent to the existing farmhouse 'Little Abbey Farm' which is a working farm which has an established bed and breakfast business. This application effectively seeks to add two additional 'rooms' which would both have an en-suite but rely upon the services of the bed and breakfast for management, cleaning of rooms, providing meals etc. Consequently the application seeks provide two 'cabins' in order to expand the existing business.

The NPPF is supportive of building a strong and competitive economy and this includes (para 83) supporting a prosperous rural economy which includes agricultural diversification and sustainable rural tourism developments which respect the character of the countryside. This is reiterated within Policy DM2 'development boundaries' of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) 2016 which states that new development will be restricted in areas outside the development boundary and will be limited to those identified as suitable in rural areas by other policies within the local plan which include farm diversification and tourism facilities.

Policy CS06 of the Core Strategy 2011 is supportive of farm diversification schemes for business purposes provided it helps to sustain the agricultural enterprise, is consistent in scale with its rural location, is beneficial to the local economy and does not adversely affect the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity. The agricultural business has already diversified into providing bed and breakfast and this application seeks to expand this.

Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2011 states that smaller scale tourism opportunities will be supported in rural areas to sustain the rural economy, provided they are in sustainable locations and are not detrimental to the natural environment. New accommodation should be located in or adjacent to villages, should be of a high standard of design, not detrimental to the landscape and mechanisms will be put in place to retain the tourism related use. This is reiterated within Policy DM11 'Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites' of the SADMP 2016 which states that proposals for extensions to, or the intensification of existing holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted unless supported by a business plan, demonstrates a high standard of design / screening, can be safely accessed and is in accordance with policies on flood risk. Conditions will also be placed on any accommodation to ensure that the occupation is restricted accordingly.

Consequently the proposal is considered acceptable in principle.

## **Visual Impact**

The proposed 'log cabins' are small in scale and of an interesting octagonal design incorporating a bedroom and en-suite (measure 4.9m in height and have an octagonal floor area of 5m x 5m, with an overhanging roof) with timber cladding and timber shingles on the roof. They would be viewed from across the fields in conjunction with the existing farm and associated buildings but it is also proposed to condition landscaping along the eastern side of the application site (agreed by the agent).

Overall it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding countryside.

## **Impact upon neighbour amenity**

There are no immediate neighbours to the proposal. The closest neighbours are located to the north of the vehicular access on Golden Gym approximately 150m from the proposed cabins. It is therefore considered that the proposal would have no material impact upon neighbour amenity.

## **Highways Issues**

The application site is accessed via Golden Gym and Low Road which are narrow and the Parish Council object on this basis, however the proposal is not considered to generate a significant level of traffic and there are no objections to the proposal from the Highways Officer. The proposal is for two 'log cabins' which constitute operational development and should the applicant wish to increase the number of log cabins on site further planning permission would be required.

## **Other material considerations**

The proposal is within flood zone 1 of the SFRA 2018 and therefore no Flood Risk Assessment is required.

The agent has agreed to pre-commencement conditions relating to surface and foul drainage arrangements as whilst it is proposed to use a package treatment plant full details are not yet known.

A pre-commencement condition relating to implementing the topsoil replacement scheme submitted within the Pre-determination questionnaire has also been agreed with the agent.

Whilst the proposal is within a buffer zone of the River Nar SSSI (Grassland Habitat – floodplain grazing marsh) it is not considered that the proposal would adversely impact upon the SSSI.

## **Crime and Disorder**

No issues relating to crime and disorder have are expected to arise due to this application.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed holiday 'cabins' would constitute an expansion of an existing bed and breakfast facility which forms part of the diversification of an existing agricultural business. The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside, nor neighbour amenity and can be conditioned for holiday use only in conjunction with the existing business. Overall the proposal is considered to comply with the principles of the NPPF 2018, Policies CS06 and CS10 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM11 of the SADMP 2016 and as such it is recommended that Members approve the application.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE** subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Planning Committee  
29 July 2019

- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans GL7238/001RevB received by the Local Planning Authority on 1st July 2019.
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: No development shall commence until full details of the foul and surface water drainage arrangements for the site, including percolation test results, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall be constructed as approved before any part of the development hereby permitted is brought into use.
- 3 Reason: To ensure that there is a satisfactory means of drainage in accordance with the NPPF.

This needs to be a pre-commencement condition as drainage is a fundamental issue that needs to be planned for and agreed at the start of the development.

- 4 Condition: The topsoil removal and replacement scheme set out in Pre Determination Questionnaire dated 07/03/2019 must be carried out prior to the commencement of groundworks, other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the works including chemical analysis of imported topsoil.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the mitigation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

- 4 Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the need to ensure that contamination is fully dealt with at the outset of development.
- 5 Condition: Prior to the first use or occupation of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include finished levels or contours and any hard surface materials. The soft landscape works shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers and densities where appropriate and should ensure that adequate planting is in place along the eastern boundary of site in order to provide screening of the development hereby approved.
- 5 Reason: To ensure that the development is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 6 Condition: All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with

the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.

- 6 Reason: To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.
- 7 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall remain in the ownership / control of the occupier of the associated dwelling known as Little Abbey Farm, Golden Gym, Pentney, and shall at no time become a separate commercial site.
- 7 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the buildings are not used for unrelated purposes as that would require further consideration.
- 8 Condition: The accommodation hereby approved shall be occupied for holiday purposes only and shall be made available for rent or as commercial holiday lets;  
The accommodation shall be for short stay accommodation only (no more than 28 days per single let) and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence;  
and  
The owners / operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings / occupation and shall make this available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.
- 8 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the building is not used for unrelated purposes that would be incompatible with the provisions of the NPPF.