



Northumberland County Council

Virtual Castle Morpeth Local Area Council Committee Meeting 12th October 2020

ADDENDUM REPORT

Application No: 19/03789/FUL

Proposal:

Change of use of existing agricultural buildings and land to residential including conversion to 5 dwellings (as amended 29.01.2020) including minor external modifications.

Site Address: Land West Of Field House, Hepscott, Northumberland.

Applicant:

Mr & Mrs J Sutherland and V Baring
C / O George F White

Agent:

Miss Hannah Wafer
4-6 Market Street, Alnwick, NE66 1TL

RECOMMENDATION:

That this application be GRANTED permission subject to a s106 agreement in relation to a contribution to the Coastal Mitigation scheme.

1. Introduction

1.1 This addendum should be read in conjunction with the Committee Report and recommends imposing additional conditions and an informative based on the receipt of late representations and consultee responses.

2. Appraisal and late representations

2.1 Hepscott Parish Council submitted further representations on 6th October 2020 to the agent and the Planning Department reaffirming their concerns with the stability of the access Bridge on the private road leading to the application site. The accompanying photos are within appendix 1 of this addendum and their comments are as follows:

“Hepscott Parish Council 12 months ago expressed great concern about the bridge on the track to Field House Farm. The bridge is in disrepair (see photos) and urgently needs a survey to determine its safe load. It crosses the Hepscott Burn only 100 metres downstream from properties in the village that were badly affected by the floods in 2008 and 2012. If the bridge is further damaged by heavy construction vehicles, collapses and dams the stream it will flood susceptible parts of the village, apart from being a major safety hazard to drivers.

We appreciate that you have put a 10m length limit on vehicles in your Construction Method Statement but this is inadequate. There are no limits on Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) or the number of vehicle axles. A 3-axle rigid (like the quoted refuse vehicle) can legally have a GVW of up to 26 tonnes, a 4-axle rigid, favoured by construction companies for removing spoil and rubble, up to 32 tonnes. Both could be within 10m length. You say that by restricting vehicles to 10m in length they “will be likely to be lesser in weight than the refuse vehicle” and the bridge “should not be vastly impacted during the construction phase.” You will appreciate that ‘likely’ and ‘should not be vastly impacted’ sound not just vague and unlikely but negligent.

We attach photos of the bridge (taken 5/10/20) to show some areas of disrepair. Photo 1 shows the damaged parapet and ‘temporary’ fence. Photo 2 shows the damaged parapet and poor condition of the masonry pointing. Photo 3 shows the dilapidated state of the masonry. Photo 4 shows a crack above the arch, damaged parapet, eroded foundations, walls don’t look vertical. Photo 5 shows the eroded foundations. Photo 6 shows eroded foundations on the other bank.

Will you therefore please:

a) state when the bridge was last properly inspected, surveyed and passed safe, and for what weight limit;

b) if you are unable to state this, please commit to ensure that the bridge is professionally surveyed and certified to take a certain maximum load, before construction begins. This weight limit should be clearly displayed at the bridge;

c) apply vehicle restrictions not only by length but by GVW and state that vehicles should be rigid and not exceed three axles, to prevent higher gross weights. The GVW should be as certified as safe in the survey.

We ask that you address these points urgently and respond promptly to prevent the need for us to take this to the Planning Committee meeting on Monday 12 October”

2.2 It was confirmed by the agent that no survey had been conducted but an appropriate assessment will be undertaken for construction vehicles including size and weight.

2.3 Based on the additional information it was considered necessary to re-consult the relevant consultees which included the Area Countryside Officer and The Local Lead Flood Authority in relation to the existing bridge.

2.4 The Area Countryside Officer initially responded to the application with no objections but has now confirmed concerns with the condition of the bridge as this is a Public Right of Way. In summary, the comments are as follows:

“I would say the bridge is deteriorating, the parapet walls have been lost, probably due to being hit by large vehicles, and it would be possible to fall from the structure. We attempted to erect safety fencing along each side of the bridge several years ago, but they were knocked over by large vehicles (probably tractors with trailers or combine harvesters) each time they were replaced.

There is certainly public interest here, in that it carries a public right of way, and though NCC has no maintenance responsibility we do have an interest in the safety of those legitimately using the public right of way on foot across it, and would not want to see the condition of the bridge to deteriorate any further.

If there is any chance that a condition could be attached to this application that a structural survey was to be carried out and any remedial works were carried out this would be a real bonus for us”.

2.5 The LLFA had no further comments other than the bridge may require future works which are likely to require Land Drainage Consent. An informative has been added to the recommendation should permission be granted.

2.6 In a separate issue to the bridge but related to access and highway safety, Northumberland Fire and Safety Rescue were consulted for comments on the existing access to the application site, in particular to manoeuvring an emergency vehicle through parked cars on Fieldhouse Lane and Park Side. There were no objections received and their comments are as follows:

We would only get a notification/consultation for comments if the planning application was of a nature that affected fire service access to the buildings within the area of the application or if it was a commercial premises application. Consultation would be restricted to the site and not any access road, unless we were requested by any party who identified concerns with regards to vehicle access. Parked cars is an issues across the county and would not result in an objection from us, we have powers to move such vehicles in the event of an emergency situation, access issues would surround road widths, appliances not having to reverse over a certain distance, etc.

2.7 The late representations from Hepscoth Parish Council and subsequent comments from the Area Countryside Officer identifying concerns with the condition of the bridge and the Public right of Way have been taken into consideration. It must be ensured that the development site has a safe and suitable access for construction traffic with heavy vehicles and for the existing and future occupants. As such this is a material planning consideration and the following conditions are recommended to secure a structural survey and any subsequent improvements works:

21. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a structural survey has been undertaken to the vehicle bridge on ‘Hepscoth Footpath 7’ by a competent and qualified consultant and then shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This should include confirmation of the Gross Vehicle Weight that the bridge can withstand.

Reason: To ensure safe access to the application site in accordance with the NPPF.

22.If the structural survey in condition 21 identifies and recommends necessary structural improvement works to the bridge, a methodology for these works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The improvement works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved methodology thereafter.

Reason: To ensure safe access to the application site in accordance with the NPPF.

23.The development shall not commence until the applicant has completed the structural works and a completion report shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the approved methodology in condition 22.

Reason: To ensure safe access to the application site in accordance with the NPPF.

Additional informative:

Any works to the watercourse within the rivers channel may require the prior written consent of Northumberland County Council, under the Land Drainage Act (1991). Please contact the FCERM team (fcerm@northumberland.gov.uk) for further information

3. Updates

The following amendments are required on the Committee Report:

- Para 7.6 refers to the NPPF July 2018 version - this should be amended to state the current June 2019 version
- Para 7.33 refers to the coastal mitigation contribution. The total contribution is £3,075 which is calculated as £615 (per dwelling) x 5 units.

Author and Contact Details

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Date of Report: 08.10.2020

Background Papers: Planning application file(s)

Appendix 1- Parish Council Photographs

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