

Dunchideock Parish Council
Item 10d, Meeting 10th March 2020

Application Ref: 20/00265/FUL
Location: Land near Penhill Cross, Dunchideock
Proposal: Demolition of agricultural building and erection of two dwellings

Prior Approval was granted in February 2019 for a scheme on this site (18/02553/NPA) which covered conversion of an existing semi-derelict wood-clad barn approximately 7m in height, into two single-storey dwellings.

The new application is for two detached two-storey houses; the scheme would have the same access point as before, but there would be a different design and layout. The overall built footprint would be slightly smaller than the original, but the ridge height of the two new dwellings would be higher, at around 9m. The proposed development would be to 'Passivhaus' standards, with measures for energy conservation including air source heat pumps, photovoltaic roof slates, low energy LED lighting and smart metering. We welcome this approach, as well as proposals for biodiversity enhancement (including green roofs with wildflower planting, integral and tree-mounted bat and bird boxes, and a wildlife pond).

This type of planning application has substantial high level case law underpinning it and there is no local or national policy to support a future expansion; therefore we have no objection on policy grounds. However, whilst we consider the proposal broadly well-designed and in keeping with local commitments in respect of energy use / biodiversity, two areas of concern were raised at the PC meeting on the 10th March:

- a) The ridge line of the new development would be around 2m higher than the previous scheme. It may be that the reason for this is because of a need to increase the pitch angle to maximise efficiency of the proposed solar PV slates; if not, then ideally the ridge height should be reduced to something more in keeping with the already approved scheme.
- b) Particular concern was raised about the potential for a development here to result in light pollution. Light spill is likely to be especially visible from ground floor windows on the southern and western sides, since landscape proposals are for 'Ha Ha'-type boundaries rather than screening walls on these two sides. For reasons of lighting control, therefore, walls would be preferable along both sides.

As a matter of good practice, all external lighting should be of the low level type wherever possible, and appropriate lamp technology (such as use of cowls and back-shields) should be adopted to minimise as far as possible upward and outward lighting spill.

We note that the 2020 Biodiversity report identifies a requirement for careful control of artificial lighting post-development and it recommends that this (as well as other biodiversity mitigation measures) are set out in a detailed 'Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (EMES)'. We recommend that this document is conditioned and formally approved by the local authority prior to construction commencing.

Cllr Andrew McCarthy

