

North York Moors National Park Authority

Ryedale District Parish: Ebberston	App Num. NYM/2011/0038/FL
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Proposal: **Erection of 2 no. log cabins for holiday use and associated access road**

Location: **Ebberston Common Farm, Langdale End**

Applicant: **Mark Hammond, Ebberston Common Farm, Langdale End, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO13 OLW**

Agent: **Ian Pick Associates Ltd, Llewellyn House, Middle Street, Kilham, Driffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 4RL**

Date for Decision: 24 March 2011

Grid Ref: SE 489951 489397

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Refusal for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would conflict with the provisions of Development Policy 16 of the NYM Local Development Framework as the log cabins would be located within a sparse and modest woodland and would be visible from a nearby public road and Public Right of Way, to the detriment of the landscape character of the area.
2. The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied from the details submitted that there is a satisfactory long term woodland management plan for the surrounding woodland in place that would secure the long term woodland screening. If permitted the proposal by reason of precedent would make it increasingly difficult for the Authority to resist other chalet proposals with only partial screening thus leading to an erosion of the landscape character of the National Park.

Consultations

Parish - Support. Good farm diversity; simple design; ideal location; no impact on neighbours.

Highways - No objections.

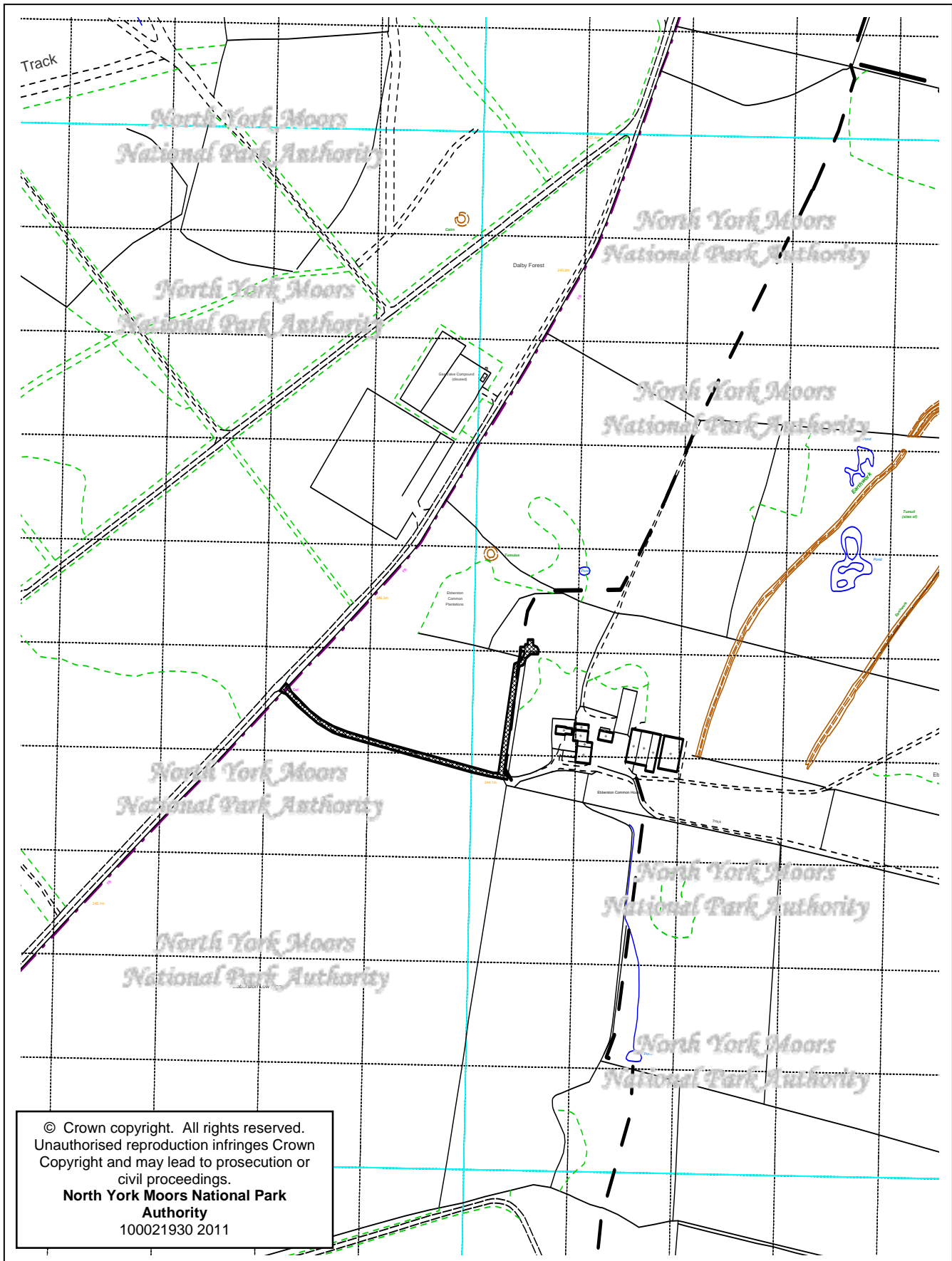
Environmental Health Officer -

Yorkshire Water - The proposed development is in an area not served by the public mains network. It is likely that the site has the benefit of a private supply. The proposal is in an area not served by the public sewerage system, the application should be referred to the Environment Agency and the Environmental Health Officer for comments on private treatment facilities.

Ramblers Association - Object. Object on the grounds that it interferes with the public path: it appears that the proposed cabins would be sited on or very close to the Public Right of Way which is not shown on the location plan.

Forest Enterprise -

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North York Moors National Park Authority
 The Old Vicarage
 Bondgate
 Helmsley
 York
 YO62 5BP
 Tel: 01439 770657

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Scale: 1:5000 



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Background

Ebberston Common Farm occupies a relatively isolated site near Langdale End and is accessed via a track leading from the Dalby Forest Drive. The site comprises the farmhouse with closely related agricultural buildings and is set in a flat and open plateau landscape on the fringe of Dalby Forest. To the immediate north of the site is a belt of mature coniferous woodland, beyond this is open and flat pasture land. To the south of the site is open arable land.

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 no. log cabins for holiday use together with the formation of a new access road. The cabins take the form of simple half log timber cabins under a roof of bitumen shingle tiles. The applicant proposes to set the cabins on a stone plinth of approximately 450mm high. The cabins are identical in design and layout, measuring 7.1 metres by 5.9 metres, 3 metres to eaves and ridge height of 5.5 metres. At ground floor the cabins provide an open plan kitchen/living area, one bedroom and a bathroom with an additional mezzanine/gallery bedroom provided above. The fenestration detailing is fairly simple with a door and window proposed for the front elevation, two windows at the rear, two windows in one gable and a single window proposed for the remaining gable. 2 no. rooflights are proposed (one on each roofslope) to serve the gallery bedroom.

The cabins would be sited in a modest block of coniferous woodland to the north west of the main farmhouse and buildings. Due to the sparse nature of the woodland, minimal felling would be required to accommodate the cabins. A new access road (surfaced in crushed stone) is proposed leading from the farm access across a pasture field to the woodland, terminating in a parking and turning area within the woodland.

Following a telephone conversation with Officers with regard to the recommended reasons for refusal, the applicant's agent has submitted revised details in order to address some of the concerns. The amended plans show a revised location for the western most cabin in order to avoid obstruction of the footpath. In order to reduce the impact of the access road, the applicant's wish to amend the surface material to 'grasscrete' which is a rigid mesh which provides a stable surface to drive over whilst allowing grass to grow through. Finally, the applicant's agent has stated that:

The cabins would be well obscured by the existing woodland. However, the woodland is thin in places and views are available from the west. We therefore propose additional planting including two areas of understory planting and an area of new planting to the south of the woodland. The existing woodland provides immediate screening and the proposed additional planting will provide strengthening to the existing screen.

Main Issues

The main issues to consider with this proposal are whether the proposed cabins are proposed to be located within an area of established woodland or forest; the impact of the development on the landscape of this part of the National Park and the impact of the proposed development on the Public Rights of Way.

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Policy Context

The relevant NYM Local Development Framework policies are Development Policies are 13 and 16. Development Policy 13 seeks to support proposals for the diversification of existing agricultural businesses where the scheme will make use of existing buildings and the proposed scheme is compatible with the existing farm activity and is of a scale and nature which will not harm the character and appearance of the locality, and where the existing access arrangements are appropriate for the proposed use.

Development Policy 16 seeks to permit proposals for the provision of small scale new caravan, camping and chalet sites only where the site is located within an established area of woodland or forest; where the site is physically and functionally linked to an existing business and can be managed without the need for additional permanent residential accommodation; where the site is in close proximity to the road network and would not result in an increase in traffic that would be harmful to the area; the scale of development would not be out of character with the area and the proposals should be designed in such a way as to minimise the level of permanency so that buildings can be removed when they are no longer required.

Impact on Landscape

The site is on the fringe of Dalby Forest and this particular area is characterised by a very flat and open topography. This open landscape is however broken by blocks of sparse coniferous woodland and whilst there are number of mature trees forming woodland, they do not provide any substantial cover particularly at ground level where there are open views right through the woodland. Officers consider that the 'sparse' nature of the cover is not sufficient to provide adequate screening for the proposed cabins which is the key policy objective of Development Policy 16. The structures would be clearly visible in the wider landscape and due to their isolation from the farmhouse and related buildings; it is considered that such sporadic development would harm the character of this part of the National Park. In addition to the impact of the cabins, Officer's also consider that the creation of a new crushed stone access track from the existing farm access over an open pasture field to the woodland would be unduly prominent and therefore harm the quality of the landscape.

Impact on Public Right of Way

The Authority's Rights of Way Officer and the Ramblers Association have objected to the application on grounds of impact upon Public Rights of Way. The Authority's Public Rights of Way Officer has commented that the proposal has a direct impact on a public footpath and affects changes to vehicle access from a public highway. The proposed crushed stone access road is on the line of a public footpath so a fine, firm surface would be required for pedestrian use. The plans suggest that one of the cabins would also obstruct the public footpath but a detailed site survey would be required to confirm this. If however, the above matters could be addressed, the Public Rights of Way Officer has suggested that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact upon Public Rights of Way.

Access and Parking

As described above, the application proposes to create an independent and unsympathetic access track and parking area to serve the needs of the proposed development. Officers have concerns with regard to the position and design of the access track and parking area which is considered to adversely affect the unspoilt character of the area. Furthermore, this aspect of the proposal is considered to demonstrate that the proposal is not within close proximity to the road network and therefore contrary to the requirements of Development Policy 16.

Design and Materials

The proposed cabins are considered to be acceptable in terms of design and materials. The cabins take a simple form and are modest in scale. The proposed materials (stone, timber and shingle) are considered to be in keeping with building materials commonly found within the National Park and are timber and prefabricated rather than vernacular such that if the holiday letting use ceased the structures could be removed from the site.

Impact on Local Archaeological Features

The proposed development is located in an area rich in archaeological heritage and features which would require careful consideration and mitigation measures if the development were to go ahead. The Authority's Archaeologist has been consulted on the application and although has not submitted detailed comments, has confirmed that archaeological mitigation would be required.

The applicant does have other sites potentially capable of accommodating cabins with better screening however these are much closer/within areas of high archaeological resource value and so have not been pursued any further.

Assessment of Amended Plans

Whilst the revised position of the western most cabin and the revised surface material for the access road is welcomed by Officers; the matter of strengthening the woodland with additional planting is not considered to comply with Development Policy 16. Development Policy 16 states that the site should be located within an area of woodland or forest which is well established and will provide a setting and enable the development to be accommodated within the wider landscape. In addition to this Planning Policy Statement 7 advises that the Government expects most tourist accommodation requiring new buildings to be located in, or adjacent to, existing towns and villages and when considering development proposals for holiday chalet developments, planning authorities should ensure that new sites are not prominent in the landscape and that visual intrusion is minimized by effective, high quality screening. It is therefore considered that the proposed site does not comply with either local or national policy by reason of the fact additional planting would be required in order to support the development.

Material Considerations

National Parks are protected by law for future generations because of their natural beauty and for the opportunities they offer for recreation. They are designated under the provisions of The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, and have two statutory purposes:

1. To conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
2. To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of these special qualities.

Policies and decisions that could have an impact upon National Parks have to take these two purposes into consideration. If there is conflict between the two purposes, the first must take precedence. It is therefore considered that, due to the likely adverse impact upon the natural beauty of this part of the National Park which is popular with visitors, the proposal is in conflict with the first statutory purpose.

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Recommendation

It is not considered that the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape without resulting in an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of this quiet part of the National Park by reason of the visibility of the cabins and increase in sporadic development. The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that there is an adequate woodland management plan in place to protect and enhance the surrounding plantation which would secure the long term screening of the development. The proposal would therefore conflict with National Park purposes, and is not considered to comply with Development Policies 13 and 16 of the NYM Local Development Framework and as such, refusal is recommended.