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| Application Number: | 25/10806 Full Planning Permission |
| Site: | SPRINGBOURNE FARM, ROCKBOURNE SP6 3NS |
| Development: | Agricultural Pole Barn (Retrospective) |
| Applicant: | Mr & Mr Coles |
| Agent: | Bell Cornwell LLP |
| Target Date: | 03/12/2025 |
| Case Officer: | Vivienne Baxter |
| Officer Recommendation: | Refuse |
| Reason for Referral to Committee: | Parish Council no agreement to delegate reason for refusal |

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- 1) Principle of the development
- 2) Impact on the character and appearance of the National Landscape

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies at the edge of the village of Rockbourne and is located in the countryside and Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The site forms most of the small holding known as Springbourne Farm. It lies to the southeast of a public right of way/agricultural track to the north of the village from which it is separated by a mature hedge. The field within which it is situated is subdivided by post and wire fencing with a further public right of way passing through in a separate parcel of land to the southwest of the site.

To the north of the site are buildings previously within the applicant's ownership which have consent to be replaced with dwellings. There is also a mobile home lawfully sited adjacent to these buildings.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is retrospective and is for the retention of a pole barn which is open to the southeast elevation. Land has been partially levelled in order to create a level floor within the building and there are stone filled gabions to support the structure. An area of hard surfacing would be retained to the southwest of the building, closest to the access into the field.

The application follows a previous refusal in December 2024 and subsequent dismissed appeal in August 2025 for that proposal. The reason for refusal was:

'The holding is predominantly horse related (for the grazing of elderly horses) and the proposal is not therefore considered to constitute either a farm diversification or alterations to an established rural enterprise. As such it is not considered to be an acceptable form of development within the countryside. By reason of the separation between the proposed barn and existing structures on the site, the current proposal

is not contained within the existing complex of buildings at the holding and is considered to be intrusive in its location adversely affecting the rural character of the area and the sensitive setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. As such the proposal would conflict with policies ENV3, ENV4 and STR2 of the Local Plan Part 1 for the New Forest outside of the National Park, Policy DM22 of the Local Plan Part 2 for the New Forest outside of the National Park, saved CS21 of the Core Strategy for the New Forest outside of the National Park and the NPPF.'

The Inspector concluded that the presence of the building as located would erode the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape (NL). The Inspector also stated that there were other buildings available which could accommodate the necessary equipment and hay bales in the locality.

The current planning application has been submitted to try and justify the need for the building and includes additional supporting information and it relates to a greater site area to 1.62ha (compared to the previous 130m²). This site area excludes the buildings at Springbourne Farm but includes the wider site (previously shown within the blue line).

4 PLANNING HISTORY

| Proposal | Decision Date | Decision Description | Status | Appeal Description |
|--|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 24/10761 Agricultural Pole Barn (Retrospective) | 20/12/2024 | Refused | Appeal Decided | Appeal Dismissed 01/08/2025 |
| 25/10323 Variation of Condition 2 of application 23/10307 to allow design changes including fenestration alterations and changes to the north east elevation | 21/08/2025 | Granted Subject to Conditions | Decided | |
| 23/11262 Demolition of existing barn consented for conversion to 3 dwellings; replacement new barn to provide terrace of 3 dwellings with parking | 28/10/2024 | Granted Subject to Conditions | Decided | |
| 23/10307 Residential dwelling and garage/store; demolition of existing agricultural barn, stables and dilapidated outbuilding | 12/02/2024 | Granted Subject to Conditions | Decided | |
| 23/10278 Removal of condition 11 of planning permission 20/10852 to enable the three dwellings to be completed as dwelling houses with unrestricted occupation | 12/07/2023 | Granted Subject to Conditions | Decided | |
| 20/10975 Conversion of existing agricultural barn to residential. Conversion of existing stables to garage/store; demolition of dilapidated outbuilding | 01/12/2022 | Granted Subject to Conditions | Decided | |

20/10852 Partial conversion, 01/12/2022 Granted Subject Decided
demolition & internal excavation to Conditions
of existing agricultural building
into 3 x holiday lets; new wall to
the retained section of barn

5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy

Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside, Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining New Forest National Park

Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness

Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality

Policy CCC2: Safe and sustainable travel

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014

DM22: Employment development in the countryside

Core Strategy

CS21: Rural economy

Supplementary Planning Guidance And Documents

Neighbourhood Plan

National Planning Policy Framework

NPPF Ch.11 - Making effective use of land

NPPF Ch.12 - Achieving well-designed places

NPPF Ch.15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance

6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Rockbourne Parish Council

Parish Council wishes to respond PAR 4 - We recommend REFUSAL, for the reasons listed.

This is already a retrospective application which has been previously refused and then appealed and refused again.

The reason for refusal is further volume of traffic on the access which is only a public footpath and not a road.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

No comments received

8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Comments have been received from the following consultees:

HCC Rights of Way

No comments specific to the application but offer advice and request informatives

National Landscape Office

Agree with Inspector's decision

9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

The following is a summary of the representations received.

- applicant is likely to convert the barn into a dwelling in 5 years' time as there is no agricultural use
- the barn should be removed
- site has not been used to make hay
- surfacing of footpath has occurred recently
- traffic would obstruct access to the adjacent recreation ground

For: 0

Against: 5

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Saved Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy covers several matters where development can be acceptable. These are:

- (a) encourage agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- (b) keep existing employment sites, and encourage improvements and redevelopments that will help maintain and enhance the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- (c) allow small-scale built development for employment purposes in rural settlements (CS9, Level 3 settlements);*
- (d) support local business development through the conversion of existing buildings, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have little adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities);*
- (e) support the local delivery of services and the retention of local shops and pubs;*
- (f) work with the New Forest National Park Authority and other neighbouring authorities to protect essential back-up grazing land to support commoning; and*
- (g) allow developments essential to support a rural workforce, including agricultural workers dwellings and rural community facilities.*

Part (a) is considered to be the most relevant here given that the proposal is not for employment use, shops or community facilities, nor does it involve the re-use of buildings. Part (a) encourages agricultural enterprises where they would maintain and enhance the environment and contribute to local distinctiveness.

The applicants have indicated in their supporting statement that the land is in agricultural use and the grazing of horses is permitted without the need for a change of use. It is considered that the use of land for the keeping of horses and equestrian activities requires planning permission unless they are kept as livestock or the land is used for grazing which appears to be the case here.

Since the appeal decision was issued, the applicant has advised that they are no longer the owners of the adjoining buildings which have extant permissions for conversion into dwellings. The site area of this planning application has also been extended from the appeal scheme to include the immediate paddocks available for agricultural purposes in this location.

The applicants' planning statement does not include any additional specific information that demonstrates a need for the barn for the storage of hay and agricultural equipment. Having visited the site on several occasions in the last 5 years, the case officer has not seen evidence of hay making within the site and this issue has also been raised by local residents who advise that only a couple of horses graze the land. The appeal Inspector stated 'The appellants intend to revitalise the small holding for sheep, cattle and pigs' in association with other land they own although the current proposal does not include any details of this to support their case. The Inspector also noted that 'there would be a functional conflict between grazing animals and hay production.'

Buildings previously in the applicants ownership no longer appear to be part of the holding although they were considered by the Inspector to be suitable for the stated agricultural purposes. The Inspector was fully aware of the extant permissions for non-agricultural uses relating to Springbourne Farm at the time of the appeal.

Since the appeal decision was made in August 2025, it has also become clear that there is a barn in close proximity to the application site - which is accessed off the same track as the site and located approximately 330m away from it - at the Mushroom Farm. This barn is no longer in agricultural or commercial use by its owner who recently applied, unsuccessfully, to convert the building into a holiday let.

Having regard to these matters, it would appear that the barn is for an agricultural use which is not yet established on the site and so there is no justification for it as required by Policy CS21. Furthermore, should the agricultural use become established, there is a barn a short distance away off the same track which could provide the necessary storage facilities for the enterprise. Sufficient justification for the agricultural barn has not therefore been provided and as such the proposal is considered to be contrary to saved Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy. As such, the principle of the development is not acceptable.

Landscape impact on the character and appearance of the National Landscape

Policy STR2 of the Local Plan Part 1 states that development should not have an unacceptable impact on the special qualities and purposes of the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape and that great weight will be given to ensuring that the character quality and scenic beauty of the area is protected and maintained. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, the Local Authority has a duty to seek to further the purpose of the National Landscape.

Policy ENV3 requires development to be sympathetic to its environment and Policy ENV4 requires development to retain or enhance landscape features such as the setting of the settlement and areas of tranquillity.

Other than the site area, the application submission has not changed since the previous refusal and associated appeal in terms of the assessment of the landscape setting of the building. It is noted that whilst the Inspector considered that the building harmonised with the variety of agricultural buildings and stables found lower down the hillside, it was also concluded that the barn appears as *'curiously isolated and its disparate positioning erodes the expansive openness of the landscape.'*

Paragraph 10 of the appeal decision letter reads:

'This conspicuous positioning is particularly apparent given that the barn is much higher up the slope than any other nearby building. As such the barn intrudes built-form into a prominent position, to the detriment of the open, rural nature of the landscape. Whilst the existing hedgerow along the right of way provides some screening and a verdant backdrop to the building particularly when in leaf, neither existing nor additional hedges can be relied upon to screen a development for its lifetime.'

The Inspector's conclusion on this matter was that the barn unacceptably eroded the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape and this harm cannot be addressed by the imposition of conditions. The National Landscape Office raised concerns about the previous application for these reasons and agree with the appeal conclusions.

Given this conclusion, together with the fact that the proposal has not changed from that which was previously considered this matter has not been addressed and the proposal remains contrary to policies STR2, ENV3 and ENV4 due to impact on the open rural nature of the landscape.

Highway safety, access and parking

Policy CCC2 of the Local Plan Part 1 requires development to prioritise safe and convenient pedestrian access by linking to walking networks.

The field in which the barn is located benefits from an established vehicular access off the adjoining farm track/right of way. Whilst HCC Highways has not been consulted on the current application, they raised no objection to the previous application due to there being no changes to the existing access provisions. There have been no changes to the access arrangements or the proposed use of the building as part of the current proposals and as such it remains the case that no highway objection is raised.

The Parish Council have expressed concerns in respect of additional traffic. This was not a matter raised in the previous consultation comment made by HCC Highways and nor was it a reason for the Inspector dismissing the appeal proposal.

However, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would give rise to additional traffic generation which would result in harm to highway safety. The reasoning for this is that the existing track can already be used for agricultural purposes by the applicant and other landowners beyond this site should they wish to do so. The proposal does not involve a change of use and is not considered to generate significantly increased levels of traffic.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy CCC2 of the Local Plan Part 1 for the New Forest outside of the National Park.

Residential amenity

Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1 requires development to avoid unacceptable effects on residential amenity such as overbearing impact and visual intrusion.

The nearest residential property to the barn at present is The Lodge at the Mushroom Farm approximately 300m away. The extant permission for a dwelling on the adjoining land, formerly part of Springbourne Farm, would be 24m from the siting

of the barn although the boundary of the enlarged site area is just 3m away from the approved dwelling. However, in view of there being no change to the siting of the proposed barn from that previously considered where no amenity concerns were raised, together with the degree of separation between the proposed barn and approved dwelling, together with the possibility of screening within the site area, the current proposal would not adversely affect residential amenity.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1 for the New Forest outside of the National Park in respect of impacts on residential amenity.

11 OTHER MATTERS

N/A

12 CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal differs from the previous scheme in terms of the site area which has increased. It states that the applicants no longer own the adjoining farm building which are subject of extant permissions for residential replacement schemes. It also sets out that the proposed barn is needed for hay production and machinery storage.

Whilst agricultural development can be acceptable in principle, subject to the criteria set out in Policy CS21. The relevant part (a) of this policy which encourages agricultural enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment and contribute to local distinctiveness. However, the current application has not been supported with sufficient details to justify the development in agricultural terms in accordance with this Policy and the proposal does not maintain and enhance the environment or contribute to local distinctiveness in this sensitive location.

Furthermore, the previous scheme was dismissed on appeal in view of the harmful impact it had on the scenic beauty of the National Landscape. The current scheme is as previously proposed and so has not addressed these concerns and as such, the proposal remains harmful to the National Landscape and contrary to policies STR2, ENV3 and ENV4 of the Local Plan Part 1.

As such refusal of planning permission is recommended.

13 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The holding is predominantly horse related (for the grazing of elderly horses) and it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal is required for the purposes of agriculture. As such it is not considered to be an acceptable form of development within the countryside and is contrary to saved Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy for the New Forest outside of the National Park and the NPPF.

Further, by reason of the separation between the proposed barn and existing structures adjacent to the site, the current proposal is not contained within the existing complex of buildings adjacent to the holding and is considered to be intrusive in its location, unacceptably eroding the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. As such, the proposal would conflict with policies ENV3, ENV4 and STR2 of the Local Plan Part 1 for the New Forest outside of the National Park and saved Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy for the New Forest outside of the National Park and the NPPF.

Further Information:

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NFDC



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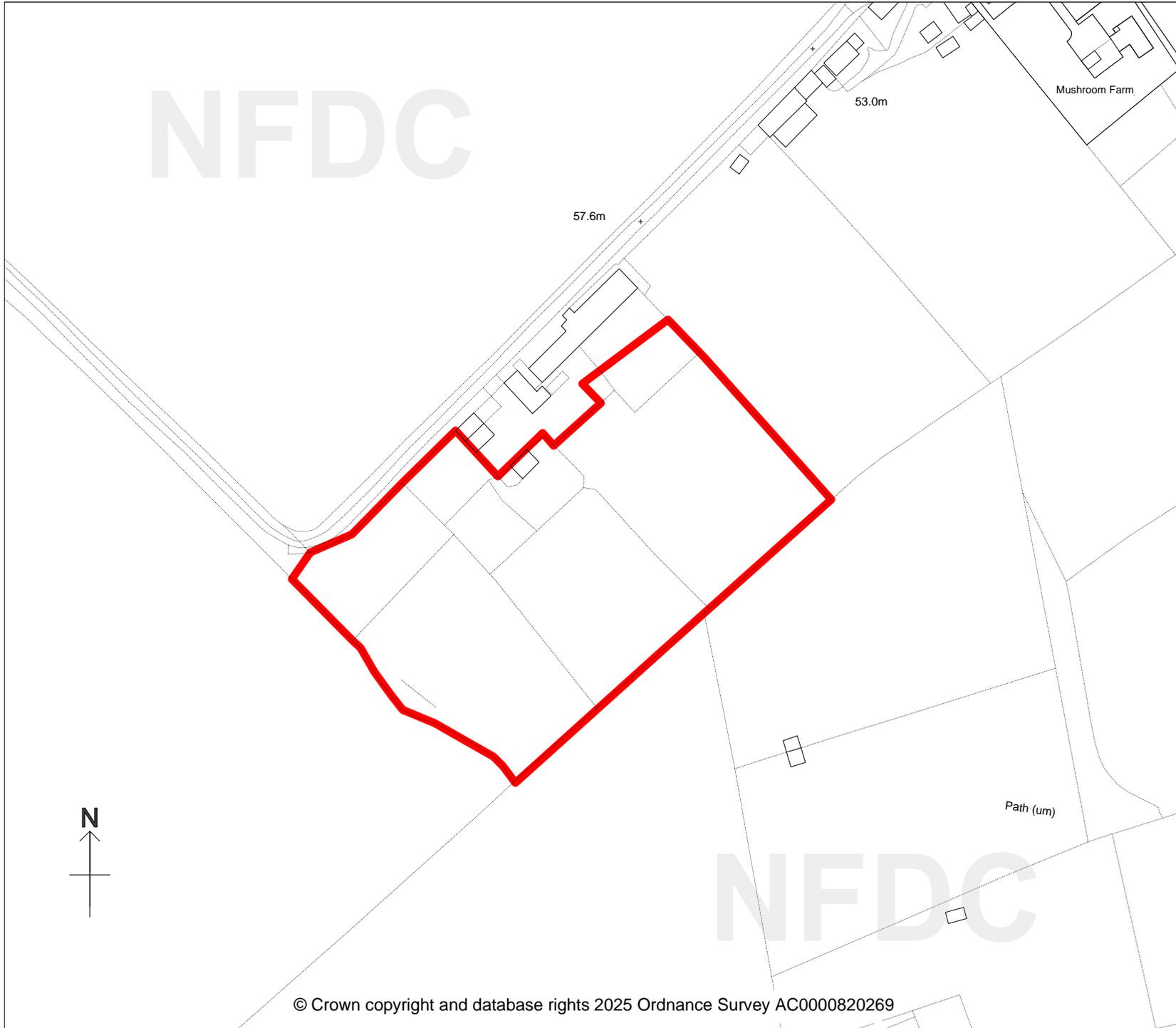
December 2025

Springbourne Farm
Rockbourne

25/10806

Scale 1:2000

N.B. If printing this plan from
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scale.



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