

Austwick Parish Council

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Ms Katherine Wood
Principal Planning Officer
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Yoredale
Bainbridge
North Yorkshire
DL8 3EL

16th October 2019

Dear Ms Wood,

Application no: C/04/148M
Land off Pant Lane, Austwick
Full Planning permission for erection of 8 no. dwellings and creation of new vehicular access to site

I understand that you are the case officer for the above planning application.

The application was considered at a meeting of Austwick Parish Council on 14th October. Councillors agreed that the initiative to progress this 'Housing Development Site' (as it is designated in the Authority's Local Plan) is welcome, as the availability of a number of new smaller houses could be of social and economic benefit to Austwick and may help to secure, for the longer term, the services and facilities we now have in place to support our community.

Whilst not objecting, my Councillors have serious reservations about a number of aspects of the present proposals. They request that the Authority take the following matters into account when deciding on the terms and conditions of any planning consent that may be granted:

1. Affordable housing and local occupancy restrictions

My Council fully appreciates the constraints imposed by national planning policy and by financial viability considerations that led to the adoption of Housing Policy C1 in the Authority's current Local Plan. As the present application is for "between 6 and 10 dwellings", the policy provides for the developer to make a financial contribution to the Authority thereby permitting open market housing to be built instead of providing affordable housing. It is clear from the letter dated 2nd October published on your website that the applicant wishes to do this.

My Council feels strongly that this would be a unique opportunity missed. There is only one 'housing development site' in Austwick in the Authority's Local Plan 2015 – 2030, namely this one. Policy C1 states that financial contributions paid by housing

developers will be used to support affordable housing in the National Park. My Council urges the Authority to work closely with the applicant to find a basis for providing at least part of this proposed 8-dwelling development as affordable or local occupancy housing, thereby avoiding the outcome that some or all of these new houses “will inevitably be purchased for retirement or second home use” (Para 4.7, Policy C1, Local Plan).

The record shows that, in the three-year period since the Authority’s current Local Plan was adopted, there have been few developments of 8 or more new dwellings in Service Villages in the National Park. If the Authority wishes to demonstrate that it will use ‘financial contributions’ paid by developers to achieve affordable housing in the Park, then this is a prime opportunity to do so. Please use some of these resources to bring affordable housing to Austwick.

2. Design features

(a) Architectural design and renewable energy

In March 2018, the present applicant submitted plans for an imaginative mixed development of 3 and 4 bed semi-detached and terraced dwellings on this site, although this application was later withdrawn. By comparison, my Councillors believe that the present proposals lack variety in design or layout and that they represent a missed opportunity to make the optimum use of this site. A single row of 8 terraced and almost identical houses would not be an asset to our village. Local residents have expressed the view to my councillors that the building plans are “depressing” and “lacking in any architectural merit whatsoever”. The applicant’s ‘Design and Access Statement’ makes no mention whatsoever of the Authority’s 2017 Design Guide and we submit that there is no evidence that the principles set out in section 3 (‘Housing’) and in appendix D (‘renewable energy’) have been considered in this application.

In the interests of conserving and enhancing the built environment of Austwick, we request that you require the applicant to review the plans for this development taking account of the principles laid down in these two sections of your Design Guide.

(b) Car parking

The application form indicates that 16 parking spaces will be provided. The Design and Access Statement indicates that 4 of these spaces will be provided ‘to the north of the terrace’ but the plans show five in this area and only 15 in total for the development. We request that the applicant be asked to give further attention to the number and location of parking spaces and we consider that 16 is a minimum number that should be provided.

(c) Site access and traffic movement

The application proposes two vehicle access points to the site. We consider this is both unnecessary and undesirable. The plans submitted with the previous application (C/04/148L) demonstrated that satisfactory traffic movement can be

achieved using a single access point at the northern end of the site. The second (southern) access is undesirable as it is located at a particularly narrow section of Pant Lane near a bend and would be in conflict with traffic moving on the highway. In addition, this southern access would require removal of a significant part of the dry stone boundary wall. This is further discussed in paragraph (f) below.

(d) Surface water drainage

A soakaway solution for surface water drainage is proposed. The Design and Access Statement says "I would expect the risk from flooding to be very low". However, we consider that there is a demonstrable 'fall' across the site towards Pant Lane resulting in existing persistent flood problems on that highway. The proposed use of hard surfaces on the development will exacerbate this problem. My Council requests the Authority to ensure that the developer specifies a surface water drainage scheme that can be demonstrated to deal adequately with this issue.

(e) Hard surfaces

The vehicle access and hard standing serving the properties is to be constructed in "tarmac and artificial stone setts" (application form) or "tarmac or concrete block paving" (design and access Statement). However, the Authority's Development Brief for this site, published alongside the 'Housing Development Plan' in 2012, said "Tarmac should be avoided as a surface treatment within the site". My Council asks that the Authority requires the applicant to provide a detailed scheme for all hard surfaces and landscaping on the site compatible with its rural location and with the requirements for adequate surface water drainage.

(f) Dry stone boundary walls

The Authority's Development brief for the site (referred to in (d) above) correctly observes that there is "an unusually high boundary wall" between the site and the highway. This wall is a feature of the rural location and of the setting of the site on Pant Lane. The applicant's site layout plan shows a new second site entrance and is silent concerning how much, if any, of the existing dry stone wall will remain. The Design and Access Statement says that "existing boundary walls to be lowered to n/e 1m adjacent to the new entrance" but is not explicit as to how much of the boundary wall will be lowered to this height. Given the distinctive nature of all the boundary walls of this site and the unusual scale of the boundary wall between the site and Pant Lane, my Council asks that the applicant be required to submit a comprehensive and detailed proposal for all proposed alterations to the dry stone boundary walls.

(g) Fuel oil storage tanks

The application is silent concerning the proposed means of providing heating to the 8 dwellings. However it seems reasonable to assume that fuel oil or propane gas will need to be stored locally for this purpose. At the present time, immediately to the north of the application site and adjacent to the highway are located underground

storage tanks serving other recently built houses on Pant Lane. Whenever these are being refilled, Pant Lane is entirely blocked by the tanker vehicle, which residents consider unacceptable. We ask that the applicant be required to provide details of the proposed method of fuel storage, and a solution to the 'refilling' problem that demonstrates it can be achieved without blocking the highway at any stage.

3. Planning consent conditions

Pant Lane is a narrow rural 'no through road'. A decade or so ago, it served few houses. In the last twelve years, eleven new dwellings have been built with sole access via Pant Lane, exiting onto Graystonber Lane. My Council, receiving comments from Pant Lane residents, is very concerned about the disruption and disturbance that may arise during the inevitably lengthy period of construction of the proposed development.

These concerns include:

- (a) the need to maintain continuous motorised and pedestrian access along the entire length of Pant Lane at all times;
- (b) the noise, dust and pollution that could occur;
- (c) the environmental damage that could be caused by construction vehicles and construction work to the surface of Pant Lane, the boundary walls, grass verges and other important features of this rural location.

My Council requests that a comprehensive and detailed set of conditions accompany any planning consent, to cover the conduct of construction works and to mitigate against all aspects of possible disruption in the immediate locality.

4. Planning Officer's Report

My Councillors request that section 1 of this letter (at least) be reproduced in full in your 'Officer report and recommendation' regarding this application.

My Councillors would be willing to discuss the matters raised in this letter directly with you or any of your colleagues at any time during the progress of this planning application if this would be helpful. They can be contacted through me.

I would be grateful if you would please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Marijke Hill
Clerk to Austwick Parish Council