

**Application No:** 24/00283FULL Full Application

**Site:** Land On South Side Of, Newtown Lane, Mockbeggar BH24 3NN

**Proposal:** Barn for agricultural/forestry use

**Applicant:** Mr R Mays & Mrs A Skeates

**Case Officer:** Lindsey Chamberlain

**Parish:** Elingham, Harbridge and Iblsey Parish Council

---

**1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

Contrary to Parish Council view

**2. POLICIES**

**Development Plan Designations**

Conservation Area

**Principal Development Plan Policies**

DP2 General development principles  
DP18 Design principles  
DP50 Agricultural and forestry buildings  
SP6 The natural environment  
SP7 Landscape character  
SP15 Tranquillity  
SP16 The historic and built environment  
SP17 Local distinctiveness  
SP48 The land-based economy

**Supplementary Planning Documents**

Design Guide SPD

**NPPF**

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places  
Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

**3. MEMBER COMMENTS**

None received

#### **4. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Elingham, Harbridge and Iblesey Parish Council: Recommend permission for the reasons listed. Cllrs agreed that supporting genuine young commoners who wish to work and earn their living in and from the New Forest should be supported where possible.

Opinion was mixed about how the applicants had developed the site prior to submission of a planning application.

The Parish Council would like the following issues looked into:

- To understand the current site designation and permitted uses.
- To see a business plan submitted.
- To see an ecology report for the site and potential impact(s) of the commercial activity(s).

#### **5. CONSULTEES**

Tree Officer: No Objection. The site is subject to W1 of TPO 1374. The retention of the pole barn will not have a detrimental impact on any existing trees. Would discourage the removal of leaf mulch and organic matter from under the trees, as in time the retention of such material will aid in the recovery and development of the woodland floor and allow whatever seed bank beneath to germinate and establish.

Ecologist: Comment. This application is not supported by any professional ecological information and the biodiversity checklist has not been completed by a relevant professional. Therefore, in reaching a recommendation on this application, the Authority is legally required to give weight to the need to protect the habitat and conserve its biodiversity value. Regrettably the retrospective application does not engage in biodiversity and conservation of wildlife beyond the completion of the checklist. Although I note the Authority's arboriculturist cannot identify direct harm to the trees on site in arboricultural planning terms, the activities on the site are resulting in compaction and degradation of woodland soils, loss of ground flora and inappropriate planting and management that is likely to be harmful to the long-term nature conservation value of the woodland. Accordance with local plan Policy SP6 and the NPPF has not been demonstrated in relation to both habitat value and species. I therefore cannot support the proposal as it stands, and note it also sets a very unwelcome precedent for other woodland in the setting of a protected landscape where tranquillity, landscape and conservation of wildlife are given great weight by government.

Given there has been longstanding harmful impacts to the woodland from past and current management, it may be the case that the value of the priority habitat may currently be reduced. However, it is likely that actions could be undertaken to restore the site in such a way it provides greater contribution to the nature recovery the government and public expects to see in National Parks.

## **6. REPRESENTATIONS**

11 representations in support:

- In keeping with the local agricultural environment.
- Situated in a wooded copse and not obtrusive.
- Activities undertaken are beneficial to the community.
- Continuation of the rural economy.
- Supporting local workers.

One representation of objection:

- Land has been cleared, was previously a wooded cops this with undergrowth and natural vegetation.
- Domestication of the site, large wooden gates and fencing have been constructed.
- Further buildings and potential accommodation.
- Land utilised as a storage facility.
- Small scale of the site, 0.4 hectares.
- Building is large and out of keeping, not comparable to the farm buildings mentioned opposite.

## **7. RELEVANT HISTORY**

No relevant planning history.

## **8. ASSESSMENT**

### **Application Site**

8.1 The 0.4ha application site is located to the south of Newtown Lane, in an area known as Shepherds Copse. The site is within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and is designated as priority habitat deciduous woodland with a group TPO covering the site. Directly adjacent to the northern boundary is the SSSI designation that runs the length of Newtown Lane. SPA and SAC designated sites are approximately 314 metres to the east and Ramsar 350 metres to the east.

### **Proposed Development**

8.2 This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a barn that has been submitted as a result of an enforcement investigation. The barn has been constructed around and atop 2 no. storage containers that are located at each end of the barn and it is currently open fronted. It is proposed to clad the walls in metal and timber and the roof in corrugated profiled metal. The structure is 16.5 metres in length and has an overall height of 5.9 metres. The width of the barn including the overhang is 8.4 metres.

8.3 The key considerations when reviewing this application are:

- Compliance with Policy DP50 (Agricultural and forestry buildings);

- The impact on heritage assets.
- The impact on the landscape; and
- The impact on protected trees and ecology.

## **Consideration**

- 8.4 Policy SP48 of the adopted Local Plan supports the land-based economy where it is beneficial to the Forest and this includes the provision of new agricultural and forestry buildings (subject to Policy DP50). Policy DP50 states that permission will be granted for buildings for agriculture or forestry purposes, subject to meeting various criteria which are considered below.
- 8.5 Firstly, whether there is a functional need for the building and if its scale is commensurate with that need and its setting in the landscape (DP50a). In this regard, the overall site is just under 1 acre in size. The applicants advise that 6 New Forest ponies are turned out from the site to graze on the forest, together with 3 pigs. The site also houses 48 free range chickens. Whilst this utilises the applicants' rights of common, it does not in itself justify the need or requirement for the barn on this particular site (which is used to store machinery and logs).
- 8.6 As part of the application, a revenue plan has been submitted to support the application showing that the projected revenue, in 2025 and 2026, is largely to be sourced from logs, albeit that currently there is no income stream from this activity. There are a number of other activities listed that generate revenue including: baling, raking and rowing up, pigs, track grading and carpentry. These activities, with perhaps the exception of carpentry, are all undertaken off site reflecting the applicants' work as agricultural contractors. Overall, there is no proven functional need for this building on such a small site.
- 8.7 Secondly, DP50c requires the site to be related physically and functionally to buildings associated with the business - this site was previously a wooded copse. The site has been substantially cleared to allow for the tracks and the construction of the barn. It is noted that there is also a 'mess room' and shepherds hut on site, however these structures are not included in the current application.
- 8.8 Lastly, DP50d states that buildings will not be permitted if the proposed building would be large or obtrusive or generate a level of activity which would have a detrimental effect on the National Park. Notwithstanding the existing tree cover, the structure is considered overly large and fairly obtrusive in the landscape (especially when the trees are not in leaf). With regards to the level of activity, given the revenue projections suggest that by 2026 57% of the total revenue will be generated from logs and given the site is not the source of the logs, this will result in an increase in traffic to the site both in terms of the delivery of the raw goods, but also the resultant distribution. Therefore, this activity is

a substantial change from the revenue stream currently detailed, 0% of sales from logs and 73% of the revenue generated from carpentry. These projections would result in an increase in the level of activity which would have a detrimental effect on the National Park, given that the SSSI is directly adjacent to the northern boundary, the access road. In summary, whilst the Parish have noted their support for the proposal citing their support for young commoners, the retrospective permission for the barn and the subject of this application is not aligned to that of Local Plan DP50 given that the building is not reasonably required for the maintenance of the land. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposal, due to its obtrusive nature, would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area or conserve and enhance the landscape, contrary to Policies SP16 and SP7.

- 8.9 Whilst the Authority's Tree Officer has raised no objection noting that the retention of the pole barn would not have any detrimental impact on the existing trees, the overall use of the site with regards to the tracks and use of heavy machinery will result in compaction and degradation of woodland soils, noted also by the Authority's Ecologist. The Ecologist has noted that the activities on the site are resulting in compaction and degradation of woodland soils, loss of ground flora and inappropriate planting and management that is likely to be harmful to the long-term nature conservation value of the woodland. Accordance with local plan Policy SP6 and the NPPF have not been demonstrated in relation to both habitat value and species and the Ecologist cannot support the proposal as it stands. Thus, in relation to Local Plan Policy SP6, the current proposal does not protect, maintain or enhance the site with regards to habitat and species biodiversity importance, contrary to Policy SP6.

## **Conclusion**

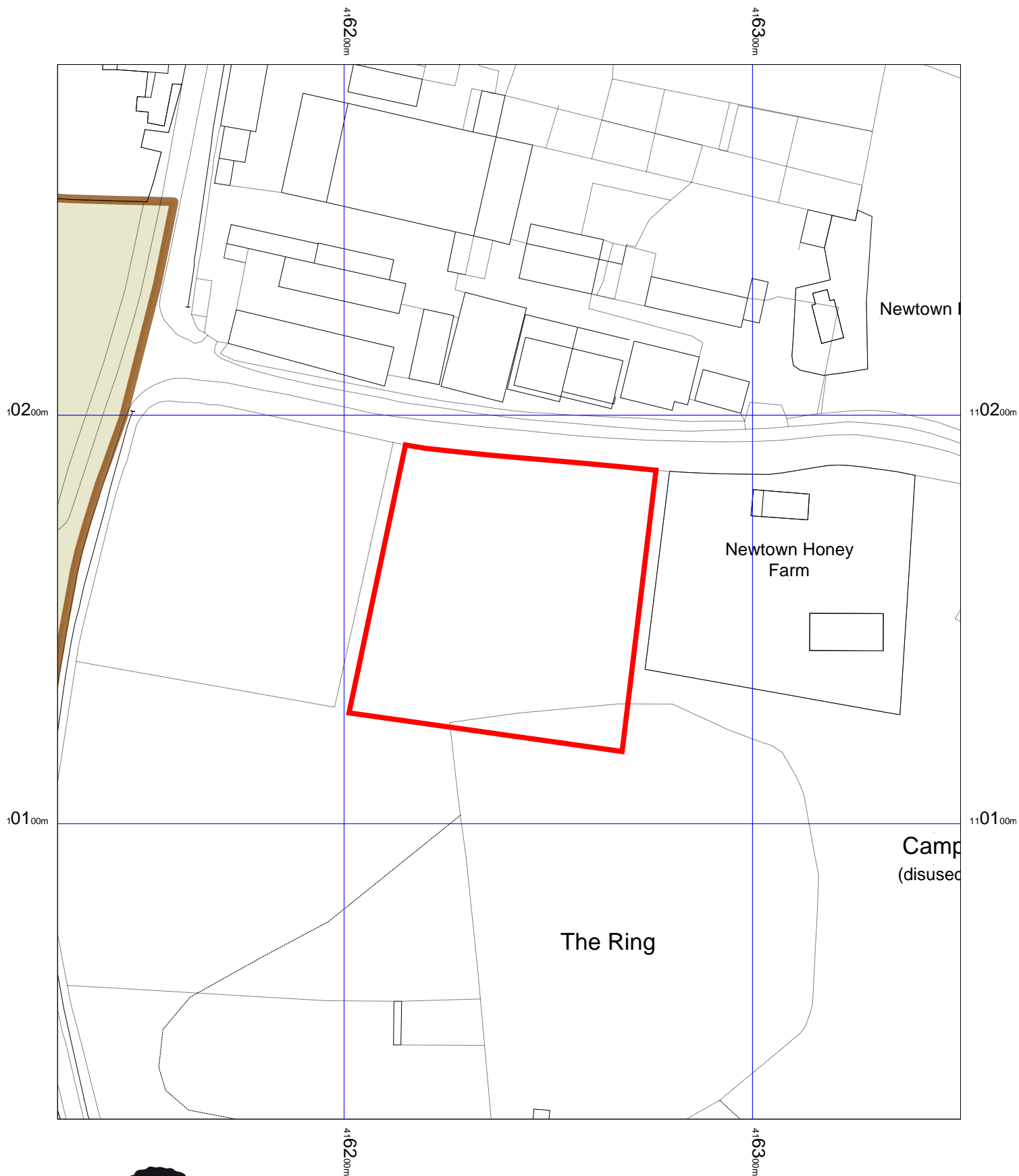
- 8.10 Whilst there have been 11 separate support comments received from individuals and it is clear there is support for the knowledge and skill set that the applicants bring to the area, this does not override the need for such buildings to be designed and used for agriculture or forestry purposes. The barn is a large structure that will in the main be used in association with the applicants' logging business. The increased activity is likely to adversely impact the adjacent SSSI. In addition, the copse has been cleared over the years and as noted by the Authority's Ecologist the site is a priority woodland habitat, with the activities on the site resulting in long-term harm to the nature conservation value of the woodland.
- 8.11 Overall, the proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policies SP48, DP50, DP2, SP6, SP7, SP16 and SP17. It is therefore recommended that this application should be refused.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse

### **Reason for refusal:**

It has not been demonstrated that the proposed barn would be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on this site. In addition, the activity generated is likely to be harmful to the long-term nature conservation value of the woodland. The development is therefore contrary to Policies SP48, DP50, DP2, SP6, SP7, SP16 and SP17 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036 (August 2019) and Sections 12, 15 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



NEW FOREST  
NATIONAL PARK

New Forest National Park Authority  
Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road,  
Lymington, SO41 9ZG

Tel: 01590 646600 Fax: 01590 646666

Date: 04/07/2024

**Ref: 24/00283FULL**

**Scale: 1:1250**

© Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 100014703

