

09/2006/010

MR K E THORNE

**ERECTION OF CATTLE SHED AND FEED STORE AT LAND AT WEST BOVEY, WATERROW, WIVELISCOMBE, AS AMPLIFIED BY ELEVATION DRAWINGS RECEIVED 24TH AUGUST, 2006 & APPLICANT'S LETTER RECEIVED 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2006**

304590/125120

FULL

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**PROPOSAL**

Permission is sought for the erection of two agricultural buildings for the purposes of cattle shelter and feed store. The holding consists of 21 acres situated to the north of the B3227 and West Bovey Farm. There is an existing access and field gateway to the site. The site has an elevated position in an area of undulating open countryside.

The buildings would be constructed around a steel portal frame. The end walls of the livestock building would be clad with Yorkshire boarding from 2.0 m high, with concrete blockwork below, whereas the storage building would feature grey profile sheeting. The proposed dimensions are 24.0 m in width, depth 9.0 m with a mono-pitch roof measuring 6.0 m at its highest point. The cattle building would be open fronted. To the north east of the site is a designated Wildlife Site.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no observations. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY no objection in principle subject to a number of specific requirements.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER given the proposed excavation of ground levels and landscaping it is considered that the proposed cattle shed and feed store will be well screened within five years. There will be some impact for the first few years but with the excavating and mounding this should be kept to a minimum and only from more distant views. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER no objections. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER supports the proposal. DRAINAGE OFFICER the applicant should be advised that surface water treatment system, such as soakaways, should be installed.

PARISH COUNCIL this is not a viable acreage to accommodate animals. Our concern stands about the narrow, steep access roads, no water or electricity, and disposal of slurry. The high buildings on top of the hill will be visible over a wide distance and the slow growing screening plants (oak) will be ineffective for many years. How can the cattle be looked after when the applicants do not live locally. It would set a precedent for any landowner to site a caravan – then a house – in open countryside.

TWO LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- what facilities are being constructed for the storage of animal and forage wastes and

their disposal; risk of surface run off due to the topography of the land; site located near an area of water extraction for human consumption which needs to be protected; having purchased Woodworthy Farm, a failed agricultural unit of 30 acres, with house, large cattle court and converted barn/milking parlour concerned that the proposal would be unviable unless intensively worked requiring on site staffing; visual impact upon amenity of Woodworthy Farm; how will the stock be cared for; how would the infrastructure cope; what will happen if the agricultural use ceases?

ONE LETTER OF SUPPORT has been received:- been in direct contact with the applicant and is satisfied that the proposed waste management plan and stocking levels are acceptable; furthermore, any investment in agriculture of whatever scale should be supported.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

RPG10 (Regional Planning Guidance for the South West), 2001.

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR6 (Development Outside Rural Centres & Villages), EN3 (Wildlife Site) and Policy 5 (Landscape Character).

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), S7 (Outside Settlements), and EN12 (Landscape Character Areas).

## **ASSESSMENT**

The primary issues in the determination of the application concern the visual impact of the proposed development on the rural character and appearance of the area, its need for an agricultural enterprise, access and services.

The site is located in open countryside and designated Landscape Character Area. As such special consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Government guidance contained with PPS7 states, inter alia, that all development in rural areas should be well designed..., in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness. The main issue for consideration is whether the proposed building would be so visually prominent and intrusive as to harm the rural character and appearance of the area to warrant a refusal.

The requirements of agricultural needs are changing and priority must be to ensure that any new agricultural building is a good quality functional building to satisfy modern farming practices, whilst ensuring the building is so sited as to have limited impact upon the visual appearance of the countryside.

The proposed buildings would be dug in and set against the hillside, providing a backdrop, which would help to reduce the visual impact. The proposal comprises two

buildings in an L shaped arrangement to break up the bulk of the development. Cut and fill techniques would be employed to achieve a level platform integrating the new buildings into the sloping site.

The proposed building is considered to be acceptable in its design in an agricultural setting. The main elevation of the building that would be seen will be finished in traditional Yorkshire boarding. The landscape officer considers that the proposed buildings subject to suitable landscaping can be assimilated into the landscape without being unduly prominent or intrusive in this location. This would incorporate the spoil left over from excavation to create new banks with native species around the building to help soften the buildings outline and anchor it in the landscape. A landscaping condition is recommended to be imposed.

The Parish Council express concern that the proposed cattle store will require supervision and the applicants do not currently live in the area. In essence, it is claimed that the proposed building will be used ultimately to seek an application for an agricultural workers dwelling on this site. Whilst the concerns of the Parish Council are noted, members will be aware that each application needs to be assessed on its planning merits and that any future application for a dwelling would need to meet the functional and financial requirements set out in Annex A of PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and the wider planning policies of the Development Plan.

The proposed site consists of an agricultural holding of 21 acres and is currently used for the grazing of cattle. The proposed building would provide shelter for approximately 25 young cattle during the winter months and food storage. In addition the applicant also has additional cattle elsewhere on rented land. The Agricultural Development Officer states that for the stocking rate the proposal is highly desirable (particularly bearing in mind welfare and Cross Compliance Regulations) for these cattle to be housed during the winter months. The applicant currently visits the site daily whilst actively looking to re-locate to the locality.

The applicant has advised that a new soakaway will be formed to deal with all clean water. Due to the topography of the area and following discussions between the applicant and the Environment Agency manure will be removed from the holding by a local contractor to be spread on local farms. The applicant also confirms that an agreement has been reached with Western Power to connect to mains electricity with the works services underground.

The Environmental Health officer has considered the impact of the livestock building upon the amenities of the area, bearing in mind that the building would be within 400 m of other properties in West Bovey but has not objected to the scheme.

There is already an existing access which serves the field. The Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposed development.

It is recommended for the reasons outlined in this report that the proposed agricultural buildings would not harm the character or appearance of the countryside. The proposed landscaping scheme would help to assimilate the development into

the wider landscape and as such it is recommended the application be approved subject to the conditions detailed below.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be GRANTED subject to following conditions of time limit, landscaping, buildings to be removed if agricultural use ceases, samples of materials, details of surface water run off and services to be positioned underground.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:-** The proposal is considered not to have a detrimental impact upon visual amenity and is therefore considered acceptable and, accordingly, does not conflict with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, S7 and EN12 and Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR1 and Policy 5.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356586 MR A PICK**

NOTES