

21/2006/019

MR JOHN PERRY

CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL LAND AND BUILDINGS TO STORAGE OF AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTING EQUIPMENT/MACHINERY AT LAND SOUTH OF LANGFORD BUDVILLE, WELLINGTON (GR 111,226) AS AMENDED BY DRAWING NO. 524/01 DATED 20TH NOVEMBER, 2006

311193/122647

FULL

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the change of use from agricultural land and buildings to storage of agricultural contracting equipment/machinery at land south of Langford Budville. The existing buildings are single storey. The proposal involves ensuring the buildings are secure and weatherproof without any major physical alterations to the building. The site is approximately 6 acres. The proposal would involve a new diesel tank, existing lockable store, and three existing barns to be used for agricultural use, storage and storage of machinery. The applicant's contracting business covers the Milverton, Wellington and Taunton area which include digging, hedge trimming and silage making.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY considers the proposed location being sited outside of the settlement limit is unsustainable. In addition the Highway Authority expresses concern that the proposal is for a change of use to a general B8 use and recommends that the building is conditioned to a specific or personal use. Furthermore, there are concerns that the existing access is substandard in terms of the width, angle and visibility and this would need to be significantly improved to overcome the highway safety issues raised.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to management and reinforcement of the existing predominantly Elm hedging it should be possible to integrate the proposals into the surrounding landscape. NATURE CONSERVATION & RESERVES OFFICER there is evidence that bats and swallows have been used in sheds 3 & 4. I am satisfied that protected species will still be able to use the buildings but in applying PPS9 it is recommend that we should be to encourage opportunities for bats and swallows. Conditions and informative recommended.

7 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- dangerous access; overloading of highway; increase highway safety problems at cross roads; unsocial hours; given restricted width of the highway it will dictate that the traffic to and from the premises would have to travel through the village resulting in detrimental impact to the village; noise; fumes; application estimates possible traffic movements but not delivery of supplies, fuel, equipment, machinery and parts; impact upon wildlife; impact upon archaeology; unsustainable location; loss of value to property; risk of pollution.

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) and Policy 5 (Landscape Character).

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), S7 (Outside Settlements), EC6 (Conversion of Rural Buildings), EC7 (Rural Employment Proposals) and EN12 (Landscape Character Areas).

ASSESSMENT

There are a number of pertinent issues in the assessment of this application, these relate primarily to the following; visual impact of the proposed development on the rural character and appearance of the area; implications for wildlife and biodiversity; amenity and highway safety.

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. 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. Local Plan H7 (Conversion of Rural Buildings) & PPS7 seeks to give priority to economic uses subject to taking account a number of criteria, such as specific local economic and social needs and opportunities. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) further supports proposals for re-using existing buildings that are adjacent or closely related to ... villages for economic or community uses. The proposal would allow the re-use of these existing barns for economic purposes and would support farm diversification activity. The existing buildings are functional in appearance and of little architectural merit. The proposed changes to the building are considered low impact development. The buildings are single storey and the site is well screened by existing hedgerow and trees.

The wildlife officer is satisfied that protected species will still be able to use the buildings. However, in applying PPS9 it is recommended that measures should be taken to enhance the site as well as the protection of species. The wildlife officer recommends that encouragement of opportunities for bats at the site. In addition informatives regarding bats and swallows nesting in the buildings are recommended.

The application site is a significant distance 100 m from the nearest residential dwellings and it is considered the site is well screened and would have no significant impact upon the amenity of adjoining residents. The use of the site would be for storage purposes. However, should there be any noise issues this would be dealt with under the Environmental Protection Act and noise nuisance.

The Highway Authority has expressed concern on the grounds of sustainability given the position of the site outside of settlement limits. However, it is considered the proposed use would provide other economic benefits to the rural economy and as such it considered an acceptable location for this specific use. In addition the Highway Authority has expressed concern regarding the use of the site for general B8 use (general warehouse/distribution) and the setting of precedent for such use. However, in order to control the use of the buildings and the site it is recommended a condition be imposed to tie down the use strictly for the purpose applied, i.e for change of use for the storage of agricultural contracting equipment/machinery only. In addition the Highway Authority has expressed concern about the existing access and has requested increased visibility and improvement to the access. Amended plans have now been received to overcome the Highway concerns. The views of the Highway Authority have now been sought to the amendments. In addition the landscape officer has been consulted to assess how the proposal which would involve the loss of part of the hedgerow would impact upon the visual appearance of the area.

A caravan has been sited within the application site and this is currently subject to further investigation by the enforcement team.

It is considered the proposed use is compatible with its rural location and provides an economic use for the existing buildings and presents an opportunity to diversify and provide a rural service in the locality. As such it is recommended the application be supported subject to the comments of the landscape officer with respect to the amended plans for the revised access and visibility splay.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the further representations of the landscape officer and the County Highway Authority on the amended access arrangements the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, wildlife requirements, landscaping, use for agricultural contracting use, details of outside storage, pollution mitigation measures and informative with respect to oil storage regulations.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal is considered not to have a detrimental impact upon the rural character or appearance of the area and is therefore considered acceptable and, accordingly, does not conflict with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, S7, EN10 and EN12 nor Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1, STR6 or Policy 5.

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

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