

47/2006/006

MR MICHAEL P YORKE

ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKER'S DWELLING AT EAST HADDONS FARM, WEST HATCH

327762/121383

OUTLINE APPLICATION

PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises an outline application with means of access included for approval, for the erection of a permanent agricultural workers dwelling as a replacement for a temporary mobile home which was granted permission for 3 years in February 2002, reference 47/2001/003. Planning permission was also granted for an agricultural building in March 2001, reference 47/2001/002.

The proposed dwelling would be sited at the same location as the mobile home, which is close to the agricultural building and well set back from the highway, and the means of vehicular access which was approved in association with the mobile home would be used.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY recommends visibility splay condition. WESSEX WATER recommends note.

DRAINAGE OFFICER recommends note.

PARISH COUNCIL We acknowledge that Mr Yorke has had a difficult time in the last few years and has changed the emphasis of his farming, but we are not happy that the financial projections put forward in the application are realistic. The accountants have prepared the accounts for the year ending April 2005, but they state that they have not been audited and are based on figures provided by Mr Yorke. They do not include any charge for interest payments. The enterprise margins put forward on page 14 of the supporting statement are a mixture of current year figures and estimate of what is hoped for in the current year. In view of the change of emphasis in the farming enterprise it might not be sound policy to give planning permission for a permanent building based on unproven estimates. Mr Yorke is extremely fortunate in being able to finance his business at an interest rate of 2.5% but we think it would be wrong to use this very low figure in an objection assessment of the projects viability. The Council opposes the present application, on the grounds that too much of the financial justification is based on unproven estimates, but would be happy to see the present temporary permission for a mobile home to be extended which would give Mr. Yorke an opportunity to prove the financial viability of the project.

1 LETTER OF OBJECTION has been received raising the following issues:- there is not sufficient verifiable information to justify the financial viability of the farm; future projections are a mixture of current figures and estimated revenues and therefore

unproven; finance at 2.5% is extraordinarily low and unrealistic; it is not sensible to grant permission until the financial position is much clearer; and the application should request a renewal of the mobile home to prove the long-term viability of his business.

5 LETTERS OF SUPPORT have been submitted.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy S7 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan and Policy STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review seeks to resist new building in open countryside unless, inter alia, it is essential for agriculture.

ASSESSMENT

In respect of the application for the temporary mobile home, a significant element of the farming business as presented in information submitted by ADAS, related to the production of raspberries, in addition to his cattle and sheep livestock enterprise. This was an important factor in the assessment of the application. The raspberry business however no longer forms a part of the proposal, and this element has been replaced by a Suffolk horse enterprise. This is effectively a new and different enterprise from the one which was assessed in 2001. Given this significant change in the operation of the farm, in addition to doubts over estimated financial revenues I am not convinced that permission should be granted for a permanent dwelling in open countryside until the financial position is clearer and has been proven to be successful. I consequently consider that permission be refused but that the applicant be invited to submit an application for a temporary renewal of the mobile home in order that he can prove a genuine need to meet both financial and functional tests in PPS7 before a permanent dwelling be granted permission.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED on the grounds that a genuine agricultural need has not been proven, and that the proposal is accordingly contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S7 and Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6.

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

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NOTES:

