

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14 MARCH 2018</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>174198 - PROPOSED NEW 3 BEDROOM, SINGLE STOREY, ECO-FULLY-ACCESSIBLE HOUSE AT LAND AT SOUTH LEA, ASTON CREWS, ROSS-ON-WYE, HR9 7LW</b>  <b>For: Mrs Burns per Studio Bark, Studio 1k Autumn Yard, Autumn Street, London E3 2TT</b>
<b>WEBSITE LINK:</b>	<a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=174198&amp;search=174198">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=174198&amp;search=174198</a>
<b>Reason Application submitted to Committee – Departure from Development Plan</b>	

**Date Received: 7 November 2017**      **Ward: Penyard**      **Grid Ref: 367156,223189**  
**Expiry Date: 8 January 2018**  
Local Member: Councillor H Bramer

## 1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is in a countryside location outside of any settlement designated under Core Strategy policy RA2. The site is part of an agricultural land holding adjoining the main built form of Aston Crews, a small hamlet featuring a public house which is located between the villages of Lea and Aston Ingham, both designated RA2 settlements with a range of services and facilities. There are no landscape or heritage designations on or adjoining the site.
- 1.2 The proposal is for a three bedroom single storey fully accessible 'eco house' with a gross internal area of 127 square metres together with associated landscaping and drainage.

## 2. Policies

### 2.1 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy

SS1	-	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2	-	Delivering New Homes
SS5	-	Employment Provision
SS6	-	Environmental Quality and Local Distinctiveness
SS7	-	Addressing Climate Change
RA1	-	Rural Housing Strategy
RA2	-	Herefordshire's Villages
RA3	-	Herefordshire's Countryside
LD1	-	Landscape and Townscape
LD2	-	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LD3	-	Green Infrastructure
SD1	-	Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr C Brace on 01432 261947

- SD2 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- SD3 - Sustainable Water Management and Water Resources

### National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF

2.2 The following sections of the NPPF are considered particularly relevant to the assessment of this application:

- Introduction - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes
- Section 7 - Requiring Good Design
- Section 10 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- Section 11 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural EnvironmentHerefordshire Core Strategy

### 2.3 Neighbourhood Development Plan

No Neighbourhood Area designated

2.4 The Core Strategy policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local\\_plan/137/adopted\\_core\\_strategy](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/137/adopted_core_strategy)

## 3. **Planning History**

3.1 None

## 4. **Consultation Summary**

### Statutory Consultations

4.1 Natural England has no objection – Natural England has assessed this application using the Impact Risk Zones data (IRZs). Natural England advises your authority that the proposal, if undertaken in strict accordance with the details submitted, is not likely to have a significant effect on the interest features for which Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC has been classified. Natural England therefore advises that your Authority is not required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment to assess the implications of this proposal on the site's conservation objectives.

In addition, Natural England is satisfied that the proposed development being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application, as submitted, will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the Wigpool Ironstone Mine SSSI has been notified. We therefore advise your authority that this SSSI does not represent a constraint in determining this application. Should the details of this application change, Natural England draws your attention to Section 28(l) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), requiring your authority to re-consult Natural England.

Welsh Water has no objection – As the applicant intends utilising a private treatment works we would advise that the applicant contacts The Environment Agency / Herefordshire Council Land Drainage Department who may have an input in the regulation of this method of drainage disposal.

## Internal Council Consultations

- 4.2 Transportation Manager – Proposal acceptable, subject to conditions and / or informatives being attached to any planning permission. *These are set out in the recommendation, below.* No objection after ownership issue was resolved.

Conservation Manager (Ecology) – Thank you for consulting me on this application. I have read the ecological survey and the great crested newt survey and I am content with the findings. The mitigations proposed are acceptable. In relation to bats, I would wish to highlight the importance of enhancing the site conditions. I note that no hedgerows are to be removed and the mitigations proposed are suitable but enhancement should be fully detailed incorporated into the landscape scheme. The site is within 4 km of the Forest of Dean Bat Site Special Area of Conservation and I have completed an appraisal of the potential impact on bats from this site as an HRA screening brief as follows:

### **Details of potential HRA issue:**

The scale and nature of this householder application has a low risk to the bats (qualifying features) Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. The site is approximately 4 km in direct line to Wigpool Common but bats ranging from hibernation sites are more likely to utilize flight lines such as hedgerows (eg lesser horseshoe, some *Myotis* spp), or stream channels (Daubentons) involving a more considerable distance. The development site and its immediate environs is intensively managed agricultural land only partially populated with hedges and trees. There is no substantial woodland at the site which might provide foraging or roosting for such as noctule, bechstein or barbastell bats. The site would is not conducive over and above other sites for significant bat activity from the bat hibernation sites.

### **CONCLUSION: No Likely Significant Effect**

With regard to mitigation and enhancements required I would suggest a number of non-standard conditions are added to any approval. *These are set out in the recommendation, below.*

## **5. Representations**

- 5.1 Aston Ingham Parish Council do not have any objections to the proposed application, but have reservations about the drainage arrangements as there have apparently been problems with flooding in the past.
- 5.2 Two comments have been received from local residents, one supporting the application and the other a general representation, as follows:
- As the owner of the neighbouring property I'd like to record my support for this application. I believe it will be a building of distinction that will provide an exemplar for Herefordshire and improve the village
  - The proposed site is not in a flood plain but is subject to extensive seasonal flooding due to road water run off & springs in the hillside opposite. A nearby pond would provide a good catchment to extensive site drainage
  - A recent application on my property for a green roof was rejected. Green roofs are difficult to maintain & this is an application for a person with mobility problems a pitched roof would be better & provide a platform for solar panels & rain harvesting in line with the ecological application
  - A site survey to establish the contours and a floor slab level should be part of the planning conditions to ensure the low profile of the building is not left to a contractor.
  - Internally hinged doors are a problem for wheelchair access & door & corridor widths should take this into account

- These comments are meant to be constructive from someone living adjacent to the site & witnessing its problems

5.3 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning\\_services/planning\\_application\\_search/details?id=174198&search=174198](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=174198&search=174198)

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/customer-services-enquiries/contact-details?q=customer&type=suggestedpage>

## 6. Officer's Appraisal

### Legislation and Policy

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states *"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*
- 6.2 The development plan for Herefordshire is the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy. There is no Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 6.3 Core Strategy policy RA1 – *Rural housing distribution* sets out the strategic way housing is to be provided within rural Herefordshire and to deliver a minimum 5,600 dwellings. Herefordshire is divided into seven Housing Market Areas (HMAs) in order to respond to the differing housing needs, requirements and spatial matters across the county.
- 6.4 Core Strategy policy RA2 – *Housing outside Hereford and the market towns* identifies the settlements in each HMA area where both the main focus of proportionate housing development will be directed, along with other settlements where proportionate housing growth is appropriate.
- 6.5 Aston Ingham is within the Ross on Wye HMA and one of thirty one settlements designated to be the main focus of proportionate growth in that HMA. The Ross on Wye HMA is to provide a minimum 1150 dwellings in the Plan period with an indicative housing growth target of 14%. It is noted the application site is located outside of what is considered to be the main built form of Aston Ingham and is also not adjacent to it.
- 6.6 Core Strategy policy RA3 – *Herefordshire's countryside* identifies exceptional circumstances where residential development can occur within the open countryside outside settlements listed under RA2 or Hereford city and the market towns.
- 6.7 The local authority is currently failing to provide a 5 year Housing Land Supply, plus a 20% buffer, which must be met by all local authorities in accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that *'relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'*.
- 6.8 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that there *"is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision taking this means... where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole... or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

- 6.9 In reaching a decision upon new housing, the housing land supply position will need to be balanced against other factors in the development plan and/or NPPF which could result in the refusal of planning permission. This site is therefore assessed and considered on its suitability as being sustainable in regards its location and other material constraints and considerations.
- 6.10 This means permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrable outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF's policies taken as a whole. This would also apply where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

#### Assessment

- 6.11 The application is presented as a departure from development plan policies and the following considerations are particularly relevant:
- The Council's housing land supply position
  - The relative sustainability of the site with regard to its location and proximity to RA2 settlements of Aston Ingham and Lea and facilities at the undesignated settlement of Aston Crews
  - Landscape and biodiversity enhancement
  - The proposal is considered to represent high quality contemporary design and architecture, raising the standards of design locally and presenting an example of what can (and should) be achieved in terms of design quality.
- 6.12 It is recognised that the site is not locationally sustainable in the purest policy terms as it is not within or adjoining any settlement listed under Core Strategy policy RA2. The site is however located within and adjoining the main built form of Aston Crews, an undesignated settlement of some 20 dwellings with direct road links to Aston Ingham and Lea. Aston Crews also has a public house. Aston Ingham, a settlement identified under Core Strategy RA2 as a suitable location for residential development, is some 1.5km to the east. Furthermore Lea is reasonably accessible from the site. The site adjoins nine dwellings and their curtilages and is an agricultural field bounded by the B4222, C1280 and an unclassified road. Agricultural land and the wider open countryside extend to the west and south-west. Furthermore, it is advised that sustainability is more than just a matter of location. The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and as such is indivisible from good planning. Amongst other things, it states that decisions should aim to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 6.13 The NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles in paragraph 17 which should underpin decision taking. These include the principle to *'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving places that the country needs'*. Amongst the core planning principles set out in paragraph 17 of the Framework are that plan making and decision taking *should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*.
- 6.14 If a proposal is considered to represent sustainable development, then the decision taker is required by paragraph 14 of the NPPF and Core Strategy policy SS1 to engage the positive presumption in favour of the proposal. The Government's definition of sustainable development is considered to be the NPPF in its entirety, though a concise list of core planning principles is offered at paragraph 17. In terms of residential development, bullet points 4, 5 and 7 of this paragraph are considered to be most relevant:

4. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
  5. Takes account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
  7. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution
- 6.15 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to) improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure. The Ministerial foreword to the NPPF states *our standards of design can be so much higher. We are a nation renowned worldwide for creative excellence, yet, at home, confidence in development itself has been eroded by the too frequent experience of mediocrity* and goes on to set out the Government's policies, aims and objectives in Section 7 Requiring Good Design, paragraphs 56-68.
- 6.16 It is clear from the NPPF that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 58 states planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:
- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
  - establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
  - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
  - respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
  - create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
  - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 6.17 Paragraph 55 states: *To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.*
- 6.18 Paragraph 61 acknowledges that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
- 6.19 Section 11 of the NPPF, titled 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' in its opening paragraph 109, sets out *The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.*
- 6.20 Core Strategy policy SS6 describes proposals *should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations.*

6.21 Policy SS6 then states in its list of criteria:

*Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*

6.22 Core Strategy policy LD1 criteria require new development to achieve the following:

- *demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, including protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;*
- *conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management*

6.23 Policy RA2 states housing proposals will be permitted in designated settlements where the following criteria are met:

*1. Their design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area.*

*2. Their locations make best and full use of suitable brownfield sites wherever possible;*

*3. They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting; and*

*4. They result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.*

6.24 Policy RA3 Criterion 6 allows for dwellings of exceptional quality and innovative design satisfying the design criteria set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF and achieving sustainable standards of design and construction.

6.25 In light of the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal would help support the community and facilities of Aston Crews and nearby identified settlements and is representative of sustainable development warranting in principle support and having regard to paragraph 55 of the NPPF does not represent isolated new development in the countryside.

#### Assessment of Proposed Design

6.26 The dwelling is a single storey unit with a square plan form featuring an internal garden courtyard and external terracing. The dwelling has a consistent height from finished floor level of 3.1 metres. The proposal is modest in size and presented as a low maintenance dwelling, with a completely open plan interior space. The comprehensive landscaping proposal is intrinsic to the development and integration of the built form to its context and setting.

6.27 The massing of the dwelling is derived from its fully accessible internal layout, creating a form that reflects the function. The concept has been developed from an appreciation and assessment of the rural setting and the idea of architecture transforming over time and with the seasons. A lightweight frame sits over the form expressing the structure of the building, while providing the support for plants to grow and gradually envelop the frame.

- 6.28 The garden courtyard is a principal feature of the design. The living accommodation encloses the garden courtyard. This space will be surrounded by low maintenance climbers, that over the years will grow up and over the structure, providing shading during the summer. Species such as Wisteria, Clematis and Honeysuckle will be chosen to enhance biodiversity.
- 6.44 The site benefits from being in a high quality landscape location with dramatic views across a valley. This has, with the environmental strategy, shaped the design of the dwelling.
- 6.45 The environmental strategy underpinning the design aims to ensure occupants are able to adapt the space to their needs over their lifetime. The form has been designed to maximise ventilation with high-level openings at the perimeter and internal courtyard to draw the air through the space and circulate fresh air. Additionally the width of the space is kept to a minimum with window openings on either side of the space to create cross-ventilation.
- 6.46 The solar strategy has informed the development's design for the building location and form. Orientated as it is, the location of the glazing on the southwest corner provides solar heat gain on to a concrete floor in the winter. The trellis will provide solar shading during the summer to avoid overheating.
- 6.47 Each bedroom space has a pivot window and a minimum room depth to create cross-ventilation. The design principle here is to allow for a large picture window to the views across the fields without compromising the environmental design of the room. Partially set down in the ground and shaded from the sun these rooms will be well insulated and stay a consistent temperature throughout the year. The "living zone" is orientated to the south-east and south-west axis, with glazing on the southern corner to maximise solar gains. While the "sleeping zone" is orientated to the northeast and north-west.
- 6.48 A feature of the design is to ensure all living spaces are naturally lit. The central courtyard allows light to penetrate into the centre of the living space maintaining a natural light source through out the day. This again, reduces energy consumption, and adds to the sustainability of the proposal.
- 6.49 In light of the significant weight being attributed to the design quality and sustainability credentials of the proposed dwelling, it is considered appropriate to assess these in some detail. The principles underpinning the proposal are as follows:

#### *Solar Gain and Solar Shading*

- 6.50 The building has been placed to minimise unwanted solar gain in the summer and maximise solar gains in the winter. Deep window reveals have been designed as fixed solar shading. The hot summersun is blocked out by the overhang, whereas the cooler winter sun is able to enter into the thermal envelope.
- 6.51 The trellis on the south-east to south-west facades creates season specific solar shading. During the summer the climbing plants will fill out, shading the interior from overheating while the low winter sun will penetrate through the thinning plants into the living space. A combination of these passive elements provide a zero impact and season specific passive heating and cooling system.



### *Fabric First Approach to Materials*

- 6.52 Materials would be locally sourced to minimise carbon footprint, for building and technical features include:
- Highly insulated and airtight timber frame
  - U values (thermaltransfer) of between 0.1- 0.15 W/(m<sup>2</sup>K) provide fantastic building fabric performance (more than 2 times better than current building regs)
  - Use of timber in the building industry helps to sequester carbon from the atmosphere
  - Timber frame construction ensures that the building is lightweight, robust, flexible and cost effective
  - Aim for airtightness of 0.6m<sup>3</sup>/(h·m<sup>2</sup>) at 50 Pa (more than 10 times current building regs)
- 6.53 Wood fibre insulation will be used where appropriate as a sustainable alternative but also achieving higher U-values and healthier living environment. All glazing would be triple glazed to reduce heat loss with U-values equal to or less than 0.85 W/(m<sup>2</sup>K).
- 6.54 To maximise the thermal mass behind southern glazing, ground granulated blast-furnace slag 'GGBS' is to be used. Ground granulated blast-furnace slag is a by-product of iron and steel making which would otherwise not be utilised. GGBS concrete is combined with Portland cement to create a more sustainable more durable product which can last up to twice as long as ordinary concrete and as it is a primarily recycled product, this reduces the carbon footprint of using concrete significantly. GGBS is also recognised by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) as improving the sustainability of projects, and will count towards certification.
- 6.55 Concrete has a very high density and as a result, the proposed GGBS groundslab provides high levels of thermal mass. The exposed polished GGBS screed creates a dense element absorbing the sun's heat, only releasing it into the space once the internal temperature drops, hugely improving the thermal stability of the whole building and reduces the cost of heating the space.

### *Passive Ventilation*

- 6.56 The application also sets out the following features:
- Openable window positions for natural cross ventilation
  - Openable windows are positioned and sized to make the most of the prevailing wind, maximising the potential for natural cross-ventilation and periodic air purging
  - Ceiling height to plan depth ratio is kept to a maximum, promoting passive airflow around the building
  - The heightened living space with high level windows creates the opportunity for stack ventilation and periodic air purging at the centre of the house

### *Lifetime home*

- 6.57 The layout circulating around a central garden is a consequence of the approach to accessibility. The layout and form reflecting the building's function and despite the sloping site, a single level dwelling is created. Features in the dwelling that enhance livability, inclusivity and house for life approach include:
- Level external entry with a covered porch and flush threshold at entry door.
  - Identifiable entry and approach to the building.
  - Provision for wheelchair storage adjacent to the main entry.
  - Open plan living area provides easy access without obstruction.
  - Low level and inclusive furniture, hardware and fittings.

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- Step free access to sleeping areas.
- All bedrooms to be accessible, with sufficient space and structure above the ceiling to fit a single point static hoist above the bed.
- Wide 1.2m hallway circulating around the garden courtyard, free from obstruction.
- Wheelchair accessible bathrooms with structural provision for ceiling mounted hoist.
- All heights of electrical outlets, switches, controls and meters to follow BS 9266:2013 Fig. 5
- Full-height glazing to allow seated occupants to benefit from the views out.
- Step free access out to terrace.
- Step free access to external store and plant room.
- Internal wayfinding for easy navigation and seamless transition through out the space

6.58 The technical details and design finishes described above will be secured by condition and form part of the high sustainability and design qualities that are considered to justify and underpin the Officer recommendation of approval. On this basis and having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to satisfy the design and built sustainability requirements of Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6 and SS7, RA3, LD1, SD1, SD3 and SD4 and the relevant design aims and objectives of the NPPF.

### Landscape Character

- 6.59 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF describes twelve core planning principles. This includes taking account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it, and contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution
- 6.60 Section 11 of the NPPF – *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*, in its opening paragraph 109, sets out *The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.*
- 6.61 Core Strategy policy SS6 describes proposals *should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations.* Policy SS6 then states in its list of criteria that *Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*
- 6.62 Core Strategy Policy LD1 – *Landscape and townscape* states Development proposals should:
- *Demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;*
  - *Conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management;*
  - *Incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings; and*
  - *Maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.*

- 6.63 There are no formal landscape designations applicable to the site or its location but inextricably linked into the concept of accounting for the locality within a Paragraph 55 dwelling is the landscape design. In this case it is considered that landscape considerations and context along with an overall enhancement of the landscape setting has underpinned and influenced the design and resultant proposal as a whole.

#### Landscape and Visual Effects

- 6.64 Significant assessment and consideration has been given to the landscape character and how the proposal can integrate and enhance the landscape character and provide ecological benefits. There are as a result, seven landscape elements to the proposal –

##### *Wild Flower Garden & Green Roof*

- 6.65 A wild flower meadow is proposed to the east, framing the new building upon entering the site and blending with the green roof. Species to be used as recommended by the Ecologist include: Snowdrop, Garlic mustard, Primrose, Wood anemone.

##### *Mixed Hedgerow*

- 6.66 To further reduce the visual impact of the new property a new hedgerow will be introduced hugging the new building to the north and circulating around to the site entrance to define the domestic gardens. Furthermore the hedge to the west directs your views out of the building creating a viewing corridor out over the Wye Valley. The hedgerow will be planted with local species identified in the Ecology report such as; Field maple, Blackthorn, Crab apple, Hawthorn, Holly. Within the hedgerow Schwegler insect boxes will be installed to enhance biodiversity.

##### *Domestic Orchard*

- 6.67 The landscaping builds on the orchard heritage of Herefordshire. Historic maps indicated an orchard just south of the proposed site. It is therefore historically appropriate to bring back the traditional character of the landscape with the introduction of an apple orchard. The layout is set on a 6 metre grid in line with the recommended planting distances. The orchard is located to the north of the site wrapping around from east to west to obscure views from the neighbouring properties. The planting of local species, such as the Russet Apple, enhances the historic accuracy of the proposals and legacy of the landscape herreabouts.

##### *Gabion Retaining Walls*

- 6.68 The building is set into the hillside by using gabion retaining walls that will be exposed on the cut faces. It is envisaged grass will grow over the top edge leaving the inside faces exposed. The gabions will therefore be faced with rocks found on site and locally quarried sandstone, for a red-brown finish.

##### *Site Enclosure*

- 6.69 The site will be 'fenced off' with a new hedgerow planted to the southern boundary.

##### *Domestic Garden*

- 6.70 The end of the gabion retaining wall creates a small hard landscaped seating area in close proximity to the kitchen. It will slightly sunken at the level of the house creating a private area that is not overlooked by the neighbours.

### *The Trellis*

- 6.71 As part of the architectural detailing the trellis will be planted with local species identified in the Ecological Report. This feature will not only work with the dwelling it will also create nesting areas for birds and increase biodiversity more generally.

### *Grasslands*

- 6.72 This area will remain much the same in nature as existing, however resown and enhanced with a native grass mix as identified in the Ecology report.
- 6.73 These individual and cumulative landscape proposals represent not only sensitive appropriate responses to context but are also considered to represent landscape and biodiversity enhancements that would not be delivered without the development. Whilst enhancing the site, these will also enhance the wider location and setting of Aston Crews. As such Core Strategy policies SS6, LD1, LD4 and SD1 and the relevant landscape aims and objectives of the NPPF are satisfied.

### Highways

- 6.74 The site is currently accessed to the north from Bures Road, with large trees lining the entrance to the west and a hedgerow to the east. The proposed access to the site uses the existing entry point to the farm just off B4222 which has a speed limit of 60mph. The use of the existing access avoids disruption along the main highway. The new house access will be shared with the entry road currently catering for farm vehicles as well as entry to the existing house, at Southlea. Visibility splays will therefore be maintained at the site entrance.
- 6.75 A newly proposed permeable driveway will run from the east heading west following the contours of the land and existing dirt track to the farm. The road will then split curving back up to the proposed new dwelling. This has been located to avoid trees, however it will be located within the Root Protection Area of one large tree. It is therefore proposed to use a cellular underlay grid such as Terram *Bodpave 85*, for root protection, gravel retention and ground stability. This system also allows for surface water to drain away naturally preventing unwanted surface water retention. Any excavation around this zone would be done in accordance with a tree root protection plan meeting the relevant British Standards.
- 6.76 Parking is provided directly from the driveway with 2 parking spaces (2.5x5metres) with access to the side for wheelchair access into the dwelling. The new dwelling also provides external storage area at the side entrance. Additionally the single access route down to the dwelling has a turning circle at the house to ensure vehicles can manoeuvre with ease through the site.
- 6.77 The hard landscaping is important to be even and stable for use with a wheelchair. The surfacing will be Terram's *BODPAVE 40* which is an open cell structure that allows unrestricted water infiltration to be used as part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- 6.78 It is not considered that the proposed dwelling will result in a serious adverse effect upon the highway network as there will not be a significant intensification of vehicle use to and from the site. It is noted the Transportation Manager has no objection and accordingly, the proposal satisfies CS policy MT1.

### Ecology

- 6.79 The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the application and the ecological survey accompanying the application, along with the great crested newt survey and is content with the findings. He comments that the mitigations proposed are acceptable, and recommends approval with conditions with respect to the ecological remit of his position.

6.80 A number of biodiversity enhancements are proposed. The significant landscaping strategy utilising appropriate planted species, detailed above, provides a raft of ecological and biodiversity enhancements and benefits. BAP priority habitats such as native species-rich hedgerow planting and native wildflower grassland sowing features as habitat creation within the development. Further to that, other measures include bird and bat boxes.

#### Drainage

6.81 In addition to the land within the applicant's control and topography of the site, the significant landscape planting will reduce surface water run off and increase infiltration rates. This has a net betterment over the existing situation as an open field. A detailed drainage strategy would be secured by condition.

#### Conclusion

6.82 The proposal, notwithstanding its location, is considered to be representative of sustainable development, being of a high quality design with landscape and ecological enhancements which comply with relevant local and national planning policies. The proposal makes a modest contribution to housing delivery in a relatively sustainable location and in an aspirational and exemplary manner. The proposal will raise design standards locally.

6.83 As part of this conclusion, weight has been given to the Council's housing land position, which combined with the above, leads to the view that the proposal is a sustainable form of development, compliant with the NPPF. Reference is made to Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, RA3, LD1, LD4 and SD1 and the relevant aims and objectives of the NPPF along with the lack of a Neighbourhood Plan that can be attributed any weight. As such, assessing the planning balance, the benefits of the proposal including enhancement of the site, quality of design and modest contribution to housing supply is considered to outweigh the modest environmental harm attributed to its open countryside location.

6.84 As such the recommendation is approval with conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any other further conditions considered necessary by officers named in the scheme of delegation to officers:**

- 1. A01 - Time Limit for Commencement (Full Permission)**
- 2. B02 - Development in Accordance with Approved Plans and Materials**
- 3. H20 - Road Completion in 2 Years**
- 4. H06 - Vehicular Access Construction**
- 5. H09 - Driveway Gradient**
- 6. H12 - Parking and Turning - Single House**
- 7. M17 - Water Efficiency - Residential**
- 8. H27 - Parking for Site Operatives**
- 9. H29 - Secure Covered Cycle Parking Provision**

10. The recommendations for species and habitat enhancements set out in the ecologist's report from November 2016 and great crested newt report of June 2017 should be followed unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. A working method statement for protected species present together with an enhancement plan integrated with the landscape plan should be submitted to the local planning authority in writing. The plan shall be implemented as approved.

**Reason:** To ensure that all species are protected having regard to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (with amendments and as supplemented by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and 2012 amendment) and to comply Herefordshire Council's Policies LD2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, LD3 Green Infrastructure of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

11. An appropriately qualified and experienced ecological clerk of works should be appointed (or consultant engaged in that capacity) to oversee the ecological mitigation work.

**Reason:** To ensure that all species are protected having regard to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (with amendments and as supplemented by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and 2012 amendment) and to comply Herefordshire Council's Policies LD2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, LD3 Green Infrastructure of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

12. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, the following details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval –  
Provision of a detailed drainage strategy that demonstrates that opportunities for the use of SUDS features have been maximised, where possible, including use of infiltration techniques and on-ground conveyance and storage features:

- A detailed surface water drainage strategy with supporting calculations that demonstrates there will be no surface water flooding up to the 1 in 30 year event and allowing for the potential effects of climate change;
- Details of proposed outfall structures. Any discharge of surface water or foul water to an ordinary watercourse will require Ordinary Watercourse Consent from Herefordshire Council prior to construction.
- Results of infiltration testing undertaken in accordance with BRE365;
- Confirmation of groundwater levels to demonstrate that the invert level of any soakaways or unlined attenuation features can be located a minimum of 1m above groundwater levels in accordance with Standing Advice;
- A detailed foul water drainage strategy showing how foul water from the development will be disposed of.
- Demonstration of the management of surface water during extreme events that overwhelm the surface water drainage system and/or occur as a result of blockage

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter be maintained as such.

**Reason:** To protect water quality hereabouts, in the interests of the environment and public safety, minimise the impact of development on water quality and surface water flooding and to comply with Herefordshire Core Strategy policies SS1, LD2, SD3 and SD4.

- 13. F14 - Removal of Permitted Development Rights
- 14. G09 - Details of Boundary Treatments
- 15. G10 - Landscaping Scheme
- 16. G14 - Landscape Management Plan
- 17. I33 - External Lighting
- 18. C01 - Samples of External Materials

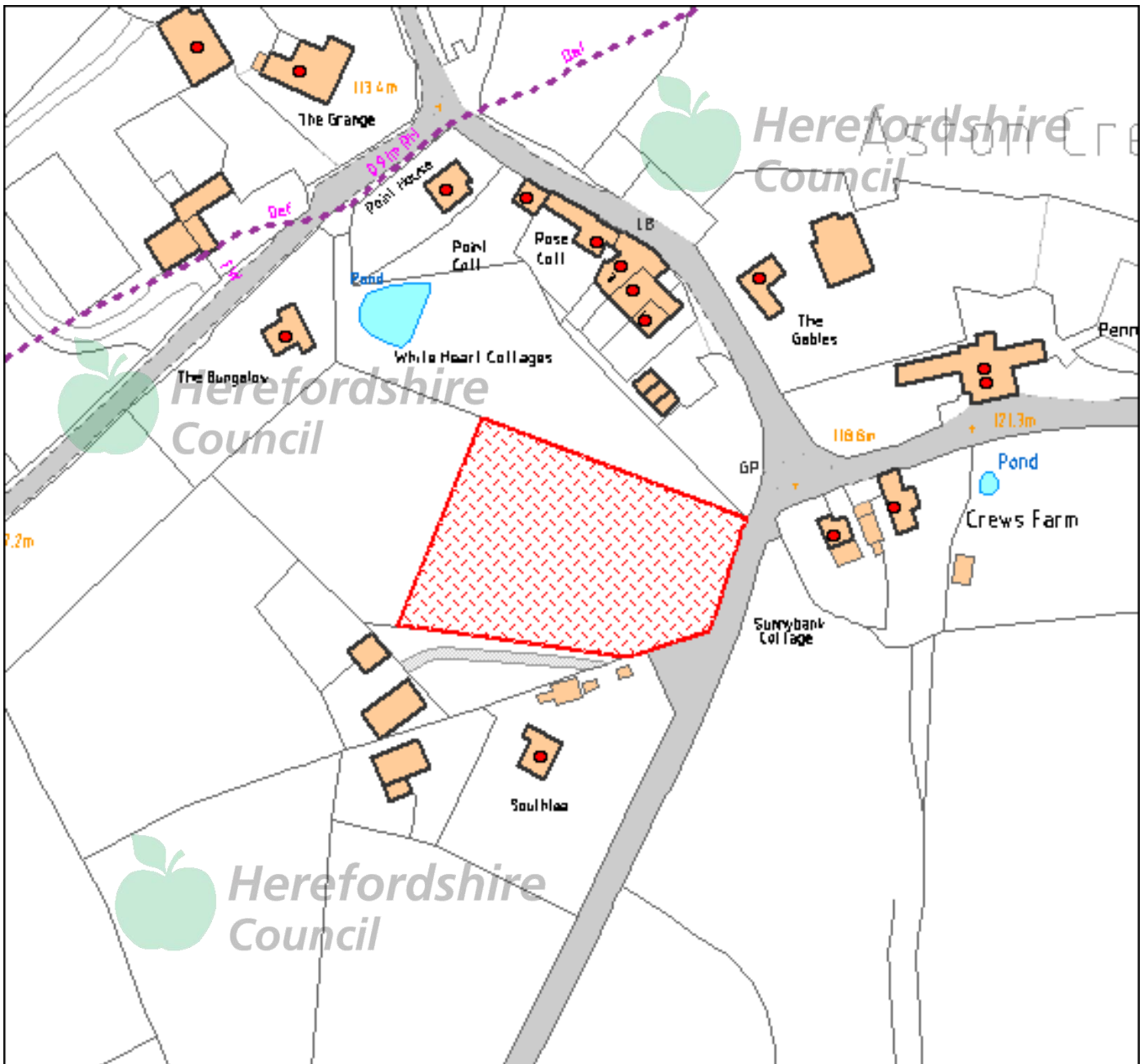
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** 174198

**SITE ADDRESS :** LAND AT SOUTH LEA, ASTON CREWS, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7LW

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