

**7 DCCW2006/3362/F - PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE TO AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT STORAGE AREA AT LAND TO THE REAR OF BEECH BUSINESS PARK, TILLINGTON ROAD, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR4 9QJ**

**For: Ravenhills Farm Services per John Phipps, Bank Lodge, Coldwells Road, Holmer, Hereford, HR1 1LH**

**Date Received: 18th October, 2006      Ward: Three Elms      Grid Ref: 48694, 42270**

**Expiry Date: 13th December, 2006**

Local Members: Councillors Mrs. P.A. Andrews, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels and Ms. A.M. Toon

### **1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 Ravenhills Farm Services is located on the north western edge of Beech Business Park, Hereford. Access is obtained from the Tillington Road through the Business Park.
- 1.2 The proposal is to use a triangular parcel of land as additional storage for the business.
- 1.3 The land abuts the Roman Road to the north but all access will be by means of the Business Park. The site measures 115 metres by 60 metres at its widest point tapering to 23 metres where it abuts Roman Road.
- 1.4 The planning application proposes enhanced landscaping along the southern, northern and part of the western boundary. Security fencing is proposed on the inside of the enhanced landscaping with two gates leading from the applicant's existing premises. A public footpath abuts the western boundary.

### **2. Policies**

#### **2.1 National:**

PPS1            -    Delivering Sustainable Development

#### **2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):**

Policy S1        -    Sustainable Development  
Policy S4        -    Employment  
Policy DR2      -    Land Use and Activity  
Policy E6        -    Expansion of Existing Businesses  
Policy E7        -    Other Employment Proposals Within and Around Hereford and the Market Towns  
Policy LA3      -    Setting of Settlements  
Policy LA6      -    Landscaping Schemes

### **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 SC990152PF Proposed change of use to agricultural storage area. Refused 6th August, 1995. Appeal dismissed.
- 3.2 DCCW2004/2365/F Proposed change of use from agriculture to agricultural storage. Withdrawn 26th August, 2004.

#### **4. Consultation Summary**

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None.

##### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards: "I can find no nuisance complaints relating to this site. I am satisfied that there is no foreseeable reason for objection to this proposal, however I would advise that restrictions are placed upon the operating hours of the site in order to protect the amenity of nearby residents from potential noise and movement of machinery and equipment.

I would recommend that the use or movement of plant, machinery or equipment should not take place on the proposed site before 7.00am on weekdays and 8.00am on Saturdays nor after 8pm on weekdays and 6pm on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays."

#### **5. Representations**

- 5.1 Hereford City Council: "Hereford City Council requests that this planning application be determined strictly in accordance with the approved development plan applicable to the area of the Parish of the City of Hereford. The City Council has no objection to this application for planning permission."

- 5.2 Burghill Parish Council: "The Parish Council would object to this application on the grounds of creeping urban development - loss of agricultural land.

They are also concerned that any further development will lead to an increased noise and light pollution to the residents of the nearby dwellings - hospital Houses, and the increase in traffic which will occur."

- 5.3 Four letters of objection have been received from J. Millest, Tsavo; 4 Tensing Close; Mr. James, 6 Hospital Houses, Burghill; Mrs. S. Green, Lower Burlton Cottage, Tillington Road and B.M. Stevens, Summer-set, Burghill.

- 5.4 A further letter of objection has also been received signed by the occupants of Nos. 1, 6, 12 and 13 Hospital Houses, Burghill.

- 5.5 The main points raised are:

1. This is an infringement of the 'Green Belt'.
2. This will set a precedent for other companies to extend onto these fields.
3. The footpath will eventually be enclosed by industrial units like the one by Bulmers at the end of Plough Lane.

4. This will increase the urbanisation of this semi-rural area.
5. The existing operation already causes problems to local residents with both smell, light and noise pollution and the further development will cause even more disruption to the local community.
6. Access to Beech Business Park is difficult for large agricultural vehicles and this will put more pressure on the local infrastructure.
7. Expansion of the premises will increase the running and testing of machinery reducing the tranquility in this area.
8. Inappropriate to place industrial units so close to Hereford Dialysis Unit.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## **6. Officer's Appraisal**

- 6.1 This site has previously been subject of a refusal and dismissed appeal in 2000. However since then the applicants have pursued the allocation of this land within the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. In this respect the Inspector has amended the settlement boundary in this location in order that the land, subject of this application, is included within the settlement boundary for Hereford City. The Inspector's full comments are:

“6.15.1 It appears to me that Ravenhill Farm Services is an important local company. It is a major supplier of agricultural equipment in Herefordshire and The Marches. The company moved into purpose built premises at the Beech Business Park in 1992. This is now the head office where some 21 staff are employed. However, the business operates in cramped conditions and expansion is an important requirement.

6.15.2 The Council has suggested relocation to a larger site. However, there are a number of problems. For example, there is a lack of suitable sites. Only two sites have been revealed by the Council's property register, both at Rotherwas. More particularly, bearing in mind existing and future business requirements, the firm needs to be located in north or northwest Hereford. If local premises cannot be found, there is a danger that the company would move to Shrewsbury.

6.15.3 The possibility of expansion to the west of Beech Business Park has been considered before. In this regard, an appeal was dismissed in May 2000. Part of the problem is that expansion of the business park would involve encroachment into the countryside outside Hereford's settlement boundary. In addition, south of the objection site, the business park does not have strong defensible boundaries and there could be pressure for more expansion into the open countryside. Further, and in relation to the UDP, the Plan does not make allocations for the needs of individual companies.

6.15.4 I saw that Roman Road in the vicinity of the objection site has recently been improved. I was told that this had resulted in an urbanising effect. Certainly, when approaching from the west, I had the clear impression of driving into an urban area. Indeed, the western elevation of the premises occupied by Ravenhill Farm Services is clearly visible and can be seen in marked contrast to the open countryside generally to the west of Hereford. Planting on the western periphery of the city at this point would be highly desirable.

6.15.5 In all the circumstances, I believe that expansion of Ravenhill Farm Services by utilising the land west of Beech Business Park should be supported. Development should be accompanied by planting along the western boundary of the site. I do not consider that the character or appearance of the area would be materially harmed.

6.15.6 However, the allocation of land for the expansion of a particular company would not be appropriate. In addition, I would not wish to encourage the unwarranted expansion of the remainder of the business park into the open countryside. As such, I feel that the most appropriate solution would be to extend the settlement boundary of Hereford to include the objection site.

6.15.7 Inclusion within the settlement boundary of Hereford would pave the way for expansion under Policies E6 and E7 and would allow for negotiated landscaping on the western boundary of the site. I appreciate that Policy E7 refers to making use of previously developed land in preference to Greenfield land. However, this is only "wherever possible". The use of brownfield land would not be possible in this instance."

- 6.2 The Council have not objected to this change made by the Inspector and therefore substantial weight can now be attached to this policy. Accordingly the principle of developing the site accords with Policy E6 of the emerging Unitary Development Plan as the site is within the revised settlement boundary for Hereford City. Therefore whilst the concerns raised in respect of encroachment into open countryside are acknowledged, these cannot be substantiated when weighed against the clear advice set out in the UDP Inspector's Report.
- 6.3 No buildings are proposed on the land with its use limited to the storage of machinery and equipment. A condition is recommended to restrict the use to storage only.
- 6.4 Enhanced landscaping of the boundaries is included within the proposal and again this will be protected with appropriate conditions and is in accordance with the inspector's findings.
- 6.5 Regarding the complaints of smell, noise and light pollution, the Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager has confirmed that they have had no nuisance complaints and are satisfied that there are no reasons to object to the proposal. However, an operating hours condition is proposed and will be included within the recommendation together with a condition controlling external lighting.
- 6.6 Finally, the Traffic Manager has assessed the proposal and raises no objection.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission)).**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

2. **F07 (Restriction on hours of operation of plant/machinery/equipment).**

**Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.**

**3. F20 (Scheme of surface water drainage).**

**Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.**

**4. F22 (No surface water to public sewer).**

**Reason: To safeguard the public sewerage system and reduce the risk of surcharge flooding.**

**5. F26 (Interception of surface water run off).**

**Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.**

**6. F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting).**

**Reason: To safeguard local amenities.**

**7. The use of the site shall be for the storage of agricultural plant and equipment in association with Ravenhills Farm Services only.**

**Reason: In order to clarify the terms under which this planning permission is granted.**

**8. G01 (Details of boundary treatments).**

**Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.**

**9. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general)).**

**Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.**

**Informatives:**

**1. N19 - Avoidance of doubt.**

**2. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.**

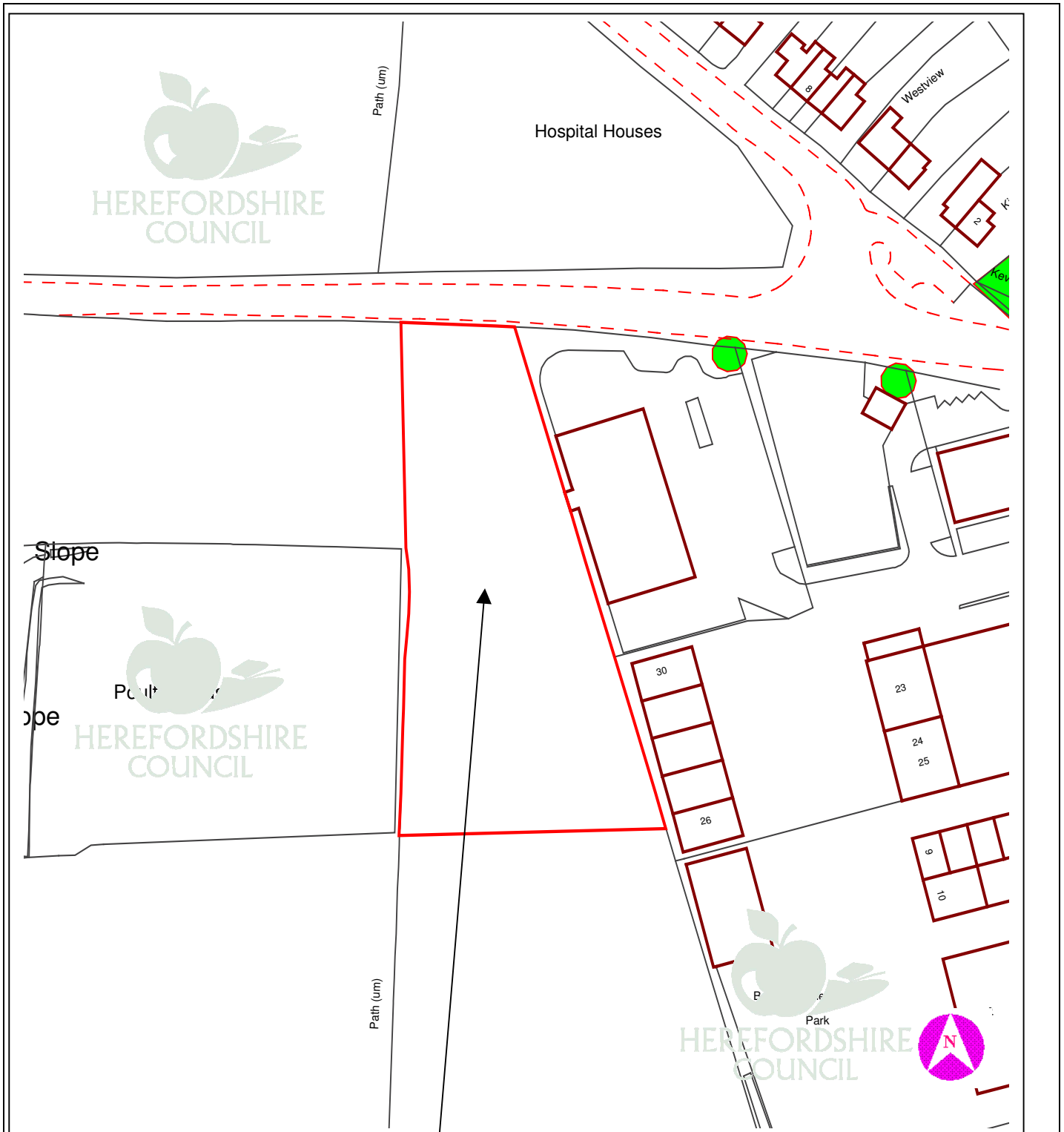
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCCW2006/3362/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS:** Land to the rear of Beech Business Park, Tillington Road, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 9QJ

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