

7 DCCW2006/3963/F - PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDING FOR GENERAL STOCK HOUSING AND GRAIN STORE AT SHETTON COURT FARM, MANSEL LACY, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR4 7HP**For: G.H. Powell & Son per Mr. I. Savagar, 35 Caswell Crescent, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8BE****Date Received: 18th December, 2006 Ward: Wormsley Ridge Grid Ref: 40566, 45014
Expiry Date: 19th March, 2007**

Local Member: Councillor J.C. Mayson

This application was deferred at the meeting of the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on the 4th April, 2007 in order to carry out a Members' site visit. The site visit was carried out on the 17th April, 2007. The report has been updated.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is located in the corner of field no. 504045 to the west of Shetton Cottage, Mansel Lacy, Hereford.
- 1.2 The ground is presently pasture land and extensive tree lined hedges about the south and northern boundaries. The land rises gently up to the west. Shetton Farm and its traditional outbuildings are located immediately to the south of Shetton Cottage. The former outbuildings are presently being converted into seven dwellings pursuant to Application No. DCCW2007/1515/F.
- 1.3 The proposal is to erect a 36.5m x 30.48m agricultural building for the purposes of general stock housing and grain store. The building would be 4.26m to the eaves and 8m to the ridge. External materials proposed are concrete walls and metal sheeting under a metal sheet roof. The sides of the building will be open.

2. Policies

2.1 National:

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy E13	-	Agricultural and Forestry Development
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas of Least Resilient to Change

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCCW2006/2966/S Hay, straw and implement building. Prior Approval Refused 29th September 2006. (Note this was in the western corner of the field).

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards: Comments awaited.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager: "I have very grave concerns about the siting of the proposed building and the resultant impact on the quality and character of the landscape. I have considered a range of possibilities by which this impact could be reduced but conclude that the building is inappropriately located and recommend that the application be refused (Contrary to Policies E13, LA2 and DR1 of the emerging UDP).

The location of the proposed buildings in a landscape type identified as 'Wooded Estatelands' in the Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment. This is a landscape of strong, well-defined elements often of a scale untypical of the central part of the county. Large, discrete blocks of woodland, linking hedges and framed views are typical features. Despite these strong elements, the landscape is susceptible to degradation through large or inappropriately located development. The LCA describes this landscape as '...dependent on a small number of strongly defined characteristics.'

The proposed building is a large, industrial scale building that would command an elevated position on the southern side of a wide valley. The main A480 road from Hereford to Kington runs on an identical contour on the north side of this valley and should be considered a major 'receptor' when assessing the potential impact of this building. Uninterrupted views of the site area gained travelling both east and west on the A480 for approximately 3 miles. It should be noted that the majority of buildings in the visual scope of this proposal are located below this contour. The proposed building will also be visible from a bridleway further up the southern valley side and will interrupt views from it.

The proposed building is arbitrarily located in the eastern corner of a field, immediately adjacent to a former trackway. This route would appear to have linked across the valley from the bridleway mentioned above, via Shetton Court Farm to Flag Farm and the main road beyond to the north. This route, now redundant, has resulted in a double-hedged field boundary instantly distinguishable from the other well trimmed, straight, post-enclosure hedges defining the remaining fields of the southern side of the valley. This feature is insufficiently large to screen the proposed building; rather its significance would be overshadowed by it.

The proposed building draws no reference from the existing buildings in the Shetton Farm complex and will be perceived as juxtaposed and dominant to it rather than part of it. No amount of landscaping would adequately disguise the presence of this building and due to the elevated position may even risk exaggerating its presence.

Whilst I recognise the importance of encouraging and maintaining livestock farming in this landscape, essential to the retention of the pastoral quality of the area, I believe that alternative sites should be investigated and more careful consideration given to the potential impact on the landscape. Identifying a site subordinate to the principal elements in the landscape will be necessary to successfully accommodate a building of the proportions proposed."

5. Representations

5.1 Mansel Lacy Parish Council: "The Foxley Group Parish Council has no objection to this application for a general purpose farm building to replace the covered area of the now obsolete fine Victorian brick farm complex. This Council realizes the importance of farms being viable in order to survive in these difficult times. We feel that the proposed siting of the new building is probably in the last obtrusive position, adjacent to the original farmstead. In fact, the new buildings will be less obtrusive than the original because many of the existing buildings are due to be demolished."

5.2 Mansel Gamage Parish Council: "Unhappy with proposed site. The first site proposed more accessible as it was more discrete from surrounding area.

This site will impact on surrounding landscape.

This building will have impact on adjoining properties by size, lights and noise.

Does not meet Parish Plan guidelines."

5.3 Further response received 28th February 2007. "At a planning sub-committee meeting held on Tuesday 27 February the above item was re-considered after we had received the attached letter from the applicant.

We believe that we gave an honest opinion when we first considered this application and found no reason to change our minds at this second consideration.

This building will be built in the wrong place should you give permission to this application."

5.4 One letter of objection has been received from Richard White, Chandos, Much Marcle, Nr. Ledbury, Herefordshire. The main planning points are:-

1. The building should be moved 200 yards to the west which would mean it would not be detrimental to Cork & Bottle Cottage and barn conversion to the north and the landscape in general.

2. Stock buildings are normally located 400 metres from dwellings.

5.5 Fourteen letters of support have been received.

The main points raised are:-

1. The positioning of this building in the proposed place would be the most advantageous as far as the workings of the farm, landscape and residential property nearby.

2. Other sites have been considered but are either too wet or would be exposed within the landscape.
3. The building will not impact in any way on the surrounding landscape.

5.6 The applicant and agent have submitted letters, the main points are:-

1. The site was chosen after a great deal of thought given the requirements of this mixed arable and livestock farm.
2. This site leads directly to the grasslands much of which is now down to permanent pastures.
3. There would be no bio-security problems with stock having to cross the lane.
4. The building has been designed to cater for the storage of straw, hay, corn and implements which would make the farm tidier and conform to present day rules and regulations regarding farm management.
5. The sheep will only be housed whilst lambing therefore there will be no slurry or problems with manure.
6. The chosen site will be seen as part of the group of buildings at Shetton Court Farm and Cottage.
7. Additional planting will be undertaken.
8. Hard surfacing will be laid around the building which will help keep the road clean and tidy.
9. Services are at hand.
10. The alternative site advocated by the Landscape Officer is remote from the farmstead and would require a new roadway. It is the wettest area of the farm and in an exposed position and surrounded by arable land. No services are to hand.
11. The site nearer the farmhouse is in a more exposed position and away from the residence of the principal stockman who lives at The Cottage. It lies adjacent to arable land.
12. The proposed building is not of industrial scale.
13. The site is already well landscaped.
14. The building will not command an elevated position in the valley.
15. Minimise the need to use the roadway and other alternative sites.

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

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The need for this new building has arisen following the conversion of the traditional buildings at Shetton Court Farm into seven dwellings. These buildings were not suitable for modern farming practices.
- 6.2 It is clear from the wide-ranging opinions expressed in relation to the proposed site that views in respect of the visual impact of the building are polarised. The choice of site has been the subject of detailed consideration and generally appears to have the support of local residents with the obvious exception of Mansel Gamage Parish Council.
- 6.3 The applicant has sought to choose a site that meets the needs of the established holding whilst still retaining an element of screening from the adjacent tree-lined hedge. However Members will note that the Council's Conservation Manager has raised serious concerns in relation to the visual impact of the building due to its size and exposed elevated position.
- 6.4 Alternative sites have been suggested but have been discounted by the applicant and whilst the reasoning put forward is noted, it is considered that a suitable site east of the farm as suggested by the Landscape Officer would have the least impact upon the landscape, being lower on the valley side and benefiting from screening by well established trees. The applicant suggests that the suggested alternative site would be difficult to develop, divorced from the farmhouse and sited in the wrong place for the land which it would serve. However, whilst these concerns are noted, it is not considered that they outweigh the visual harm caused by the proposed building in its current location.
- 6.5 Accordingly the planning application as submitted is considered to be contrary to the Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

This building by reason of its isolated and prominent hillside location would have a detrimental impact upon the landscape quality of the area contrary to Policies E13, LA2 and DR1 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

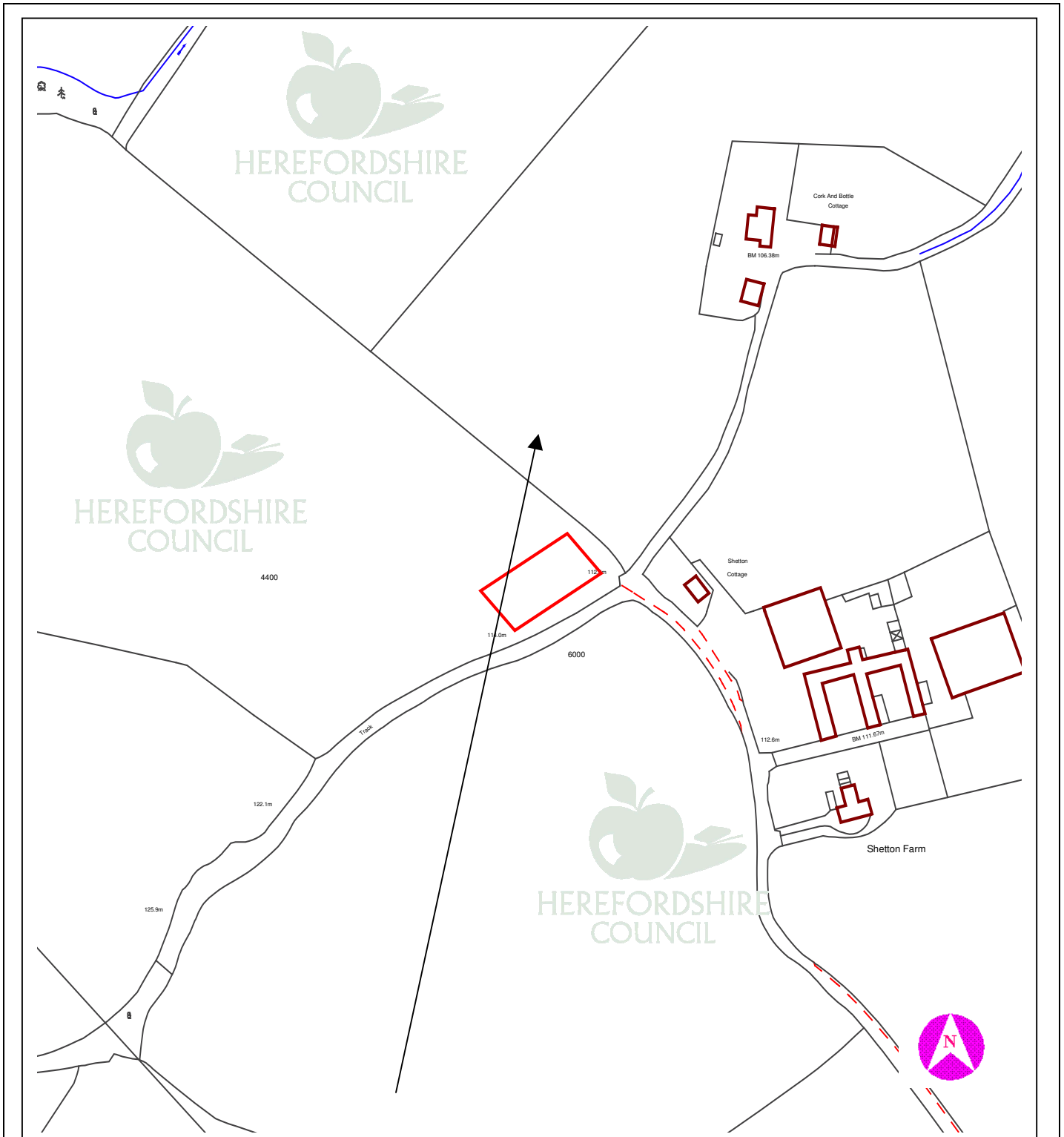
Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning purposes. No further copies may be made.

APPLICATION NO: DCCW2006/3963/F

SCALE : 1 : 2500

SITE ADDRESS : Shetton Court Farm, Mansel Lacy, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 7HP

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Herefordshire Council. Licence No: 100024168/2005