

14A DCSE2007/0900/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM UNUSED FARM BUILDINGS TO FARM SHOP & OFFICE AND ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY BUILDING FOR USE AS PRODUCTION UNIT IN PLACE OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS, WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS ROAD AND PARKING.

14B DCSE2007/0894/L - REMOVAL OF INTERNAL PARTITIONS AND CEILINGS: BUILD INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAIRCASES: FLOOR REPAIR. CHANGES TO FENESTRATION. RESTORE DOOR OPENING TO FRONT ELEVATION 1ST FLOOR.

AWNELLS FARM, MUCH MARCLE, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR8 2NW.

**For: Countryside Restoration Trust per Peter Crump,
14 Richmond Avenue, Bristol, B56 5ET.**

**Date Received: 26th March, 2007 Ward: Old Gore Grid Ref: 65888, 31942
Expiry Date: 21st May, 2007**

Local Member: Councillor Miss T.M.R. McLean

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Awnells Farm is situated on the east side of the C class road (Much Marcle - Kempley) and is about 1 km to the south of Much Marcle village. The east side of this road is open farmland but opposite Awnells Farm there are a number of detached dwellinghouses. The farmstead comprises several discrete elements: a traditional brick barn with modern addition fronts the road, with the listed farmhouse and attached former cider house to the rear and beyond that a range of modern farm buildings. A large pond is on the north side of the complex and occupying a slight ridge between the pond and the adjoining field are disused deep litter poultry sheds.
- 1.2 Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in May 2002 for change of use of the former cider house to a farm shop and office (NE2002/0341/F) and the erection of a production unit (butchery and food preparation) to replace the poultry sheds (NE2002/0344/F) plus listed building consent for internal and external alterations to the cider house (NE2002/0347/L). The current applications are for renewal of these permissions/consent.
- 1.3 The intention is to restore the cider making buildings to their appearance at the end of the 19th century, with limited external alterations, and to bring them into use. The ground floor of cider house and lean-to cider mill at the rear would be a farm shop

selling the applicant's produce and a range of local produce. On the first floor would be office space, providing "IT capability" for the farming and local community, mail order and CRT volunteers. The farm would have an educational role and the shop would be an integral part of this activity. The new building would comprise two parallel ridge-roofed building, although the building adjoining the field hedge would be significantly smaller. Connecting these two buildings and forming an asymmetrical 'H'-shaped complex, would be a taller gabled building. The building would be of brick construction with timber boarding above, concrete roofing tiles but with some solar heating cells. The existing ground level would be lowered by about 1m so that the proposed buildings would be 1m higher than the taller of the two existing poultry sheds. This new building would be used for butchery and food preparation for meat-based products which would be sold through the applicant's farm shop, outlets and by mail order. A new access road to the Production Building would be constructed with 18 car parking spaces.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy HBA1	-	Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings
Policy HBA3	-	Change of Use of Listed Buildings
Policy HBA4	-	Setting of Listed Buildings
Policy HBA12	-	Re-use of Rural Buildings
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas least Resilient to Change
Policy E8	-	Development of Redundant Rural Buildings
Policy E11	-	Employment in the Countryside
Policy E12	-	Farm Diversification
Policy TCR17	-	Farm Shops

3. Planning History

3.1	NE2002/0341/F	Change of use from unused farm buildings to farm shop and office.	-	Approved 30.5.02
	NE2002/0344/F	Erection of single storey building for use as production unit in place of redundant farm buildings, with associated access road and parking	-	Approved 30.5.02
	NE2002/0347/L	Removal of internal partitions and ceilings, build internal and external staircases, alterations to fenestration	-	Approved 30.5.02

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 The Traffic Manager recommends that conditions be included if permission is granted.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant's agent has submitted a Design and Access Statement together with a Development Statement and Business Plan. The latter is summarised below:

- (1) The Countryside Restoration Trust (CRT) has been employing sustainable farming methods and husbandry. Official recognition of the important correlation between quality food production, rich habitat and abundant wildlife. Awnells Farm produces quality food (traditional Hereford beef cattle) and supports wildlife (productive cider apple and Perry pear orchards).
- (2) A major objective in the CRT's medium term plan is to extend the farming methods and diversification practices for all of its holdings.
- (3) The objectives and strategy which is to be directly employed at Awnells Farm includes:
 - Marketing of Quality Farmed products under the CRT's own Wild Farm brand.
 - Diversification of Agricultural Activities.
 - Education development and use of Awnells as an educational resource.
 - Water Resource Management.
 - Farm Management Services.
 - Encourage Access for Social Inclusion.
 - Protection of the Herefordshire Landscape Heritage.
 - Wildlife, Habitat and Landscape Conservation.
 - Provide services to the Rural Economy and Population.
- (4) The Countryside Restoration Trust is a national charity dedicated to the protection and restoration of the countryside where quality food is produced using farming methods that encourage wildlife and enable people to make a living from the countryside.
- (5) The 200-acre farm is stocked with Traditional Hereford cattle and has always been run on an organic basis. The 17-acre ancient orchard containing traditional Hereford apple varieties and Perry pear is organic and registered as such with the Soil Association. The species-rich grassland and orchards are managed under a Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- (6) The Cider Press and Old Mill will be restored with much of their original characteristics retained, will serve as farm shop, education and CRT information base and office facility with IT capabilities. Produce sold through the outlet will be local, much of it of CRT origin, including Traditional Hereford beef, local cheese, cider and Perry pear. The range will expand as conditions permit.
- (7) The poultry sheds will be replaced by a new building that will provide butchery, kitchen, pie making facilities, curing and smoking rooms for meat-based products. These will be sold through the CRT's farm shop and outlets including mail order resources. The proposed Production Unit has been designed on a small scale to fit in with the traditional farm buildings on the site and to avoid the "industrialisation" of agricultural buildings.

- (8) It is intended to grow the business until an optimum employment of 18 employees is reached, significant changes beyond this will be to the ratio of part to full time workers.
- (9) The CRT will seek to minimise staff vehicle movements by the use of minibus transport for employees and the timing of any shift work changeovers will be arranged to avoid local traffic conflicts. Deliveries to and from the business will be limited to box type vehicles and the new access provisions have been designed to prohibit large vehicles. It is anticipated that there will be six vehicle movements per week for delivery and collection.
- (10) The criteria for changes at Awnells Farm include measures which are aimed at preventing waste, reducing carbon emissions and embrace energy efficient technology. Habitat restoration and management work has been in progress at Awnells since the farm moved into CRT ownership.

5.2 Parish Council has no objection to the proposal.

5.3 Two letters have been received objecting to the proposed development on the following grounds:

- (1) this is an extremely peaceful, tranquil and unbelievably quiet part of Herefordshire, which would be changed irrevocably if the farm shop is allowed by a constant stream of traffic, 7 days a week in all likelihood, resulting in significantly increased noise from vehicle engines, slamming of car doors and visitors speaking/shouting. This would be especially noticeable at weekends when there are very low levels of traffic along the lane.
- (2) Production unit would result in increased traffic for employees and deliveries are likely to include noisy machinery, some probably being unpleasantly smelly.
- (3) Increase in traffic along the lane would increase risk of injury to walkers and cyclists, particularly children and detract from these activities.
- (4) Unacceptable to introduce a production unit into this peaceful and well-regarded area.
- (5) Animals would go off the farm for slaughter and be brought back for processing, involving an equivalent or longer journey than if processed in Ledbury - without saving food miles as application documents claim.
- (6) Height of production building above existing ground level would be 5m which would significantly affect views from our house which is directly opposite. Reduction in height should be considered.

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

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The erection of new buildings for employment purposes in the countryside is not encouraged by the Council's policies (E11). An exception however is for a farm diversification project provided the new development is of "a scale and design appropriate to a rural area" (E12). The current proposal (both production unit and farm

shop/offices) would fall within the scope of “farm diversification” and in principle therefore new buildings may be acceptable. It is accepted that the existing deep litter sheds are unlikely to be suitable without major reconstruction and the remainder of the farm buildings are required for stock. The report on the earlier approved scheme (NE2002/0344/F) points out that initial concerns with the impact of the building within the landscape and on the setting of the adjoining listed buildings were overcome by excavating the building 1m into the ground and positioning it as far away from the listed farm and cider houses as possible. In addition the field hedge would be allowed to grow and be maintained at 600mm higher than at present and the building would have a traditional appearance (weatherboarding above a brick plinth). On this basis the building was considered not to be intrusive in the landscape or harm, either the listed buildings or the nearby Much Marcle Conservation Area. There have not been any changes to policy or circumstances that would require re-assessment of that analysis. Although taller and larger than the existing sheds the new building would be about 70m from the nearest dwelling, which is sufficient to protect the amenities of local residents. Additionally a condition could be imposed requiring details of means of attenuating noise emissions from the building.

- 6.2 Farm shops are part of farm diversification and are supported by policy TCR17 provided they are small scale, occupy existing farm buildings, are not detrimental to rural character, residential amenity, highway safety or the character and capacity of the local road network and have no unacceptable impact on nearby village shops. The shop/offices would occupy existing buildings and would ensure that these listed buildings are brought back into use, necessary refurbishment/maintenance work would be carried out and their character respected. This accords with the Council policies for listed buildings and re-use of rural buildings (HBA1, HBA3 and HBA12). As a restricted range of produce would be sold there is unlikely to be harmful competition with the village shop, although this could change over time. This would also limit the number of callers, which because of the location would mainly come by private motor vehicle. The adjoining road is not unduly narrow and only about 1km from Much Marcle village which links to the A449 Ross – Ledbury road. Subject to adequate visibility at the access the Traffic Manager does not object to the proposal. In these circumstances I consider that the level of traffic would not reach unacceptable levels either with respect to local roads or the amenities of neighbours. It is likely that traffic would be more noticeable at weekends, which is very quiet according to representation reported above. Nevertheless this is not sufficient ground to warrant refusing planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

With regard to DCSE2007/0090/F

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 C02 (Approval of details)**

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.

3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

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

4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

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

5 G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

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

6 E15 (Restriction on separate sale)

Reason: It would be contrary to the policy of the local planning authority to grant consent for a separate dwelling in this location.

7 F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

8 H03 (Visibility splays)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

9 H06 (Vehicular access construction)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

10 H13 (Access, turning area and parking)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway.

11 H30 (Travel plans)

Reason: In order to ensure that the development is carried out in combination with a scheme aimed at promoting the use of a range of sustainable transport initiatives.

12 H27 (Parking for site operatives)

Reason: To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interests of highway safety.

13 H29 (Secure cycle parking provision)

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

14 No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision of foul drainage works has been approved by the local

planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

15 F02 (Scheme of measures for controlling noise)

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties.

16 E01 (Restriction on hours of working)

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality.

INFORMATIVES:

- 1. HN05 - Works within the highway
- 2. HN10 - No drainage to discharge to highway
- 3. N19 - Avoidance of doubt
- 4. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.

With regard to DCSE2007/0894/L:

That Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

1 C01 (Time limit for commencement (Listed Building Consent))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2 C02 (Approval of details)

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.

3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

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

- 4 A schedule of repairs for works to the mill building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development commences.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of special architectural or historical interest.

- 5 The method of removing the paint on the external walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development commences. A sample area shall be prepared for inspection and approval before completing the works.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of special architectural or historical interest.

- 6 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

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

- 7 G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

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

INFORMATIVES:

- 1 N19 - Avoidance of doubt

- 2 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Listed Building Consent

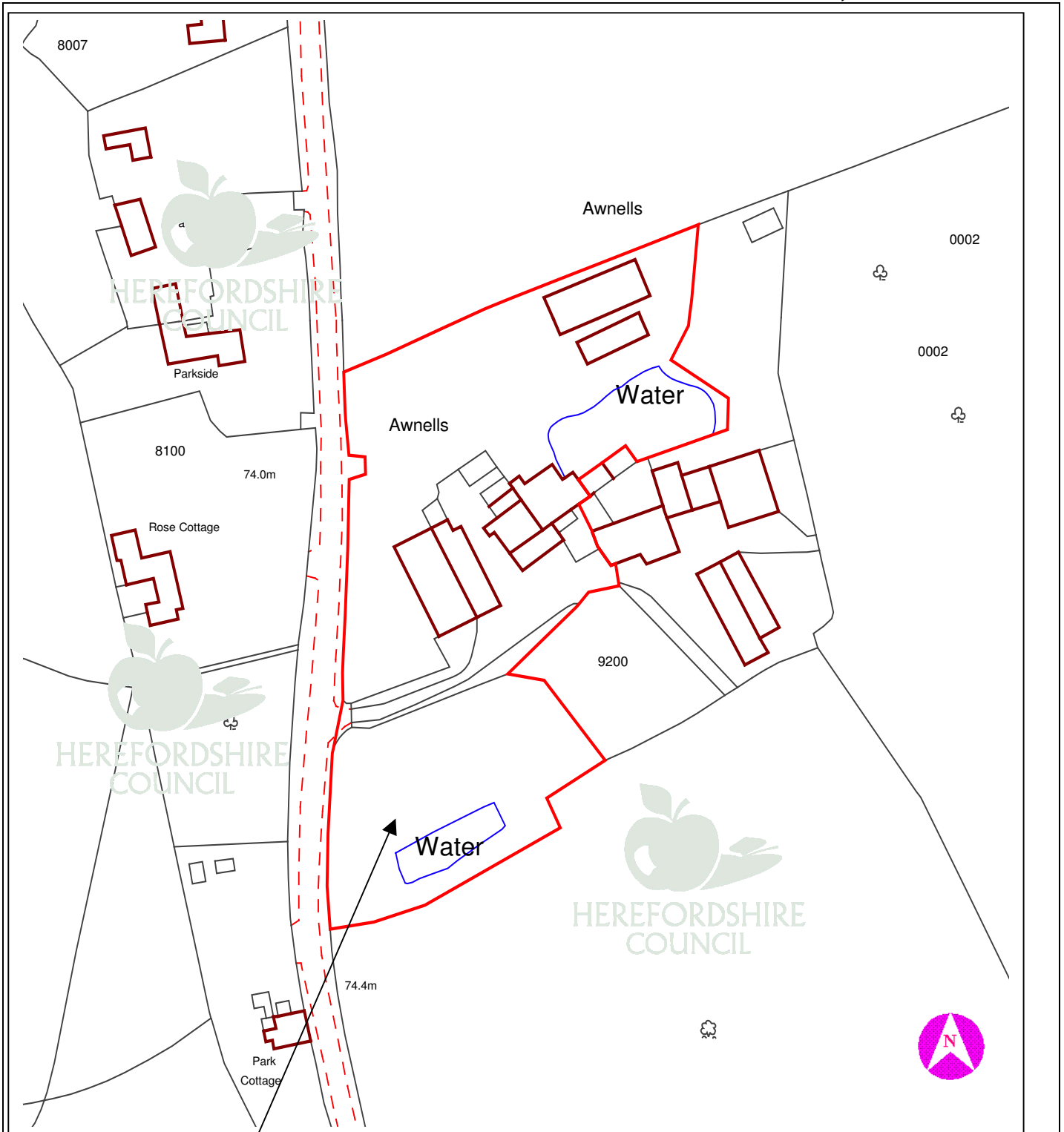
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2007/0900/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Awnells Farm, Much Marcle, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2NW

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