

**21 DCNE2007/1497/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM  
PACKHOUSE TO USE FOR AGRICULTURAL  
ENGINEERING BUSINESS AT PRIORS GROVE  
PACKHOUSE, PUTLEY, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE,  
HR8 2RE**

**For: Richard Tooby Farm Services Ltd**

**Date Received:**  
16th May 2007

**Ward: Frome**

**Grid Ref:**  
64091, 37997

**Expiry Date:**  
11th July 2007

Local Member: Councillor PM Morgan

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

- 1.1 The site is located to the west of the C1304 lane in open countryside at Putley. It consists of a former steel framed packhouse building (30m x 14m) and a surrounding hard-cored yard area with an existing access to the road. Between the building and the road is a pond and surrounding Willow trees that provide screening. The building formerly served Priors Grove fruit farm as a packhouse. The farm is in the process of being sold in separate lots.
- 1.2 This application is for the change of use of the building from a packhouse to use for agricultural engineering. The applicant currently occupies a cramped site off Hereford Road in Ledbury and has been looking for suitable new premises for some time. He considers the building to be large enough to allow all work and storage to be carried out inside the building. The business serves local farmers and employs two people in addition to the applicant and his wife.
- 1.3 The nearest houses are just over 100m to the north and south of the building. The landscape around the building is undulating and characterised by woodland and orchards.

### **2. Policies**

#### Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

LA2 - Landscape character  
E8 - Design standards for employment sites  
E11 - Employment in smaller settlements and open countryside  
E12 - Farm diversification  
HBA12 - Re-use of rural buildings

### **3. Planning History**

NE01/3284/S – Erection of storage building - Prior approval 10.1.02  
NE02/0484/F – Erection of an agricultural store – Approved 11.4.02

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

##### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager has no objections to the proposal.
- 4.3 The Head of Environmental Health has no objection to the proposed development.
- 4.4 The Conservation Manager comments:

“Currently the building is well screened from the roadside by a number of young willow (*Salix spp.*) trees and I would recommend that a condition is attached to any permission granted requiring their retention.

The plans submitted do not indicate a defined hard standing area and I am concerned that the storage of machinery and equipment would not be confined to the immediate vicinity of the building. The resultant ‘cluttered’ appearance could be considered to be detrimental to the quality and character of the landscape and some effort should be made to control this.

Following from above, it should be noted that a pond exists between the building and the road that would appear to be in good condition and have the potential to support locally important or protected species. Whilst the change of use application does not directly impinge on this feature I am concerned about the possibility of this water body becoming contaminated and again a clearly defined and properly drained hard standing area should be established”.

#### 5. Representations

- 5.1 A statement from the applicant explaining the background to the application states:

“My business serves the needs of the local fruit farmers, and this site will be ideal, having enough space to allow all work and storage to be carried out inside the building. I do not intend to change the buildings appearance (a toilet will need to be installed if planning permission is granted, and I plan to use a mini plant system).

There is an existing wide gateway set back from the road, with parking space for employees and visitors. I employ two engineers, as well as being an engineer myself as well as being the Company Director. My wife provides office support. We have three vans, one for each engineer and a lot of work takes place on the farms, (that would be about 60% of the work). The work that takes place in the yard is on the more complex jobs, which may take longer to complete and also the pre-delivery check for new farm vehicles.

As a seasonal business, traffic flow is variable but we may get 5/6 callers per day for parts, although a lot is sent out by post following telephone enquiries. Vehicles coming to the yard for work to be done would be 6/8 a day. The Packhouse traffic was very

intensive with large vehicles moving at night, and our use will be less intrusive to neighbours and spread out during the day.”

- 5.2 In response to questions raised by officers the applicant supplied the following information:

“The amount of traffic. - The previous usage was a Packhouse where the owner had three heavy goods vehicles and a number of delivery vans, plus outside hauliers and delivery of product throughout the day and night. Due to the nature of our business, which is all-agricultural, the majority of our work is carried out on farms, therefore traffic to our premises is minimal, 5-8 callers a day and 5-7 deliveries a week.

Reason we need to move. We have been looking for suitable premises for three years because the yard we use at the moment is not in our control and after September this year we will not have use of this therefore it will become very difficult to work from this site.

Noise levels. - Our present site is next to residential properties and we have had not had any complaints about noise in the eleven years we have been here.

Your concern about the land surrounding the Packhouse. Our intention is to keep this land as it is, which is production of organic fruit.

We confirm that we are aware of the right of way through this land to woodland for the abstraction of timber and accept this”.

- 5.3 Putley Parish Council have no objections to the application.

- 5.4 Letters of objection have been received from:-

S Cole and M Carter, Oakdene, Putley Common.  
Mr and Mrs McEnery, Woodlands, Putley Common.

The following points are raised:

- a) The proposal would increase the number of large vehicles using the local narrow lanes that have dangerous bends. Putley is more than a mile from the main road and the lanes are used by tourists, cyclists and people walking dogs. The applicant’s present business is in Ledbury adjacent to other businesses.
- b) The use of the building for heavy industry would attract customers from a wide area and is inappropriate in a small rural parish.
- c) The use would bring noise and nuisance to a very quiet area due to grinding, drilling, hammering, banging and testing motors.
- d) The previous use of the building was seasonal, generally light and never at night.
- e) The application is not in accordance with the development plan because the unacceptable traffic capacity, safety, environmental impact and potential noisy development is not suited to Putley.

- 5.5 Mr B Pardoe, Castle Cottage, Lower Wilcroft Bartestree, Hereford wrote to say that he has no objection to the application provided that it will not affect his access and private right of way to adjacent woodlands.

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

## 6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 sets out policies that encourage the re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes. The main issues in determining this application are the impact of the proposed use on the road network, the amenities of local residents and the landscape.
- 6.2 The former packhouse building is located in attractive open countryside and has an existing access and adjoining hard-core yard. The proposed use is a general industrial use providing a service to the agricultural community. The applicant's present premises in Ledbury cannot meet his need for additional space.
- 6.3 In terms of traffic generation, the applicant has stated that the majority of their work is carried out on farms and traffic visiting the premises is limited to 5 - 8 callers per day with 5 – 7 deliveries a week. The local road network is narrow and the site is over a kilometre from the A438. However, the building was formerly used as a packhouse and store where traffic generation would be significantly greater particularly during the fruit packing season. The Traffic Manager has no objections to the application and officers consider that the traffic generated by the proposed use will not be detrimental to highway safety.
- 6.4 There are residential properties just over 100m from the site. It is unlikely there will be an adverse impact on local residents as a result of any noise from the premises given the distance between the building and the houses. A considerable amount of their work takes place off site and within the building most work would be carried out using hand tools. The Head of Environmental Health has examined the application and has no objection to the proposal.
- 6.5 The site is located at the foot of land that slopes up to the west and is fringed by woodlands and orchards. The building is dark coloured and screened to some extent from the road by existing willow trees and a hedge. At present the extent of the proposed yard area to be used in connection with the building is not marked or contained by a boundary fence. The applicant intends to use the remainder of the site for organic fruit production. Provided the proposed use does not spread beyond the proposed site there will be limited impact on the landscape. Conditions are suggested to ensure the yard area is contained and the pond and trees are not removed or adversely affected.
- 6.6 Officers are satisfied the proposal meets the requirements of development plan policies and planning permission for the change of use is recommended.

## 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 - **F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting )(external lighting)(the use hereby permitted)**

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

- 3 - E06 (Restriction on Use )(agricultural engineering)(B2)

Reason: The local planning authority wish to control the specific use of the land/premises, in the interest of local amenity.

- 4 - E16 (Removal of permitted development rights )(no extension or installations of plant or machinery outside the building)

Reason: To retain control over the size of the premises in the interests of protecting the amenities of the area.

- 5 - No goods, plant, material or machinery shall be deposited or stored outside the application site edged in red on the plan received by the local planning authority on 21st June 2007.

Reason: To protect the appearance of the locality.

- 6 - G12 (Planting of hedgerows which comply with Hedgerow Regulations )(around the boundary of the site)

Reason: To ensure that hedges planted are ecologically and environmentally rich and to assist their permanent retention in the landscape.

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

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

- 8 - G09 (Retention of trees/hedgerows )(existing trees or hedgerow along the road frontage of the site)

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.

- 9 - The existing pond adjoining the road and shown on the plan received by the local planning authority on 21st June 2007 shall be retained and protected from contamination in accordance with a scheme that shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority before the use commences.

Reason: To protect a water habitat that has the potential to support locally important or protected species.

- 10 - F18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal)

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided.

**Informatives:**

- 1 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

- 2 - N19 - Avoidance of doubt

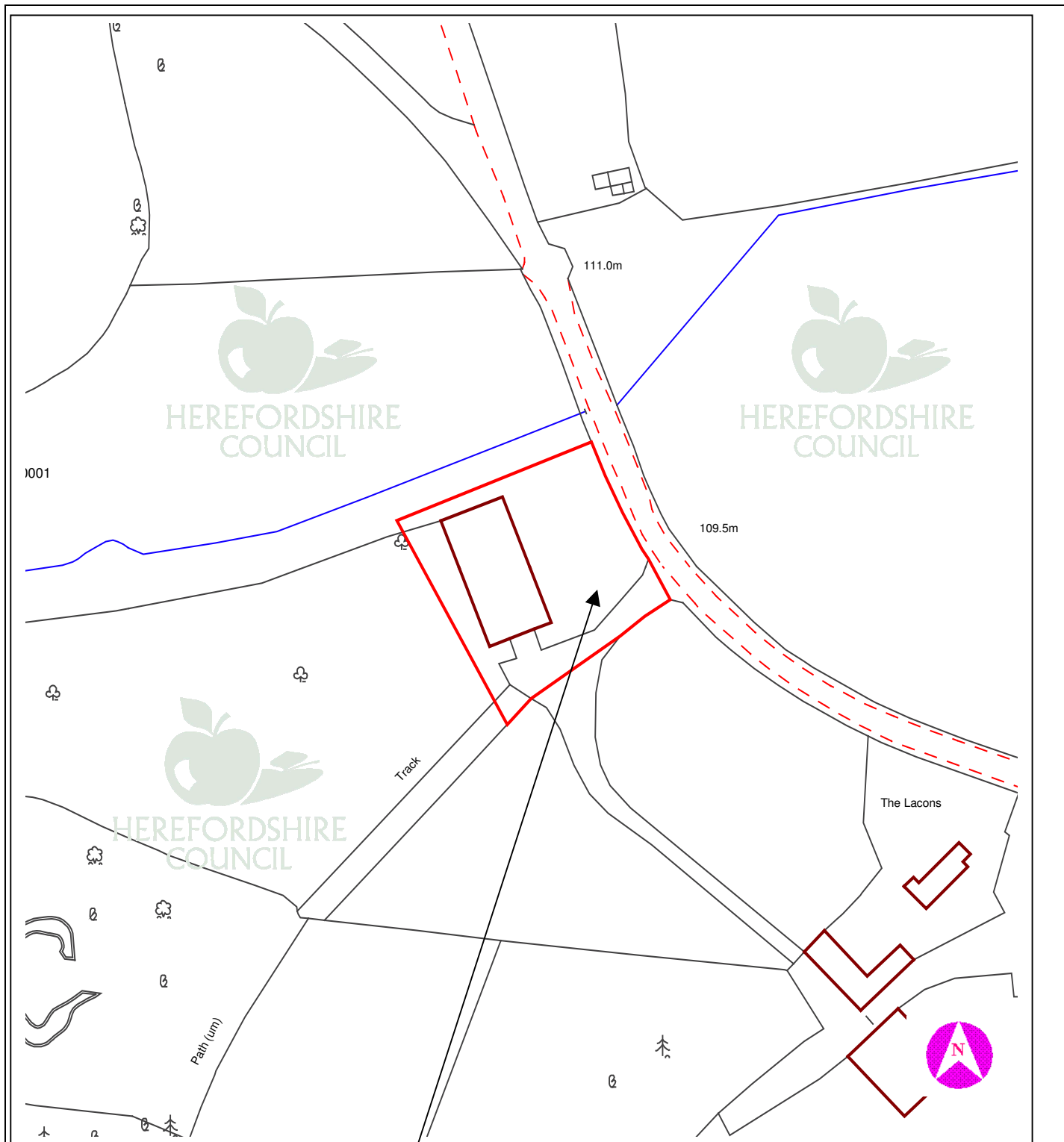
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCNE2007/1497/F      **SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** Priors Grove Packhouse, Putley, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2RE

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