

11 DCCE2007/3378/F - FOUR POLYHOUSES 17M X 5M FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ORNAMENTAL VEGETABLE PLANTS ETC. AT PLOT 1, PEACOCK LODGE, RIDGEHILL, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR2 8AE**For: Mrs. Powell, 62 Web Tree Avenue, Hereford, HR2 6HQ****Date Received: 25th October, 2007****Ward: Hollington****Grid Ref: 51352, 36065****Expiry Date: 20th December, 2007**

Local Member: Councillor GFM Dawe

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of unclassified road 71616 in the area known as Ridge Hill approximately 1.5 kilometres south of Hereford. The site is an agricultural paddock enclosed along the western boundary (roadside) by a mature native hedge with a further small length of hedgerow along the northeastern boundary, the remainder being enclosed by a mixture of post and rail and post and wire fencing. Levels falls relatively steeply from west to east and the site falls within open countryside as identified within the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for the erection of four polytunnels each measuring 17 metres in length by 5 metres in width by 2.3 metres in height sited in two rows along the western boundary of the site. The polytunnels are of metal hooped construction covered with polythene.

2. Policies

2.1 National:

PPS 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy E13	-	Agricultural and Forestry Development
Policy LA6	-	Landscaping Schemes

3. Planning History

- 3.1 None of relevance.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 None.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection.

4.2 Conservation Manager:

The application site is within a landscape type, 'Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings', with a very distinct pattern and characteristics. It does, however, lie at the very edge of this landscape type and would principally be viewed from a different landscape type, 'Principal Settled Farmlands'. The interface of different landscape types often provides opportunities for enhancement of one or other type where infrastructure can be required as part of the development process.

In the case of this site the infilling of a piece of open space on the road frontage would generally be considered contrary to the pattern of the landscape, one of densely located smallholdings and wayside cottages separated by small orchards and pasture, were it not for the fact that the proposed developed has a low profile, disguised below the existing hedge and therefore not visible from the roadside. No infilling will be apparent.

Viewed from the south and south-east (from the Principal Settled Farmlands landscape type) there is the opportunity for enhancing the pattern of the landscape by requiring the planting of new hedges and trees to the site boundary. Not only will this recreate lost field boundaries but help assimilate the proposed development into the landscape.

There remains a final point, that whilst modern in form, the proposed development represents a continuation of the 'smallholding' tradition that first created this densely settled landscape. The scale and proportions of the proposed polytunnels is not a significant departure from the existing development along Ridge Hill and I am satisfied that the proposed development can be assimilated into the landscape.

A detailed and extensive scheme of landscaping will be required.

5. Representations

5.1 Lower Bullingham Parish Council: The application is not supported. Concerns over the visual impact within the surrounding area and that the proposal is contrary to policy LA2 of the UDP. The development will cause an adverse change to the local landscape of open countryside, and would have a detrimental effect locally.

5.2 Five letters of objection have been received including a petition with 18 signatures from local residents. The main points raised are:

1. The development will be detrimental to the area and quite obtrusive.

2. Additional commercial scale vehicles utilising the access and local highway network which is a single track road with no passing places will cause a danger to highway safety.
3. The locality is nicknamed "windy ridge" and the development would create unacceptable noise from the wind rattling over the polytunnels.
4. The development may lead to similar development creating a plastic town as has happened in other parts of the county.

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. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The applicant presently runs a small family business producing ornamental plants, vegetable plants and perennials. The polytunnels are required to enable the expansion of the business and particularly to maintain a supply of stock for sale throughout the year. The growing of plants amounts to an agricultural (horticultural) use, which by its nature, requires a rural location. Four polytunnels of standard size and construction are proposed and the scale is commensurate with the needs of the business and the proposed site. In agricultural and horticultural terms, the proposal represents a small-scale development.
- 6.2 The key issue is the landscape and visual impact of the development. Polytunnels by their design and materials will inevitably have an impact on the local landscape but the key assessment is whether the impact is harmful to the extent that refusal of planning permission is justified. The existing mature roadside hedgerow will largely screen the polytunnels from the west (roadside) and with additional landscaping, the impact of the development can be mitigated from more distant views of the site from the north, east, and south. There are also a number of other properties and associated domestic and agricultural development in the locality and therefore the development will not appear isolated. Furthermore, the Council's Landscape Officer considers that the overall landscape impact is acceptable subject to further landscaping being undertaken which can be controlled by condition.
- 6.3 The Traffic Manager confirms the existing access is acceptable including the capacity of the local highway network to accommodate additional traffic associated with the development. The applicants also confirm that the business does not employ any staff and trips to and from the site will be a maximum of two trips a day during peak season and once a week during the winter. They also confirm there will be no retail sales to visiting members of the public from the site and this can be controlled by condition. It is also not considered that the development will have any adverse impact on the amenity of local residents.
- 6.4 As such the landscape and other impacts of the development are considered acceptable and the development is considered acceptable in accordance with the relevant Unitary Development Plan policies.

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. **G04 (Landscaping scheme (general)).**

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

- 3. **G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general)).**

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

- 4. **G10 (Retention of trees).**

Reason: In order to preserve the character and amenities of the area.

- 5. **There shall be no sales of any produce or products directly from the site to visiting members of the public.**

Reason: In the interests of residential and visual amenity and sustainable development.

Informatives:

- 1. **N19 - Avoidance of doubt.**
- 2. **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.**

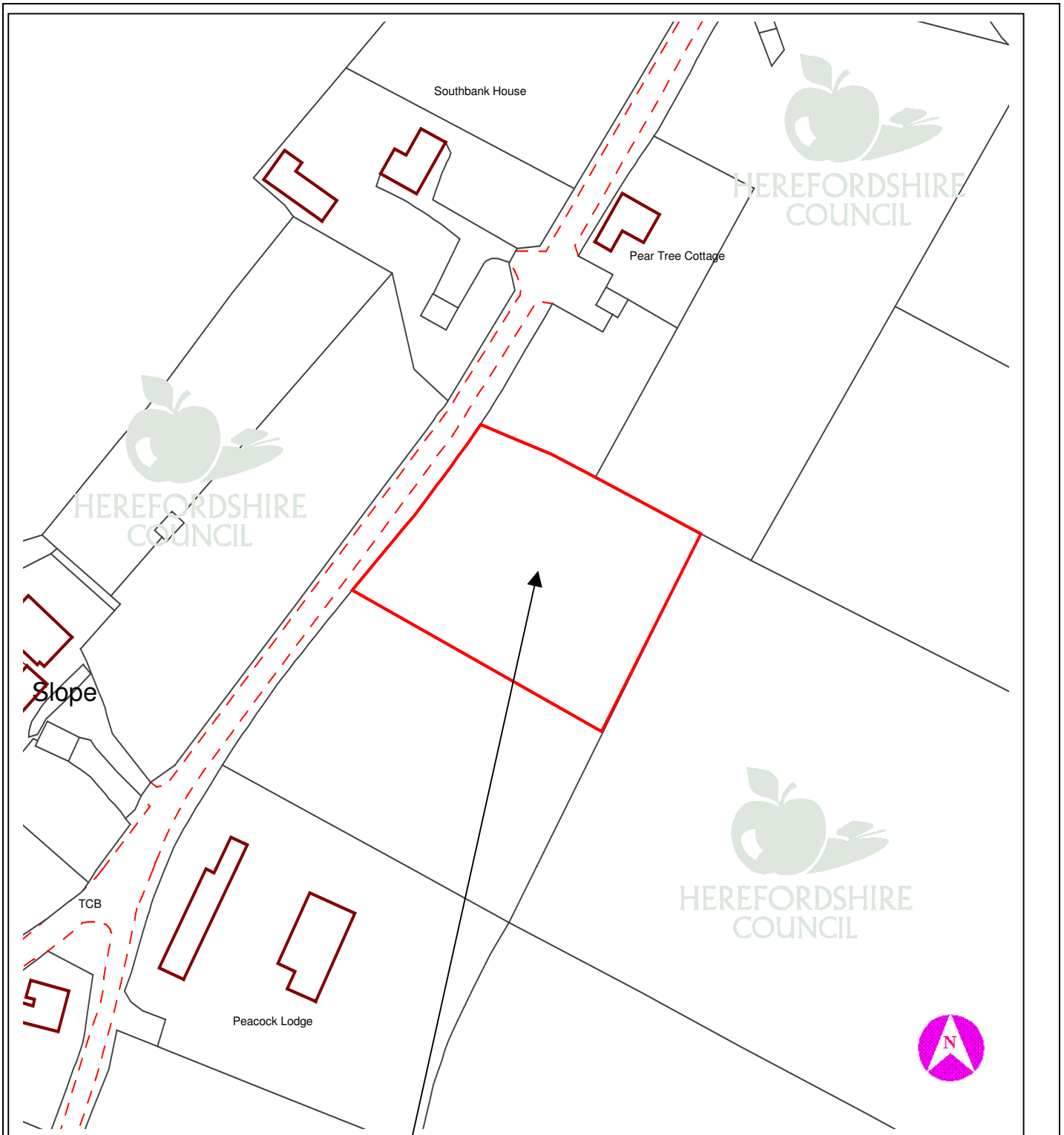
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCCE2007/3378/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Plot 1, Peacock Lodge, Ridgehill, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 8AE

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