

**8 DCNC2009/0620/F - PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL LIVESTOCK BUILDING. LOWER BUCKLAND, DOCKLOW, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 0RU.****For: Mr RH Thomas at the above address.****Date Received: 20 March 2009      Ward: Hampton Court      Grid Ref: 55858, 56831****Expiry Date: 19 June 2009**

Local Member: Councillor KG Grumbley

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The application relates to an area of agricultural pasture lying immediately to the north of an existing range of agricultural buildings. The land slopes gently in both a west/east and south/north direction within a typically undulating landscape of small fields defined by mature hedgerows. One such hedgerow separates the application site from the existing buildings referred to above.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the erection of a new agricultural building identical in its form to that which exists. It comprises a central element with a curved roof with shallow pitched lean-to parts to either side. The building has a total floor area of 1393 square metres, an eaves height of 4.5 metres and a maximum height of 7.3 metres, and is to be finished in a combination of black profile sheeting and space boards.
- 1.3 The design and access statement accompanying the application advises that the building is required as Buckland Farm, previously owned by the applicant and his brother, has been split into two separate farms. The majority of its associated buildings and the farm yard remain in the ownership of the applicant's brother, with limited farm buildings serving the newly created farm at Lower Buckland which amounts to 150 hectares. The farm has a mixed use of arable, sheep and pigs and the building is to be used to house the latter. Approximately 1500 animals are currently housed in a building at Buckland Farm but the agreement for this is due to terminate at the end of the year.
- 1.4 The statement also advises of the removal of a 40 metre length of hedgerow in order that the existing and proposed buildings can be used as a combined complex. It also advises of an intent to plant a new hedgerow of 120 metres to the east of the application site.

**2. Policies**

E13 - Agricultural and forestry development  
LA2 - Landscape character and areas least resilient to change  
LA5 - Protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows  
LA6 - Landscaping schemes

**3. Planning History**

- 3.1 DCNC2008/1311/F - Creation of a new access onto A44 and track to serve Lower Buckland Farm - Approved 13th June 2008

**4. Consultation Summary**

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None required

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Transportation Manager - No objections  
4.3 Conservation Manager - Ecology -

Questions the need to remove the hedgerow between the existing building and the application site. Also advises of a record of Great Crested Newts to the south west and that hedgerows can provide a terrestrial habitat for them.

If the application is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms it is suggested that work to field boundaries is avoided and that hardstanding is created within the field.

**5. Representations**

- 5.1 Docklow and Hampton Wafer Parish Council - No objections  
5.2 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. Officer's Appraisal**

- 6.1 The application is being considered by the Northern Area Planning Committee principally because the applicant is married to an employee of Herefordshire Council. No objections have been received although the Council's ecologist has questioned the need to remove a length of hedgerow totalling 40 metres. Therefore the ecological and landscape impacts of this proposal form the key matters to be considered. An assessment of the need for the building in comparison to the size of the holding and the use for which it is intended is also material to the determination of the scheme.

Landscape Impact

- 6.2 Although this proposal is of some significance in terms of its size, the site is visually well contained. It is located on lower lying land and therefore does not occupy a prominent location on or close to the skyline. The landscape pattern means that distant views are broken by mature hedgerows and coppices of trees. This is of some benefit as this provides a degree of natural screening. The site is not visible from any distant viewpoints and this is borne out by the fact that the existing buildings cannot be seen. The proposal to plant a new hedgerow to the east of the site will mitigate the landscape impacts that the proposal will have and therefore it is considered to accord with policies E13 and LA2 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Ecological Impact

- 6.3 The applicant has advised that in order for the buildings to operate as a single combined unit it is his desire to remove the hedgerow and create an area of hardstanding between the two to allow machinery to move freely between them.  
6.4 Hardstanding has been laid up to the hedgerow on its southern side and the reality is that if it were to be retained it is likely to be compromised by the creation of a similar area immediately to the north. It is reasonable to allow space around farm buildings in order that they function properly and the planting of a new hedgerow to the east is also considered to provide mitigation

in terms of ecological impact. The proposal accords with Policy LA5 and LA6 of the Unitary Development Plan as it includes mitigation proposals.

Need for the Building

- 6.5 The use of the land as an agricultural holding is well established. It amounts to 150 hectares and the applicant's intended use for the building is to house the existing 1500 pigs. His use of the building is intended to comply with current Freedom Food stocking densities. The minimum to comply with this is 0.55 square metres per animal, but the intention is to stock at 0.7 square metres per animal. The building is also designed to incorporate a hospital pen, together with handling and loading facilities that are also a requirement of the Freedom Food Assurance Scheme.
- 6.6 It is concluded that the building is reasonably required to meet these needs and therefore this final matter is also considered to be acceptable.
- 6.7 It is concluded that there is a need for the building and that the landscape and ecological impacts of it will be mitigated through the planting of a new hedgerow to the east of the application site. The proposal therefore accords with the relevant Unitary Development Plan policies and is recommended for approval.

**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. - **B02 (Development in accordance with approved plans and materials)**

**Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans and to protect the general character and amenities of the area in accordance with the requirements of Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

**INFORMATIVES:**

- 1. - **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission**
- 2. - **N19 – Avoidance of doubt**

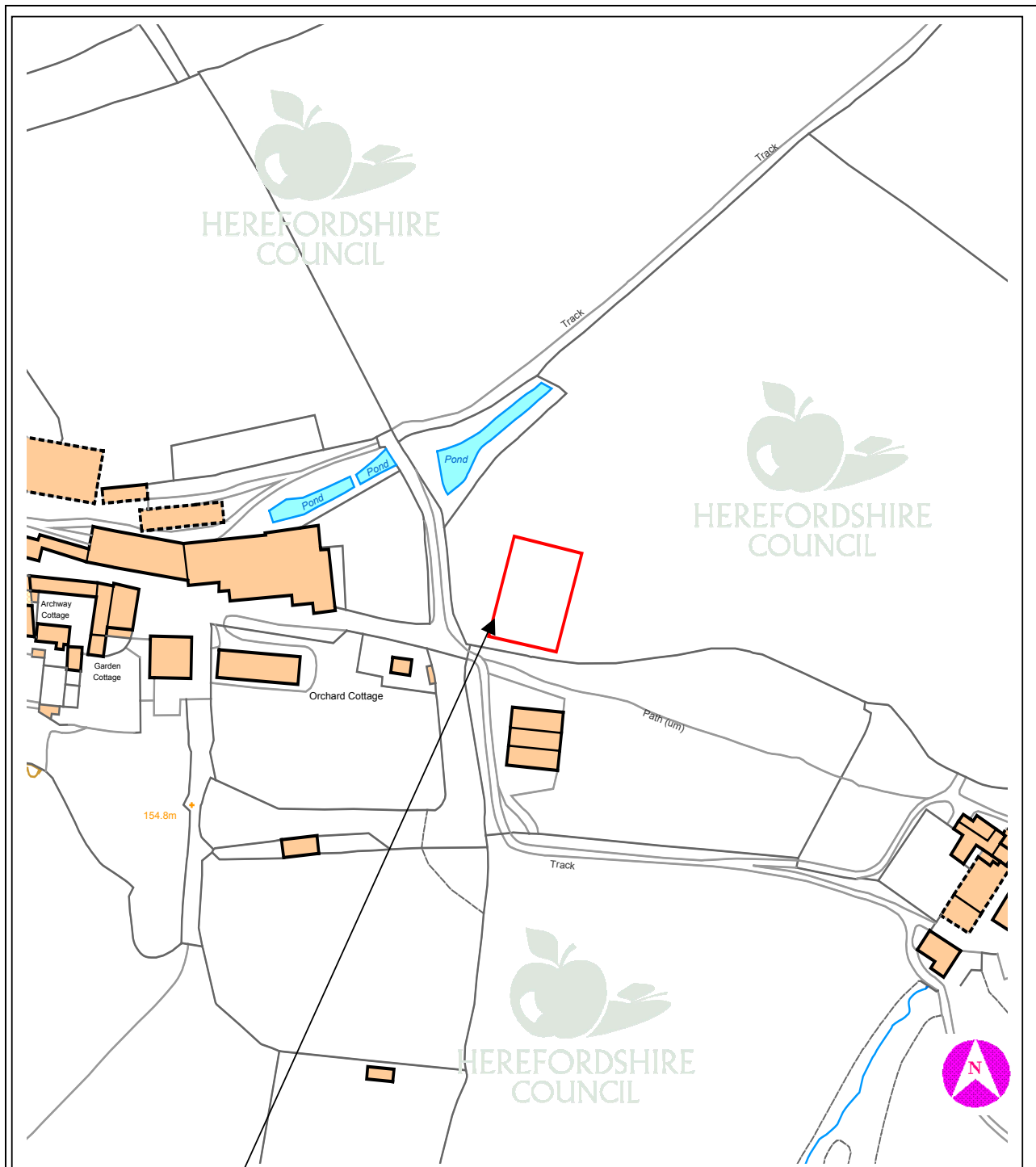
Decision: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCNC2009/0620/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 2500

**SITE ADDRESS :** Lower Buckland, Docklow, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0RU

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