

9 DCSE0009/0945/F - ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL PLANT COMPRISING: AN IRRIGATION TANK, PUMPHOUSE AND BUNDED LIQUID FERTILISER STORE AT LAND ADJACENT TO COLERAINE BUILDINGS, COUGHTON, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5SG.

For: Cobrey Farms per Antony Aspbury Associates, 20 Park Lane Business Centre, Park Lane, Basford Nottingham NG6 0DW.

Date Received: 18 May 2009

Ward: Kerne Bridge

Grid Ref: 61576, 21943

Expiry Date: 13 July 2009

Local Member: Councillor JG Jarvis

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 This application for the retention of agricultural plant is functionally linked to the polytunnels (see DCSE0009/0944/F on this agenda) and specifically the requirement to provide irrigation for the blueberries under the polytunnels with acidified water. The development for which planning permission is sought comprises the following:

- A round, galvanised steel irrigation water tank (height 2.230 metres, diameter 21.030 metres);
- A pressed steel panel clad oblong pump house (height 2.5 metres, length 6.055 metres and width 2.430 metres);
- An open-sided banded store for liquid fertiliser, with profiled steel clad ends and roof on a banded base comprised of reinforced concrete blockwork (height 2.390 metres, length 7.505 metres, width 2.375 metres).

1.2 The combined site area is 0.7 hectares, located immediately to the north of the farm complex upon pre-existing hardstanding. The polytunnel site is immediately to the east.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

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| Policy LA2 | - | Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change |
| Policy DR6 | - | Water Resources |
| Policy E13 | - | Agricultural and Forestry Development |

3. Planning History

3.1 DCSE2009/0944/F Erection of 0.99ha of polytunnels on land to the east of the current application site: - Not determined. See Agenda Item 8

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 Environment Agency: comments awaited

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Environmental Protection Manager: No objections
- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Landscapes): No objection. The intensive agricultural setting, which has degraded the natural landscape, combined with the position of the irrigation tank low on the valley floor and near the existing farm buildings, lessens the visual intrusion of this development. In view of the proposed landscape enhancement, including riparian planting along Castle Brook and planting up of gaps in the hedgerow along Coughton Lane, there is no objection subject to the imposition of conditions.
- 4.4 Conservation Manager (Ecology): No objection subject to the imposition of a condition to seek wildlife and ecological enhancement of the brook corridor.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Walford Parish Council: "Concerns were expressed about possible run-off from the acidic irrigation."
- 5.2 Ross-on-Wye Town Council: No objection
- 5.3 Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council: Defer to the comments made by Walford Parish Council.
- 5.4 Wye Valley Society: This application is functionally related to the polytunnel application. The Environment Agency should be consulted in relation to this application to ensure compliance with paragraph 4.49 of the Polytunnels SPD.
- 5.5 Campaign to Protect Rural England: We trust that the Environment Agency is fully aware of the potential problems associated with possible run-off damaging the nearby Castle Brook.
- 5.6 Walford Residents' Association: Noted that the application is retrospective.
- 5.7 Letters of objection have been received from Lady North, Frogmore, Weston-under-Penyard, Herefordshire and Mrs. V. Morgan, Westfield House, Bulls Hill, Walford. The letters raise concern at the potential for contamination of the brook and groundwater over time.
- 5.8 One letter of support has been received from BerryWorld Limited, Turnford Place, Turnford, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. The letter confirms that the irrigation tank is required to store rainwater which is collected from the nursery area and used to water the blueberry plants, which require an acidic growing medium and are so grown in pots. UK production of blueberries reduces the need for bulk transport and by association carbon emissions.

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 Planning permission is required for the proposal owing to the fact that the equipment has already been erected. Were this not the case, the applicant could have applied for the agricultural plant under Part 6 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995, which entitles farmers to certain permitted development rights for the erection of buildings and plant reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture upon the holding concerned.
- 6.2 The above notwithstanding, the irrigation tank, pump house and liquid fertiliser store are considered to be of limited visual impact. This is due in large part to the nearby presence of the

large industrial scale agricultural buildings which act to screen the plant from the public highway and provide a significant backdrop from the elevated land to the north.

6.3 Concern has been expressed at the potential impact upon the nearby Castle Brook and the threat posed by the release of acidified water into the brook. The Environment Agency has been consulted, but their observations were not available at the time of writing. A verbal update will be provided. The applicant has provided clarification on water management issues, confirming that run-off from the polytunnels is harvested and pumped into the irrigation tank, where it is mixed with a synthetic acid and then released via automated means to the blueberries which stand in pots under the polythene. Any run-off from the pots is tested for acidity and is typically pH 6.8 – almost neutral. In any event, it is recommended that a condition be imposed to require confirmation of the methods described by the applicant to ensure that they are maintained into the future.

6.4 Although functionally linked to and therefore associated with the polytunnels, this application is by far the least contentious. The impact of the agricultural plant in the wider landscape is negligible and the adverse visual impact of the mobile homes and polytunnels is addressed by the mitigation proposed by the submitted landscape and visual impact assessment. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to the Environment Agency raising no objection, officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the condition below and any additional conditions considered necessary by officers:

- 1 Within 3 months of the date of this planning permission, an ecological and wildlife enhancement strategy for the Castle Brook corridor shall be submitted to the local planning authority and implemented as approved and maintained thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: To comply with Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policies NC6, NC8 and NC9 in relation to nature conservation and biodiversity and to meet the requirements of PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and the NERC Act 2006.

INFORMATIVES

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

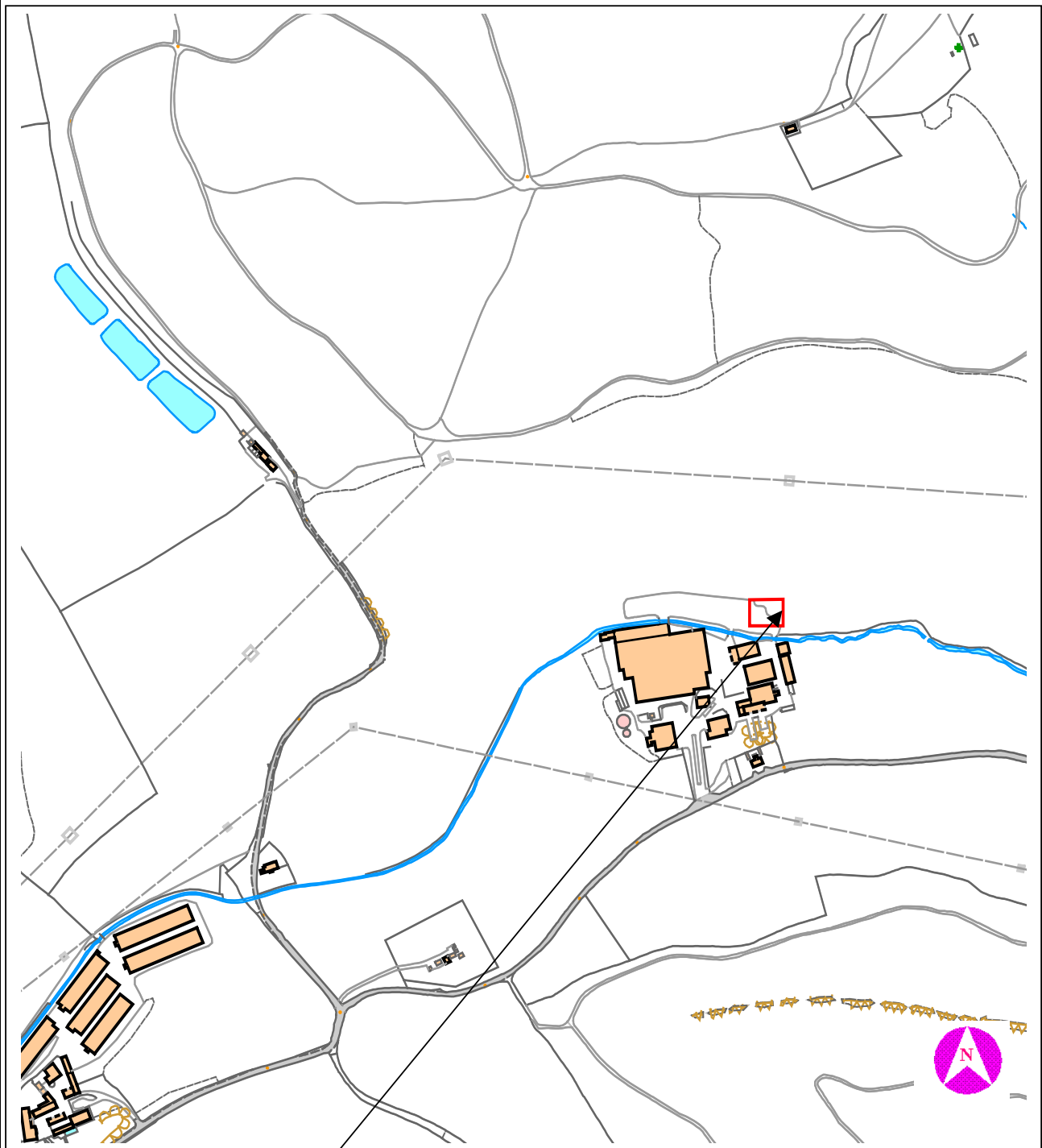
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE0009/0945/F

SCALE : 1 : 6527

SITE ADDRESS : Land adjacent to Coleraine Buildings, Coughton, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SG

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