

3 DCSW2004/0015/F - ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING FOR FREE RANGE EGG PRODUCTION BOWLING GREEN FARM, CLEHONGER, HEREFORD, HR2 9SJ**For: Mr P S J Whittal, Bowling Green Farm, Clehonger, Hereford, HR2 9SJ****Date Received: 5th January 2004 Ward: Stoney Street Grid Ref: 45977, 37934****Expiry Date: 1st March 2004**

Local Member: Councillor D. C. Taylor

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is reached off the northern side of the Class II road (B4349), 160 metres east of the junction of the B4349 road and the Gosmore Road.
- 1.2 Bowling Green Farm is a 190 hectares farm, and predominantly arable. It comprises a red brick faced farmhouse, with a range of modern farm buildings to the north and north-east of the original farmstead. It is proposed to erect a single building 21.9 metres wide, 73.6 metres long, 8.1 metres to the ridge and 3.6 metres to the eaves. The roof and sides of the building will be box profile polyester coated steel sheeted, and coloured to subsequent approval. Eleven pop holes measuring 400mm high and 2 metres wide are arranged along both sides of the building. Ventilation will be through the ridge of the roof. Two feed bins are sited on the southern end of the building, where the service area and egg store is situated. The two feed bins are on the western side of the building and are 7.3 metres high, i.e. below the ridge height of the main building. This building is sited on an area of partly treed land, these are apple trees. The site will continue to be tree lined on the western boundary which has elevated views towards Clehonger and on the eastern boundary. The western boundary is open at present.

2. Policies**2.1 Planning Policy Guidance**

PPG.7 - The Countryside, Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC.9 - Development Requirements
Policy A.3 - Agricultural Buildings
Policy A.5 - Intensive Food Production Units

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy GD.1 - General Development Criteria
Policy SH.16 - Housing & Livestock Units
Policy ED.9 - New Agricultural Buildings

2.4 Unitary Development Plan

There are no policies that are considered to raise issues different from Development Plan policies.

3. Planning History

3.1 SH790177PF Agricultural building - Approved 19.04.79

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 The Environment Agency has no objections to the application

Internal Council Advice

4.2 The Head of Engineering and Transportation has no objections to make.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant submitted a supporting letter. The main points being:

- diversification project aimed at producing a profit so that I can continue farming
- demand for free range eggs
- provides employment for one person on site
- building naturally ventilated. No heaters or burners, only limited number of fans for ventilation in adverse weather
- orchard to west and agricultural buildings to south and east shelter the site
- two hedges are to be planted for extra shelter for the hens, further providing screening
- colour of building will be green, blending it into countryside
- rainwater from gutters and yards will go into existing drainage systems. Dirty water from wash downs will be collected into collection tanks
- unpleasant smells will be limited. Smell will be noticeable at change over when building is cleaned out (once every 13 months)
- all waste material will be used as natural fertiliser
- no marked increased in vehicular movements as there will be only one feed lorry and three egg collections a week
- building specifically designed for free range egg layers, it complies with DEFRA, BEIC and RSPCA standards

5.2 The Parish Council's observations are awaited.

5.3 A joint letter of objection has been received from Nos. 1 - 6 inclusive of The Pippins, Church Road, Clehonger

The following main points are raised:

- adverse impact on residential properties
- major unpleasant smell, given prevailing wind direction in the catchment area
- waste product storage and disposal as fertiliser is also an offensive smell
- diversification case outweighed by quality of life issue

- farm already had major grain-store built in last 12 months, not complimentary to surrounding area
- possible creeping over-development occurring.

The full text of this letter can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 There are considered to be two main issues in relation to the proposal. Firstly is the impact of the building on the landscape and the second is the impact that a free range egg production unit would have on the amenities of residents in the locality.
- 6.2 The application site is well screened from the south, i.e. from the highway, with the existing tree screening and existing red brick farmhouse and outbuildings and from the east and south-east by a line of mature trees and that the site declines north-westward from the main farm complex. The site is visible from the south-west after leaving Clehonger and inclining up to the farm entrance on the northern side of the B4349 road. A silhouette of an 8.1 metres high building will be more visible in the winter months when the existing trees on the western side of the proposed building are not in leaf. There would though be other taller buildings visible behind the building. More tree planting could take place not only to provide more screening, but also to provide some sheltered areas for the chickens.
- 6.3 The second issue relates to the use of the building for egg production. The building is 150 metres away from the closest protected building, Larkrise, which is to the south-west. The boundary of the nearest dwelling, at The Pippins, to the site is 370 metres which is considered to be an accepted distance given a farm building is also between the site and The Pippins. Although 12,000 birds will be housed in this building, the use of the building cannot be compared to a broiler house in which the birds never see daylight, and where the means of ventilation and lighting are not natural. The chickens in buildings, such as the one proposed, can use the 22 pop holes provided, this also provides natural ventilation for the building. It is not usual for a majority of the birds to venture outside, nevertheless the means are provided. There will be some odour possibly detectable and depending on wind direction when the birds are replaced by new ones every 13/14 months, however this cannot be compared to the more regular cleaning out of 6/13 weeks say of broiler units. The Environment Agency has not objected, nor recommended conditions that ought to be attached in the event that planning permission is granted for the proposal. The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards' formal advice is awaited but the indication is that this will not be in the form of an objection.

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to the response of the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards, the officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following conditions and any additional conditions considered necessary by officers:

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. **A07 (Development in accordance with approved plans)**

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.

3. **B01 (Samples of external materials)**

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

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

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

5. **G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))**

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

Informative(s):

1. **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission**

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.