

7 DCSE2003/3606/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL TO BUSINESS/LIGHT INDUSTRY, WINDY HOLLOW, UPTON BISHOP, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7TT

For: Mr G A Roberts, Windy Hollow, Upton Bishop, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7TT

Date Received: 2nd December 2003

Ward: Old Gore

Grid Ref: 63336, 26439

Expiry Date: 27th January 2004

Local Member: Councillor J. W. Edwards

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 The application site comprises an area of land of about 0.85ha on which three potato storage buildings were erected during the 1990s. The site is on the south side of the B4221 roughly half way between Phocle Green and Crow Hill. The buildings are about 850m², 450m² and 460m² in floor area. There is no farmhouse associated with this group of agricultural buildings. The site has been landscaped, which included reducing ground level, bunds and planting, with a vehicular access formed in accordance with the local highway authority's requirements.

1.2 This complex is no longer required for storage of potatoes. It is proposed to use the buildings for business/light industrial purposes. No building works affecting the external appearance of the buildings are proposed.

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 E.6 - Development in rural Areas outside the Green Belt

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy C.1 - Development within Open Countryside
Policy C.36 - Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings
Policy ED.6 - Employment in the Countryside
Policy ED.7 - Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings for Employment /Tourism Use

3. Planning History

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|-----|------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 3.1 | SH931112PF | Portal frame potato, cereal and grass seed storage buildings | - | Permitted 28.10.93 |
| | SH960696PF | Portal frame potato, cereal and grass seed storage buildings | - | Permitted 16.10.96 |
| | SS980511FZ | Storage building | - | Prior Approval not required 08.09.98 |

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Engineering and Transportation has no objection to the grant of permission.
- 4.3 Head of Environmental Health has no comments to make on the proposal.

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicant has submitted a supporting statement which, in summary, makes the following points:-

- potatoes have been grown, stored and graded at this site but due to the downturn in arable farming and inability to obtain contracts for processing potatoes the only sensible alternative would be to curtail farming activities and apply for light industrial use
- the buildings are of high specification with insulated composite panelling and electric up and over sectional doors; temperature control is possible in two of the buildings
- they were erected in 1994, 1996 and 1998
- Economic Development Officer suggested light industrial might be best alternative
- site is on B4221 just one mile from Junction 4 of M50, 300m from nearest dwelling and half a mile from any hamlet, visibility at access to site is good
- potato haulage can be noisy and dusty but never encountered any noise, light or dust/odour problems.

- 5.2 Parish Council "are strongly opposed to this development as it represents yet more creeping industrialisation of the countryside. If the original planning application had been for light industrial rather than agricultural use it would never have been passed. Local residents are very anti this application."

5.3 Three letters have been received objecting to the proposal. In summary the following reasons are given:

- site is not suitable for business/light industrial use - it would not be entertained were there not new agricultural buildings there now
- permission should not have been given, under delegated powers, in first place - on top of a hill (not a hollow) seen for some distance and out of place in landscape
- objections were submitted to the second building; it was pointed out that permission had been given for a huge pile of pallets as much as a building (stacked as high as eaves for much of year) - second building supposed to solve this problem but did not
- what exactly are intentions? Must be found out as use could become more elaborate with time - another Technicrop sprawl with aircraft landing strip or even a slaughterhouse?
- B4221 is very busy and would be made worse by extra traffic, local roads cannot cope with increased lorries (no doubt site will expand in future as two large businesses in village have, spoiling the village)
- access to B4221 is unsuitable for cars and low vehicles, as due to steep slope visibility is not up to standard

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

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 Both national and local policies encourage re-use of rural buildings especially for uses that benefit the local economy. Thus in PPG.7 it is stated that "the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development There should be no reason for preventing the conversion of rural buildings (including modern buildings) for business re-use" provided that stated criteria are met. The criteria are as follows:

- (a) they are of permanent and substantial construction;
- (b) conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality
- (c) their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings; and
- (d) imposing reasonable conditions on a planning permission overcomes any legitimate planning objections (for example on environmental or traffic grounds) which would otherwise outweigh the advantages of re-use; and
- (e) if the buildings are in the open countryside, they are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.

6.2 These are substantial agricultural type buildings and are therefore appropriate in the countryside. Their prominent location is appreciated but the current proposal does not involve any increase in their size. The buildings would not therefore be any more intrusive in the landscape. They are capable of being converted to business use without major or complete reconstruction.

6.3 Generally there appears little demand for re-use of rural buildings for business use in Herefordshire. There have been some applications in the Ross-on-Wye area, including a butcher's shop at Phocle Green (now with permission for servicing and repair of agricultural and commercial vehicles and machinery) and for industrial use at

Hildersley Farm. The latter also includes extensive new industrial units but has not yet been implemented. Nevertheless employment remains highly concentrated in Ross town centre and the industrial estates within the town. The Unitary Development Plan proposes a 10ha. business park which if realised would accentuate the role of this market town. There is no likelihood therefore that this proposal, or the cumulative impact of this and comparable proposals, would prejudice the vitality of Ross-on-Wye or the nearby villages.

- 6.4 It is accepted that if this was an application for new industrial development it would conflict with the Council's policies (for example Policy ED.6). However the buildings are there, they have been used for agricultural purposes for a number of years and are unlikely to be demolished or removed if permission is refused for the current proposal. Given the strong support for re-use of rural buildings it is not considered that this is grounds to refuse permission in this case.
- 6.5 The access was formed in accordance with the former county highway authority's requirements. The site is only a short distance along a 'B' class road from the motorway/trunk road network (M50 and A40). The Head of Engineering and Transportation does not share the concerns of objectors regarding highway matters. In these circumstances it is not considered that this is sufficient reason not to grant permission. Furthermore the distance from residential properties means that local residents are unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposed use.

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. **E10 (Use restricted to that specified in application)**
Reason: To define the terms of the permission and to protect the visual amenities of the area.
- 3. **F42 (Restriction of open storage)**
Reason: To protect the appearance of the locality.

Informative(s):

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

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.