

17 DCNW2004/0746/F - AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING AND ATTACHED GARAGE AT LAND AT QUEBB, BOLLINGHAM, KINGTON HEREFORD**For: Mr J P Raymond per Mr A Last Brookside Cottage
Knapton Birley Herefordshire HR4 8ER****Date Received:****1st March 2004****Expiry Date:****26th April 2004****Ward:****Castle****Grid Ref:****30511, 51585**

Local Member: Councillor J Hope

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site comprises a 0.16-hectare plot of land in proximity to a general purpose agricultural building on the northern side of a large pasture field lying on the western side of the A4111 Kington – Eardisley road at Quebb. The associated farm enterprise consists of land at both Prospect Farm and here, at Quebb. The business occupies in the region of 200 acres of mainly pastoral with some arable land. The business is an intensive dairy and livestock farm. The general purpose agricultural building found on site is utilised for calving dairy cows, for home bred and imported stock for beef production. The remainder of the stock is housed at Prospect Farm, from where the business is primarily run and where both the dairy and farmhouse are located. A number of Listed Buildings are found in this locality, the closest being in the region of 300 metres away.
- 1.2 This holding has Outline Permission for an agricultural workers dwelling associated with it (NW2002/3904/O). This permission was approved on the 3rd of April 2003. Unfortunately the boundary of the outline site was tightly drawn around an existing building, leaving no room for a dwelling without demolition of that building. Consequently an application for Reserve Matters cannot be pursued. This application therefore seeks full planning permission for a dwelling on this site.
- 1.3 The proposal consists of a two-storey four bedroom dwelling with an attached garage/car port/utility projecting at right angles from the main dwelling house. The dwelling would be finished with facing brickwork and a slate roof. The principal two storey element of the proposal has a gross floor area of approximately 163 square metres. The ground floor elements (kitchen, shower room and utility) add a further 21 square metres. The total habitable living space is therefore approximately 184 square metres. The site is served by the existing access way associated with the agricultural building in situ. The proposed dwelling would be located to the east of this agricultural building, in proximity to an existing Oak tree, which would be retained as part of this proposal.

2. Policies

2.1 National Policies

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 - General Policy and Principles
Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 - Countryside

2.2 Hereford and Worcester Country Structure Plan

H16A – Development Criteria
H20 – Residential Development in Open Countryside
CTC9 – Development Criteria
A4 – Development Considerations

2.3 Leominster District Local Plan

A1 – Managing the Districts Assets and Resources
A2 (D) – Settlement Hierarchy
A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
A12 – New Development and Landscape Schemes
A18 – Listed Buildings and their Settings
A24 – Scale and Character of Development
A41 – Protection of Agricultural Land
A43 – Agricultural Dwellings
A70 – Accommodating Traffic from Development

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft)

S1 – Sustainable Development
S2 – Development Requirements
DR1 - Design
H7 – Housing in the countryside
H8 – Agricultural dwellings
T11 – Parking Provision
HBA4 – Setting of Listed Buildings

3. Planning History

NW2002/3904/O - Outline planning permission for agricultural workers dwelling
Approved, 03/04/03

NW2002/1841/O - Outline planning for agricultural workers dwelling
Withdrawn, 12/11/02

NW2001/1312/F - Extension to agricultural building
Approved, 29/08/01

99/1592/F - General purpose building at land at Quebb
Approved, 29/09/99

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 None required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Engineering and Transportation – Recommended that any permission which the Authority may wish to grant includes conditions relating to visibility at the entrance.
- 4.3 Chief Conservation Officer - raises no objection to the proposal in relation to the impact upon the setting of the Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site. However, concern was expressed regarding the design. It was stated that in consideration of the prominence of this site, the design could be more sensitive to the surroundings. It was recommended that a smaller dwelling with a lower ridge and enhanced design should be pursued.
- 4.4 Public Rights Of Way Manager – Advised that the development does not appear to affect the footpath running to the rear of the agricultural building.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Eardisley Parish Council raise no objections to this proposal. The full text of these letters can be inspected at Northern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 Three key areas for consideration are assessed to be associated with this application. These are:
1. Principle of development
 2. Design and scale
 3. Commensurate Size

Principle of Development

It is suggested that the most appropriate way to consider an application such as this is to first establish the acceptability of the proposal in relation the five areas of consideration specified under Planning Policy Guidance Note 7: The Countryside, Annex I. These are:

1. Existing functional need,
2. Requirement for full time worker,
3. Establishment and profitability of the unit,
4. Availability of alternative accommodation,
5. Satisfaction in relation to other planning requirements.

The above issues are reflected in the adopted Leominster District Local Plan, policy A34, and the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, policy H8.

This holding has associated with it a previous Outline permission for an agricultural workers dwelling. This application considered the principle of development associated with the provision of an agricultural workers dwelling on this holding. It is considered that points one through four were effectively considered as part of this application. The consent for this is little over a year old and on the basis of this it is suggested that the

principle of an agricultural workers dwelling on this holding has been established and can be accepted for the purposes of this application.

Point five will be considered in the sections of this report subsequent to this but it is confirmed that the proposed siting is suitable and considered acceptable.

Design and Scale

The application submitted is, with the exception of further minor design alterations, the same proposal as previously discussed. Little attempt has, at any stage, been made to address the concerns raised during registration in relation to the proposed development.

The proposed development is uninspiring in design and has limited identity and individuality. It is a brick finished property that would appear at home in a modern housing estate. The height and width, together with the attached single storey element, give the property significant bulk and result in a substantial dwelling that is considered inappropriate for a rural location such as this. The application site is in an attractive rural landscape area and it is suggested that the application site merits development with a dwelling of superior design and a more appropriate scale than that currently proposed. It is suggested that landscaping would not overcome these concerns and would not at any rate remove the fundamental issues associated with the design and scale of this proposal. PPG1 advised Local Planning Authorities to reject poor design.

The introduction of a reduced ridge height and width, the insertion of dormer openings, the use of alternative materials, and the removal of the attached garage and carport, replaced by a detached single garage, would constitute a significant improvement over the existing proposal. The result would be a more modest property with a cottage like appearance. This will allow for a less dominant and imposing structure and will greatly enhance integration with the surrounding landscape. A written request for such a revision has been made but not acted upon.

Ultimately the current proposal is excessive in size and uninspiring in design. The design and scale are considered unacceptable for this location.

Commensurate Size

Policy H8 of the emerging Herefordshire unitary Development Plan refers to policy H6 in consideration of size. Policy H6 specifies 90 square metres as an appropriate habitable living space. This application seeks approximately 184 square metres, in excess of double the recommended floor area. A property of this size is considered excessive and cannot be considered as a commensurate size.

Leominster District Local Plan policy A43 states that:

'It should be understood that it is the needs of the enterprise rather than the owner or occupier that is relevant to determining the size of a dwelling appropriate to a particular holding'

This advice reflects PPG7 and is a fundamental consideration for applications such as this.

The supporting information submitted with the application states, in the context of the design revisions requested, that:

‘Your suggestion of lowering the roof and creating dormer windows at first floor level does however put up building costs which could jeopardise the project’

It is suggested that the above raises questions concerning the affordability of this project, a consideration stressed in national and local policy guidance.

Conclusion

Beyond the issue of excessive floor space, it is suggested that this proposal demonstrates a basic lack of consideration for the importance of acceptable design and scale in an attractive rural landscape, issues which are no less important to applications such as this. The fact that agricultural workers dwellings represent one of the exceptional circumstances where housing in the countryside may be permitted does not remove the responsibility to strive for good design and development of an appropriate scale and character for the locality.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1 - The proposed dwelling, in view of its overall size, would not be commensurate with the established functional requirements of the holding contrary to Annex 1 of PPG7: The Countryside, adopted Leominster District Local Plan policy A43, and emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policy H8.**
- 2 - The proposed dwelling, by reason of its scale and design, would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenities of the locality amenities contrary to PPG1, policies H16A and A4 of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan, Leominster District Local Plan policies A1, A9, A24 and A43, and policies H7 and H8 of the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.