

**8 DCNC2004/2599/F - NEW GENERAL PURPOSE BUILDING, CHILLED PLANT STORE AND ASSOCIATED HARDSTANDINGS AND ACCESS WAYS AT BRIERLEY COURT FARM, BRIERLEY, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 0NU**

**For: S. & A. Property per Mr. P. Dunham, Paul Dunham Associates, 19 Townsend, Soham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5DD**

**Date Received: 10th August 2004 Ward: Leominster South Grid Ref: 49012, 55952**

**Expiry Date: 5th October 2004**

Local Member: Councillors R.B.A. Burke and J.P. Thomas

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

1. The application site consists of the south-east corner of the field which lies immediately to the east of the existing caravan site to be subject of a Public Inquiry. The site lies approximately 400m to the west of the former hop yard at Brierley Court.
2. The proposal is for the erection of a chilled plant store measuring approximately 31m x 25.4m with a ridge height of 9.7m and eaves at 7.3m. These dimensions include a lean-to element on the rear elevation of the building up to 6m in height. Both roof and cladding materials are to be in Goosewing Grey.
3. In addition to this, a general purpose storage building is proposed measuring approximately 30.5m x 18.3m with a ridge line of 8.6m and eaves at 6.1m. It is to be similarly clad. These buildings are to be erected adjacent to the existing water tanks on a site currently occupied by polytunnel frames.

**2. Policies**

**2.1 Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire)**

A2(D): Settlement hierarchy  
A9: Safeguarding the rural landscape

**2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft)**

LA2: Landscape character and areas least resilient to change  
E13 – Agricultural and forestry development

**3. Planning History**

- 3.1 There is no planning history on this particular part of the field although Members will be aware of the recent refusal for the caravan site and amenity building in the adjoining field and of the sewage treatment works in the north-east corner of this particular field, which are subject to a Public Inquiry to be heard next year.

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Environment Agency has no objection but makes comment in regard to the sustainable urban drainage schemes for surface water run-off.
- 4.2 River Lugg Internal Drainage Board also make comment with regard to the surface water discharge and comment that the Council will need to be satisfied that any increased rates of discharge volumes will not disadvantage other areas from which surface water entered the same system.

##### Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 Head of Engineering and Transport: No objection.
- 4.4 Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards: No objection.

#### 5. Representations

- 5.1 In support of the application the applicant's agent advises: 'This is a central location to the water storage and irrigation pumping centre. The existing farmyard at Brierley Court was discounted because of the need for a relatively level area for safe handling of pallets and stillage by fork trucks, because it reduces the amount of cut and fill required, approximately 300mm across the site compared to the existing yard which would involve over 2.5m, it is more easily accessible from the road access and far enough away from Brierley to mitigate issues of noise nuisance. The chiller itself is required to hold strawberry plants in a dormant state prior to planting. To date these have been held in cold store locations across the county. It allows for improved product control and eases logistical problems at store loading periods as well as when phased plantings are carried out.'
- 5.2 Objections to the proposal have been received from:

Mr. A. Green of Ivington Park Farm  
Mr. T. Inglis of Hillview, Aulden  
The Arrow Valley Residents Association  
Mr. B.R. Pettit of Ivington Mill  
Mr. and Mrs. Hooper of Upper Court, Aulden  
A. & F. Galliers-Pratt of Upper Wintercott, Ivington  
P. Johnson of Lower Park Cottage, Ivington  
Leominster Civic Trust

Additionally, a petition objecting to the proposal containing 70 signatures has also been received.

Objections are summarised as follows:

- 1) The proposal is a considerable distance from Brierley Court farmstead
- 2) It will result in loss of high quality agricultural land
- 3) There is no justification or logical development given that plants have a life of 3 to 4 years and the building would only be needed every 3 to 4 years

- 4) There is concern that the use would be for chilling strawberries after picking, therefore being an industrial food packaging process not agricultural production, that the building should locate on the Leominster Enterprise Park, that the existing building at Brierley Court could be adapted for this particular use, that there is no justification since the whole operation is temporary and the permanent buildings have already been refused
  - 5) More hard surfaces will cause more localised flooding of the lanes
  - 6) It is not centrally located as the agent suggests; it should be centred at Brierley Court Farm
  - 7) Additional heavy traffic on Brierley Lane
  - 8) Close to public rights of way
- 5.3 A letter has been received from the Brierley Residents Committee advising that 'in terms of location this is practical and adjacent to the farm centre, away from the hamlet so noise pollution from the chiller units nor vehicles. There would be major reservations if moved closer. The applicant has been respectful to concerns and needs of Brierley Residents and hope that the proposal form is part of an ongoing commitment. Support the application but have concerns with noise pollution.'

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 The application site clearly lies in open countryside where Policy A2(D) of the Leominster District Local Plan seeks to restrict development unless according with one of a number of exceptional circumstances. One of six exceptions is if the development is necessary for the efficient running of agricultural or forestry enterprises. If permitted, these would be the first authorised buildings in this location and would be likely to form the basis of the centre of operations for any further development which may be required. Policy A9 of the Leominster District Local Plan seeks to safeguard the rural landscape and the case for the buildings needs to be weighed against that particular policy. Furthermore, when considering new agricultural buildings, locations adjacent to existing buildings are usually considered to be more appropriate. In this particular instance, other than the brief comments in the agent's letter, nothing has been provided to suggest that the existing former hop yard site could not accommodate these particular buildings. Their visual impact would be much reduced if this could be achieved.
- 6.2 Policy E13 of the draft UDP also requires consideration of the functional relationship with other buildings. Where this cannot be done, that development be so sited as to be readily assimilated into the landscape. In this instance, it is considered that the scale of the buildings in relation to the public vantage points from the many public rights of way in this area, even with a landscape scheme, which has not been submitted, would make this difficult to achieve. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area, contrary to Local Plan and draft UDP policies.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That planning permission be refused for the following reason:**

It is considered that the proposal would be contrary to Leominster District Local Plan Policy A9 and Herefordshire Unitary Development (Revised Deposit Draft) Policy E13 in that the buildings would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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### **Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.