

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	14 DECEMBER 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	<p>DMN/111756/F - CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL FIELD TO CAMP SITE AND CONVERSION OF STABLE BLOCK TO TOILET AND SHOWER FACILITIES FOR THE CAMPSITE AT MONSTAY FARM, BURREINGTON, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 2HE.</p> <p>For: Miss A Thomas, Monstay Farm, Burreington, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2HE.</p>

Date Received: 1 July 2011

Ward: Mortimer

Grid Ref: 346662,273029

Expiry Date: 18 November 2011

Local Members: Councillor LO Barnett

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Monstay Farm occupies an open countryside location, approximately 3 miles to the south west of Ludlow and at the heart of the Mortimer Forest. The landscape is typically undulating wooded upland with some open cultivated areas. These field parcels are small and generally used for the grazing of sheep and cattle. Their boundaries are demarcated by hedgerows with some individual specimen trees.
- 1.2 The farm holding comprises a small group of farm buildings and a dwelling. The majority are of brick construction and arranged around a yard. Access is gained via a long private track onto a C class road. A public footpath runs through the farm yard and crosses the northernmost corner of the application site. There are also footpaths to the north and south from which the site is visible. An Ancient Woodland, known as Well Wood, also bounds the site to the south.
- 1.3 The application seeks to create a touring caravan and camp site. The applicant already benefits from a five caravan certificate from the Camping and Caravanning Club for which planning permission is not required, but it is their desire to expand upon this to provide up to 12 pitches for touring caravans and 20 pitches for tents. The area to be used is a field immediately to the west of the farm complex that amounts to 2.7 hectares. The application also includes the conversion of part of an old brick-built stable block to provide toilets, shower and washing facilities.

2. Policies

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

- 2.1 Policy S1 – Sustainable development
- Policy DR2 – Land use and activity

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr A Banks on 01432 383085

Policy DR3	–	Movement
Policy LA2	–	Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
Policy LA6	–	Landscaping schemes
Policy RST14	–	Static caravans, chalets, camping and touring caravan sites

3. Planning History

3.1 None identified.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 Forestry Commission – no objection.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Transportation Manager – no objection.

4.3 Environmental Health – no objection.

4.4 Public Rights of Way – no objection.

4.5 The Landscape Officer has concluded that, in light of additional information received regarding the location of the caravans, the proposal will have a limited visual impact but recommends the imposition of conditions relating to the layout of the site and additional planting.

5. Representations

5.1 Leintwardine Parish Council – No objection.

5.2 The Ramblers Association comment that there is a footpath which runs close to the proposed site. Unobstructed access to this path should be maintained and the waymarking remain clear during and after any work undertaken.

5.3 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Hereford Customer Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB and prior to the Committee meeting.

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 This is a relatively modest proposal at a site that is already used as a small-scale touring caravan site under a certificate from the Caravanning and Camping Club. The key issues to be considered in respect of its potential expansion are landscape impact, economic benefits, sustainability and these are considered below.

Landscape Impact

6.2 The applicant has indicated that the use of the site will be seasonal – April to October, and that there will be little change to the appearance of the land. The touring caravans will each be provided with electrical hook-ups, but the intention is to keep other infrastructure such as surfaced access roads, stand pipes and bins to a minimum. An additional plan submitted following the initial comments from the Landscape Officer shows that the caravan hook-ups will be located in an area closest to the farm house and toilet facilities. The area is bounded by a mature hedgerow and it is considered that this will minimise their visual impact when viewed from a ridge line further to the north.

- 6.3 The applicant plans to restore an old field boundary running roughly north/south across the field and to re-lay and restore other boundary hedges. This approach of restoration, rather than introducing significant new planting, is considered to be most appropriate as it complements the historic pattern of field boundaries rather than introducing new blocks of planting that are likely to look discordant as they mature. This approach accords with the requirements of Policy LA6 and consequently the proposal will have a limited visual impact, in accordance with Policy LA2.

Economic Benefits

- 6.4 The site is approximately three miles from Ludlow and is within the Mortimer Forest. Although not within the county, Ludlow is a destination for tourists and is likely, in the first instance, to be the primary reason for people to stay at the site. Mortimer Forest is owned by the Forestry Commission and is well used for leisure pursuits, including walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers and a campsite in this location is likely to offer an attractive and convenient base for people engaging in such pursuits. However, visitors will inevitably visit parts of this county and use local facilities and it is therefore considered that the proposal would make a contribution to the county in terms of adding to the local economy.
- 6.5 The applicant has also highlighted the fact that the proposal is intended as part of a farm diversification scheme. Monstay Farm is a small hill farm of 50 hectares which is concentrated on a herd of beef cattle and a flock of breeding sheep. The proposal will utilise a modest proportion of grazing land. It is of a small scale that is commensurate with the size of the holding and makes use of part of a building that has a limited agricultural use in the provision of shower and toilet facilities. The proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of farm diversification in accordance with Policy E12.

Sustainability

- 6.6 As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, the site is in relatively close proximity to Ludlow and the town has a range of services that would provide for the needs of visitors to the application site. The nature of caravanning or camping is such that the majority of visitors use their own transport rather than rely on forms of public transport. However, Ludlow is well connected with regular bus and rail services. As has also previously been demonstrated, the scheme will have a low landscape impact and will not demonstrably affect the countryside as an irreplaceable asset. The application also includes the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof and this will produce a sustainable form of energy generation to provide power to the toilet block and the farm house. It is therefore concluded that the proposal is sustainable in accordance with Policy S1 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 6.7 In conclusion, the proposal can be shown to have a limited impact on the character and appearance of the landscape, and this can be limited through the imposition of conditions relating to additional planting and management of existing features and the provision of further details in relation to the precise layout of the site and infrastructure requirements. It is also recommended that a condition is imposed to reflect the seasonal nature of the business. On this basis the application is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
- 2. B01 Development in accordance with the approved plans**

3. No caravan shall remain on the site or shall the site be used for the purposes of camping between 1st October in any one year and 31st March in the succeeding year.

Reason: To conform to Policy RST14 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and to protect the visual amenity of the area.

4. G10 Landscaping scheme

5. G11 Landscaping scheme - implementation

INFORMATIVE:

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

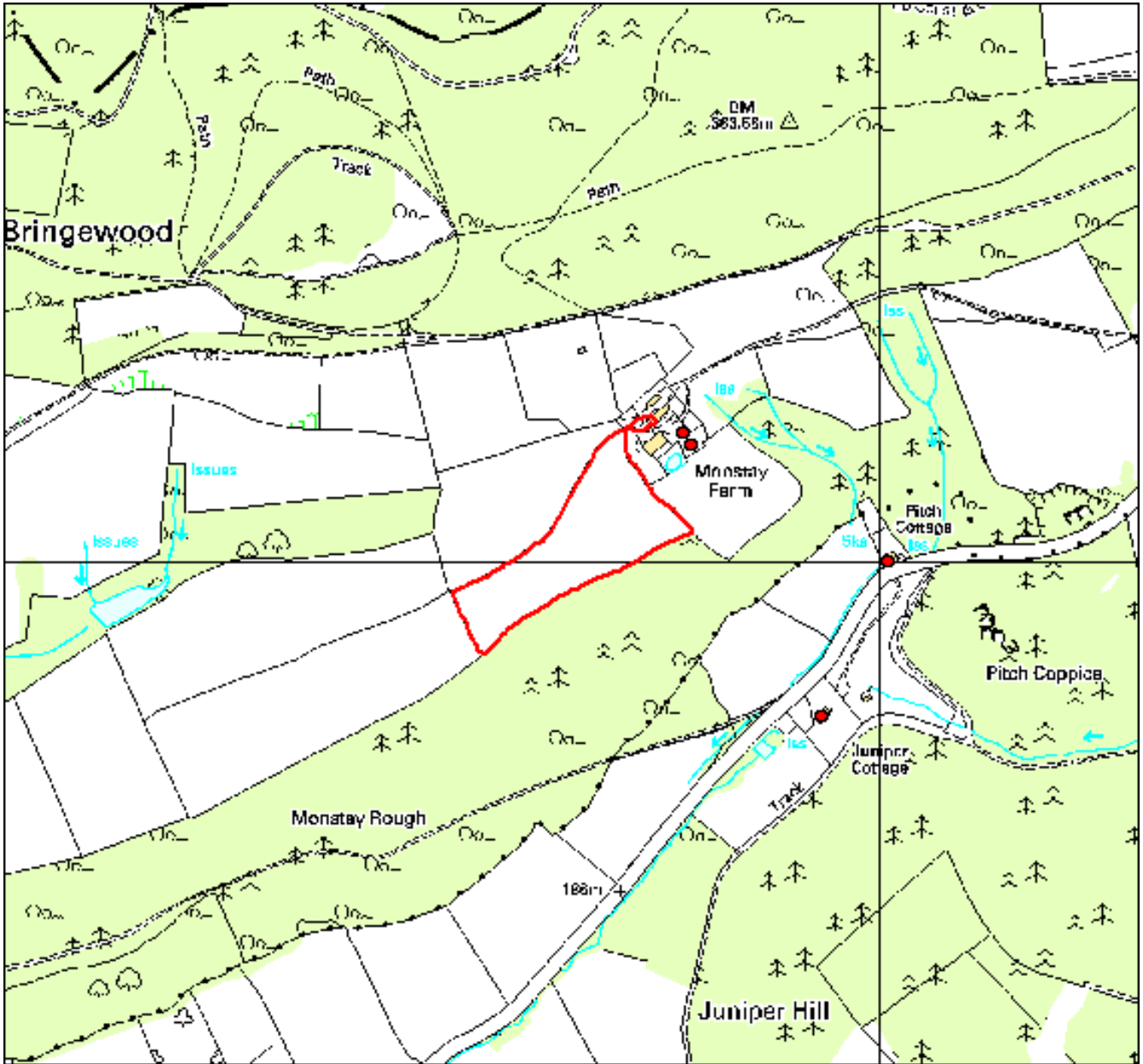
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DMN/111756/F

SITE ADDRESS : MONSTAY FARM, BURRINGTON, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 2HE

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