

232851 - PROPOSED RESTORATION AND RESIDENTIAL USE OF THE FARMSTEAD AT AUBREYS INCLUDING: THE CONVERSION OF AND EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING FARMSTEAD, PROPOSED DETACHED BUILDING FOR GARAGING, WORKSHOP AND PLANT STORAGE, EXTENSIVE LANDSCAPING AND REWILDING OF THE WIDER SITE, THE INSTALLATION OF AN ACCESS TRACK AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT AUBREYS, TO THE WEST OF THE MOUNTAIN ROAD, LLANVEYNOE, LONGTOWN, HR2 0NL

For: Ms Gardner per Mr Matt Tompkins, Lane Cottage, Burghill, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 7RL

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS

Five further representations have been received from Dr R Maurice-Williams, Mr N Keeble, Mr Bill Mills, Mr D Stones and the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, the concerns raised are summarised as follows:

All correspondence can be viewed on the website at:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=232851&search-term=232851

Objection from Mr Stones is also appended.

- extensive new development will spoil the remote landscape of the upper Olchon valley.
- the new ancillary building is well away from the present farmstead and interferes with the ancient field pattern which is visible from the other side of the valley. This will contravene the landscape policy guidance document 2023 section 7.
- the existing farm is derelict and needs to be rebuilt. The core strategy policy RA5 says that the property has to be restored without major new building and without any extensions and ancillary buildings. This application does not fit in with these criteria.
- Structural survey of building should be a pre-requisite for validation – real risk of significant loss of historic fabric
- Notice given by one representation (from Nicholas Keeble) that an application to Historic England for listing the entire structure was submitted (Thursday 29 August)
- Allowing the development on an LWS could set a precedent for future planning applications which could negatively impact the LWS designations
- Scale of landscape impact remains significant and this is not outweighed by the works to restore that farmstead which in terms of their scale fundamentally alter and detract from their value
- The proposed drainage strategy does not comply with the Environment Agency's General Binding Rules and permission should not be granted without evidence of a viable drainage strategy
- Incorrect assumptions made about the flows within the adjacent watercourses with evidence provided of no flows
- Photographic evidence of flooding of the Mountain Road also provided
- Whilst mitigations have been recommended which could replace details such as roosting sites once an existing habitat is lost it is not easy to replicate or to replace the value of that habitat
- current proposal for track passes directly through the LWS but the application area also includes the field to the South which lies outside of the LWS boundary. It might be

possible to reduce the impacts of the development by redirecting the proposed track through this field. Reducing the amount of the development within the actual LWS boundary could reduce the risk to the LWS habitats

- we note that the Phase 1 survey is dated August 2021 which is now 3 years ago and therefore may not provide a current view of the ecological status of the site.
- We believe that in its current form the above application may conflict with LD2 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

OFFICER COMMENTS

For the avoidance of doubt a structural appraisal is not a national validation requirement and at present Herefordshire Council does not have a local list requiring such as a pre-requisite to validation. Nevertheless, further to the publishing of the report, the applicant has commissioned a Structural Survey of the farmhouse and buildings which took place on 28 August 2024 and was submitted to the LPA on 2 September.

In summary, the report advises that the remaining elements of the buildings are capable of being retained. In particular, crack stitching, repointing, roof replacement and floor installation is recommended for the farmhouse whereas the design and construction of new roofing will be required for the remnant farm buildings. What is evident from the report is that the standing remains of the farmstead can be retained, underpinned with new floors created thereby preserving the historic fabric alongside the recommended use of traditional techniques to carry out the new work and works of repair.

Having regard to the support offered by policy LGPC4 for the re-instatement of historic farmsteads it is considered that this report provides sufficient evidence of the ability to retain the existing fabric through the implementation of the project. Notwithstanding this, condition 7 remains valid in terms of providing for a further detailed level of clarification as to how the existing fabric will be retained during construction. This accords with the requirements of the Principal Building Conservation Officer in the event that permission is granted.

The Council has received confirmation that the listing application referred to above has a reference number and is being actively considered by Historic England Midlands. Historic England have advised that there is no certainty as to when the listing application will be considered although they will try to achieve this by the agreed determination date of 6 September. There is however no guarantee that it will be completed by this date but Historic England have made clear that they respect the right of the Council to proceed with the determination of the planning application and advise that in practice, if the buildings are listed then it would likely be necessary for a separate Listed Building Consent application to be submitted. The legal advice in respect of this latest development will be covered in the presentation but for clarity, the current position is a matter for the decision maker to consider and accord appropriate weight to. It is however your officers view that in light of the early stage that the application for listing is at, it should be afforded only limited weight.

The assessment of this application has properly considered the heritage value of the farmstead and at no time over the last 3 or so years that the various proposals for the site have been under consideration has there been any suggestion from the Principal Building Conservation Officer that the farmstead is worthy of listing. Instead the approach has been to try to promote the most appropriate balance between the interests of securing a viable and beneficial use of the buildings in a manner that respects their character and setting. This is considered to be reflected in the terms of policy LGPC4 of the Longtown Group Neighbourhood Development which identifies the site as one for potential reinstatement.

With regard to the further representation regarding the drainage strategy, it is maintained that the Council's advisor is satisfied that a viable drainage solution can be achieved and as such recommends a condition. The compliance or otherwise with the General Binding Rules is a separate matter from the determination of the application and would be a matter for the applicant to address directly with the Environment Agency.

In response to the comments received from the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, the Ecologist has provided the following updated response

The initial Phase 1 Ecology Survey for the site was undertaken in August 2021, there have been further visits and reports relevant to the condition of site throughout 2022 and 2023 with the most recent update being undertaken in June 2024.

I note the comments from Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and their concerns over the track passing through part of the Black Mountains Woodland SWS. The access track has been re-designed so although the access track still goes through SWS, it is only within the lower ecological value area dominated by bracken and through an area of habitats for which the site is not designated. There is proposed mitigation to create and enhance habitats within the site.

The access track has been designed in this way to reduce the visual impact by taking it through a less visible field and avoiding parking and turning at the front of the buildings in order to better preserve their undeveloped setting.

It is also confirmed that there will be no loss of irreplaceable habitat associated with the development proposed within the Special Wildlife Site.

NO CHANGE TO RECOMMENDATION