

**26 DCNW2004/3669/F - CONSTRUCTION OF 2  
POLYTUNNELS FOR CONTAINER PLANT  
PRODUCTION AT CREDALE NURSERY, UPPER HILL,  
LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 0JZ****For: Mr E Smith at same address****Date Received:**  
**22nd October 2004****Ward:**  
**Golden Cross with  
Weobley****Grid Ref:**  
**47203, 53104****Expiry Date:**  
**17th December 2004**

Local Member: Councillor John Goodwin

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 Credale Nursery was purchased by the applicant in 1994, and was previously known as Swintage Nurseries. The dwelling associated with the nursery is subject to an agricultural / horticultural occupancy restriction. The application site forms part of an established horticultural nursery that now specialises in growing Japanese Maples and Hellebores which are primarily sold wholesale. The site already has a number of existing polytunnels in the adjacent field (between the application site and associated dwelling). The field which is the subject of this application has two existing polytunnels that measure 9m x 22.5m x 3.5m (h) and are sited to the north of the field (approved under application number NW2001/2658/F). The ground slopes south to north towards the existing polytunnels. The site has a mature hedgerow to the west, north and east. The southern boundary is currently fenced and a new hedge has been recently planted.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the erection of the two additional polytunnels to the south of the two existing polytunnels. These would also measure 9m x 22.5m x 3.5m (h). The structures would have an arched form with a steel and aluminium gable end framing with Luminance THB AF polythene 800guage external. A winch up side vent with ventilation mesh is incorporated to the side elevations (to a height of 1.4m). The tunnels would also have guttering allowing for the collection and reuse of water. The tunnels are covered by a green shade net from April to November. Access to the site is via the existing access adjacent to the associated dwelling (U94000).

**2. Policies**PPG1 – General Policy and Principles  
PPGS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**2.1 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan**

CTC2 – Development in area of Great Landscape Value

## 2.2 Leominster District Local Plan

- A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
- A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
- A12 – New Development and Landscape Schemes
- A35 – Small Scale New Development for Rural Businesses Within or Around Settlements

## 2.3 Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft)

- DR2 – Land Use and Activity
- LA2 – Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change
- LA6 – Landscaping Schemes

## 3. **Planning History**

- 3.1 NW2001/2658/F - Construction of two polytunnels - Approved 29 November 2001
- 3.2 96/0815/N - Construction of a polythene polytunnel to increase production area of nursery - Approved 27 November 1996

## 4. **Consultation Summary**

### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory consultees consulted.

### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Highways and Transportation has no observations to make on this application.

## 5. **Representations**

- 5.1 The applicant has submitted some supporting information in relation to the application, much of which is in response to the concern raised by local residents. This can be summarised as follows:

- Credale Nursery was purchased in Dec 94, and was previously run as Swintage Nurseries (1978). The property was bought with a Agricultural / Horticultural occupancy condition, which has been honoured with the property continuing to be run as a nursery.
- The nursery specialises in growing Japanese Maples and Hellebores which are primarily sold wholesale.
- To be able to continue to keep the nursery viable and provide employment for ourselves, it is necessary for us to increase our production area by a modest two growing tunnels.
- The proposed tunnels will have guttering allowing collection and reuse of the water on the plants. The plants will sit on a sealed capillary mat which makes the most efficient use of the water applied by hand; therefore the increase in water usage would be minimal.

- The tunnels are covered in a green shade net from April to November and are surrounded by either tall or recently planted hedges which both minimises any visual impact and reduces the amount of water used by plants.
- Being a small nursery our current maximum daily water consumption is 8.5 cubic metres / day. Even increasing the production area, our maximum daily water consumption would not go above 10 cubic metres / day which is well below the 20 cubic metres / day required for an abstraction license.
- The small amount of waste soil produced from making the holes for the support tubes will be disposed of on site.
- The modest increase in production means that it is not expected to be any noticeable increase in traffic, possibly two extra movements per month from the main entrance.

5.2 Birley with Upper Hill Parish council resolved to make the following comment: All the immediate neighbours object to the visual impact of the polytunnels in a beautiful secluded area, which should be residential rather than commercial. There are also other aspects which worry the residents, i.e the amount of water used by the expanding nursery which apparently affected the water supply last summer.

5.3 Letters of representation have been received from A.G Beaver, Rose Cottage; Joyce Underwood, Stone House; Mr and Mrs Barnard, Upper Hill Cottage and Mr R. Pendleton, Swing Gate Cottage. These letters raise the following issues:

- Concern that access is not gained via the private lane that runs to the east of the field adjoining the application site as additional traffic would have an adverse impact on amenity and condition of the road.
- Concern over impact on the landscape and impact on the Area of Great Landscape Value because their physical presence would not lie sympathetically within the landscape. Relocation of soil to accommodate this development on this scale will destroy the ancient meadow land contours, along with its flora and fauna.
- Concern about traffic increase and inconvenience to other road users through deliveries causing obstruction.
- Potential water consumption also causes concern as residents in the locality gain water from local boreholes. A water shortage in the last couple of years has heightened concerns.
- Concern about the relocation of spoil soil left over from the works, that may be left to become overgrown with invasive weeds which may become visually unsightly and cause weeds to grow in the gardens of neighbouring properties.
- Concern over sufficient drainage systems?

5.4 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 main issues in the consideration of this proposal are the visual impact of the proposed poly tunnels, on the Landscape and Area of Great Landscape Value the potential impact on highway safety and access, soil relocation, water consumption and drainage. The issue of support of this small rural business is a material consideration.

6.2 The application site lies within an area of Great Landscape Value as designated in the Leominster District Local Plan and as such the impact of developments within this sensitive landscape is of importance. However, the site itself is not in a prominent

visual location within the area, with only glimpse views from public vantage points. The application site also has three boundaries with tall mature hedging and trees forming an effective screen for the existing and proposed tunnels. The additional two polytunnels, which are only 3.5m in height, are not considered to have an adverse impact on the Area of Great Landscape Value. A hedgerow has also recently been planted along the Southern Boundary. As such the proposal accords with policies A1, A4 and A7 of the local plan, which seek to protect such areas from development that would be harmful to the landscape quality of the area.

- 6.3 The proposal allows for an increase in production in order to support and increase the nursery business. The increase in production gained by the polytunnels is likely to only increase traffic movements by approximately two vehicles per month. This increase would not cause concern in relation to highway safety or disturbance to local residents.
- 6.4 The local residents have raised some strong concern relating access being gained to the private drive / lane that provides access to their houses. This application does not apply for nor gives consent for an access from Credale nursery onto this lane and as such these concerns, whilst noted, cannot be taken into account as part of this application.
- 6.5 As a result of the development, some soil will be removed from the site. Although this is likely to be minimal, a condition is suggested to control the deposit and treatment of any extracted soil so to protect the landscape and visual qualities of the area.
- 6.6 Some concern has also been raised over the increase in water consumption, which could have an impact upon other borehole users in the area. The increase in water consumption is likely to be minimal, and measures have been introduced by the applicants, such as guttering and capillary matting to maximise the use of water. The boreholes and consumption are also monitored and regulated by the Environment Agency.
- 6.7 Drainage of the site is proposed to existing soakaways in the adjoining fields. Details are requested by condition for the purpose of clarification.
- 6.8 To conclude, the proposed polytunnels are a small scale, minimal development that would enhance the prospects of this established rural business. The structures would not be visually harmful or intrusive to the sensitive landscape area and accords with the policies that seek to protect the area. The increase in production is would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety or water consumption / provision. Matters relating to soil disposal /excavation and drainage can be satisfied by condition. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable and a recommendation of approval with conditions is proposed.

## **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 - F20 (Scheme of surface water drainage )**

**Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.**

**3 - G07 (Details of earth works )**

**Reason: In order to protect the landscape auality of the area and local amenities.**

**Informatives:**

**1 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP**

**2 - Please note that this permission does not convey approval for any new vehicular or pedestrian accesses.**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.