

12 DCNW2005/1067/F - PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS AT MARLBROOK HALL, LEINTHALL STARKES, LUDLOW, HEREFORDSHIRE, SY8 2HR**For: S R Morgan & Sons Burton & Co Lydiatt Place
Brimfield Ludlow Shropshire SY8 4NP****Date Received:**
31st March 2005**Ward:**
Mortimer**Grid Ref:**
43693, 70948**Expiry Date:**
26th May 2005

Local Member: Councillor O Barnett

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site comprises a green field site that lies to the east of the Grade II listed farmhouse and existing complex of farm buildings. The site is approximately 1.1ha in size and has a mature hedgerow forming its boundaries. Adjacent this field to the east lies a poultry breeding house that is sited within a small valley where the land rises gradually away (to the NE & SW) towards the application site. One modern agricultural building lies to the west of the site.
- 1.2 Marlbrook Farm is a traditional mixed farm of 220 acres with a further 80 acres of rented land. Due to a separation of a partnership involved in the running of the farm, additional buildings are required, including a grain store and livestock buildings. The existing buildings are considered by the applicant (and in the supporting documentation from John Amos and Co) to be impractical, inefficient, too small with poor access for modern agricultural purposes.
- 1.3 Planning permission is sought for the erection of 5 new agricultural buildings in addition to the existing 'poultry' house. The single building that lies to the west of the site would be replaced by 'Building 1' an implement store which would be relocated from existing farm yard and would measure 9.25m by 15.35m by 5.5 to eaves and 7.9m to ridge. The building would be constructed of block walling to 1.8m and box profile steel sheeting. Buildings 2 and 3 would be located to the south of the site and would be used for livestock. These buildings would lie side by side and would measure 36.5m by 15.2 by 5.5 to eaves and 7.9m to ridge. Building 4 would be used for hay and grain storage to the north of the site (closest to the highway) and would measure 27.5m by 33m by 6 m to eaves and 10.1m to ridge. Building 5 would be relocated from the existing yard and would measure 22.9m by 9.2m by 5m to ridge and 6m to ridge and would be constructed from treated timber Yorkshire boarding and slate blue roof sheeting.
- 1.4 The application is also accompanied by a further application for the conversion of the existing traditional farm buildings into six dwellings on the other side of the farmhouse to these traditional buildings. (DCNW2005/1056/F and DCNW2005/1057/L)
- 1.5 Access to the site would be via the existing hard surfaced farm yard driveway.

2. Policies

2.1 Government Guidance

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

2.2 Herefordshire & Worcester Council Structure Plan

Policy H16A – Development Criteria

Policy CTC9 – Development Criteria

Policy CTC13 – Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

2.3 Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire)

Policy A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources

Policy A2 – Settlement Hierarchy

Policy A7 – Replacement of Habitats

Policy A8 – Improvements to or Creation of Habitats

Policy A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape

Policy A18 – Listed Buildings and their Settings

Policy A16 – Foul Drainage

Policy A41 – Protection of Agricultural Land

3. Planning History

NW2002/3371/F (adjacent site) - Erection of 1 Grandparent poultry breeding house together with feed silos and ancillary works - approved 10th January 2003. (erected)

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 None required.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Traffic Manager raises no objection.

4.3 Conservation Manager responded as follows:

Design/Listed Building: no objection to siting of proposed agricultural buildings. They will not detract from the character of the Listed Building.

4.4 Public Rights of Way Officer: Public footpath ET3 crosses the entrance to the proposed building site and asks that points relating to keeping the footpaths clear and the legal obligations to do so are conveyed to the applicant.

5. Representations

5.1 Leinthall Starkes Parish Council raises some concern about the access lane, the applications were considered to be acceptable as being an excellent and beneficial use of the currently redundant farm buildings and the appropriate re-siting of new farm buildings.

5.2 The application submission also has a supporting statement which can be summarised as follows:

- It is a fact that most of the existing buildings have come to the end of their useful life
- The existing buildings are generally dilapidated, small scale, awkwardly sited in relation to one another and have poor access
- John Amos report concludes: *"in order for Marlbrook Hall Farm to remain a viable enterprise it is recommended that significant restructuring and rebuilding takes place. The demands placed on facilities by current agricultural practices are not met by the existing buildings on the farm. Significant restructuring of the layout of buildings and new more modern agricultural buildings are needed in order to sufficiently and appropriately house the stock on the farm. Mr Morgan is proposing to expand his Ewe flock from 200 to 800 animals, which has been delayed due to the loss of his brother's facilities at Westfield Farm. Also farm machinery and equipment, together with a larger and more modern Grain Storage building is required in order to cope with the proposed expansion of the Arable business and in order to pass the inspection by the A.C.C.S. in the future. This proposed restructuring of the farm enterprise is vital in order that the holding remains an economically viable business. Although many of the existing farm buildings are of a good and serviceable condition, it must be underlined that they are outdated and very limited in their use with the ever increasing standards of livestock care and crop assurance of a current day agricultural enterprise. It is recommended therefore that it would be prudent to erect a new build site allowing adequate buildings to be erected with ample space for access.*

The dimensions and form of each building and the relationship with other buildings, yards and access is designed for operational efficiency, for flexibility of use and for potential future development. The viability of the farm is dependant upon this design.

Livestock Buildings no's 2 and 3: These two buildings will replace the five existing cattle buildings and will house a similar number of cattle and at different times of the year will house sheep. These buildings are essential to the future of the farm."

- The proposed site is adjacent to an existing and modern farm complex, i.e. the poultry house granted planning permission (NW2002/3371/F) as recently as 10th January 2003. This location thus achieves efficiencies in labour requirements, vehicle movements and waste management. The proposed siting also complies with Council policy.

The new farm buildings would have less impact upon the landscape if sited as proposed rather than on the existing site. The reason for this is that the proposed site lies at a significantly lower elevation than the existing site.

5.3 A total of 6 letters of representation have been received from the following persons:

Nicholas Maxted Jones, 1 Willow Cottages, Burrington.
Mr and Mrs Brian Smith, 2 Willow Cottages, Burrington.
Mr Douglas of The Willows Farm, Burrington.
Mr & Mrs Midwood, The Willows Farm, Burrington.
R & V Taylor, Elton Farm, Elton.
1 anonymous letter

The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

- a) Intensified use of highway causing highway safety concerns
- b) Conflict of use between farm traffic and vehicles.
- c) Inadequacy of road network and quality of road, especially given narrowness of road and height of hedges
- d) Request for S106 for payment towards road upgrade and changes to accommodate traffic
- e) Danger to pedestrians, in particular children
- f) Impact on the landscape causing harm to the valley and area of outstanding beauty
- g) Impact and damage to the setting of the listed building making reference to the SPG which says that conversion of Listed buildings should be strongly resisted
- h) Impact on peaceful area and views from dwellings across valley.
- i) Problems due to 'egg factory' / poultry unit - lack of landscaping
- j) Request for additional landscaping

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 for consideration is the determination of this application are as follows:-

- a) The principle of erection of agricultural buildings in open countryside;
- b) The impact of the proposed buildings on the character and appearance of the landscape and the wider impact on the surrounding countryside;
- c) Residential amenity;
- d) Setting of the listed building
- e) Highway safety, and;

6.2 Policy A2 (d) of the Leominster District Local Plan makes allowance for the erection of buildings that are necessary for the efficient running of agricultural enterprises. Policy A41 also allows for development on agricultural land, although low grade land should be used in the first instance. Other factors that should be taken into account include, the location of the development in relation to farms; farm size and structure, buildings and other fixed equipment and other effects of development on agriculture.

6.3 The application site lies between the farmhouse and the poultry unit and has a clear relationship with both buildings. The field selected has field boundaries of native hedgerows and is restricted in size by this. It does not involve the subdivision of the field. As such in principle the development of this land for agricultural purposes can be supported.

6.4 The buildings are required to be moved in order to facilitate the conversion of the traditional barns that lie to the west of the farmhouse. These existing buildings are considered to be substandard as outlined in the report from John Amos and Co. The creation of a new, purpose built farmyard will overcome these concerns and make the agricultural enterprise viable.

- 6.5 The main concerns lie with the impact of this proposed development on the landscape quality of the area. It is not denied that these buildings will have an impact on the landscape and it is this particular issue, which requires careful consideration and assessment. The buildings themselves, to be useful and practical have to be of a certain height to accommodate modern machinery. This means that this cannot be hidden from view by landscape screening. However, when views of the development are taken into the context of the surrounding trees and hedgerows, the view of agricultural buildings is not considered to be one that would be particularly intrusive or unusual in the rural area. A landscape appraisal was undertaken by the applicants agent, and alternative sites also assessed but this site was considered to be the most viable, and least intrusive. Additional landscaping around the site to soften the appearance of the development has already been suggested in the application submission. However some further planting of native species, which will enhance the area around the site, is requested by way of condition. Neighbours request additional landscaping of the poultry unit that they consider an eyesore, and this can also be sought as part of this application. In conclusion, the buildings will have an impact on the landscape but the need for such buildings, the context of the site and the provision of additional landscaping are considered to outweigh the negative impact that the buildings may have.
- 6.6 Whilst there are no dwellings within the immediate vicinity, with the closest being some 500m away, concerns have been raised from the owners and occupiers of the dwellings to the spoilt views and disturbance of their peace and quiet. However the distances are considerable and with the careful use of landscaping this impact can be softened.
- 6.7 The proposed buildings will be relatively close to the Grade II listed building. However, there is a good landscape barrier and enough distance to protect the setting of this building and the setting of the listed building is preserved in accordance with the policies of the Leominster District Local Plan and Government guidance in PPG15.
- 6.8 Access to the site is currently via both the farmhouse gate and via a 'farm entrance' to the south. This hardsurfaced farm track also turns to the east from the farm entrance towards the site and is considered to be acceptable by the Traffic Manager. As detailed in the report relating to the barn conversions, there is strong local concern in relation to the current problems with the narrow road network, high hedges and the problems that the increase in traffic would have causing vehicles to reverse and manoeuvre on sometimes blind bends and corners. In response to this, it has been suggested that in addition to the passing place which is already planned by Herefordshire Council, the applicant provides four further passing bays between Leinthall Starkes and the application site. Two of these will involve renewing old bays that have overgrown. This would be carried out at the applicants expense and to a specification agreed by the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with the Transport Manager. It is felt that this will alleviate the concerns of the local road users and improve highway safety on this lane.
- 6.9 To conclude, the supplementary information provided with the application relating to need and justification satisfies the criteria and requirements of the relevant local plan policies. The main issue relates to landscape impact and it is considered that on balance, the creation of a new purpose built farm yard to help sustain the farm enterprise and the provision of suitable landscaping to enhance the development is acceptable. There are no highway objections that relate specifically to this application and the introduction of passing bays prior to the commencement of the conversion development has overcome these concerns. As such it is considered that the

proposals accord with policies and are recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted with 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 - A06 (Development in accordance with approved plans)

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.

3 - B01 (Samples of external materials)

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

4 - F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

5 - G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.

6 - G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

7 - G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

8 - G09 (Retention of trees/hedgerows)

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.

INFORMATIVES:

1 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.