

**10 DCNE2005/3838/F - ERECTION OF 2 NO. WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SEMI-DETACHED HOLIDAY COTTAGES FOR THE DISABLED AT HIDELOW HOUSE, ACTON BEAUCHAMP, WORCESTER, WR6 5AH**

**For: Mr & Mrs S H Diplock per Wall, James & Davies,  
15-23 Hagley Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands,  
DY8 1QW**

**Date Received:**  
**30th November 2005**

**Ward: Hope End**

**Grid Ref:**  
**70039, 49386**

**Expiry Date:**  
**25th January 2006**

Local Members: Councillor R Mills and Councillor R Stockton

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The application seeks permission for the erection of 2 no. wheelchair accessible semi-detached holiday cottages at Hidelow House, Acton Beauchamp. Sole vehicular access to the site is along the farm track taken from the B4220, 0.5km south of Acton Green.
- 1.2 Hidelow House comprises the existing former farmhouse and surrounding barn complex, which have been sensitively converted to form specialist holiday let accommodation, aimed specifically at the disabled market. Additional facilities have been added over time, including the laundry and reception area. The business is now well established and supporting documentation alludes to clientele visiting from overseas as well as all over the country. Use has been made of all suitable existing buildings and it is now requested that consideration be given to the provision of an additional 2 units in a field immediately to the east of the existing complex.
- 1.3 The application is made subsequent to the refusal of application number NE05/2249/F, which also sought permission for the erection of 2 semi-detached holiday cottages. This was refused on the basis that the development proposed was new build in open countryside and thus contrary to Housing Policy 4 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.4 This revised application is for a slightly repositioned and redesigned pair of semi-detached cottages, although the broad thrust of the development is as previously applied for.
- 1.5 The building proposed is quite substantial, being broadly rectangular, with dimensions of 16.6m x 9.2m. This is somewhat smaller than the cottages applied for previously, which measured 19m x 14m. Height to the ridge has also been reduced by 1m to 6.3m. The bulk of the building is aligned east/west with two single storey cross-wings to the rear, which would house the kitchens. Internally each cottage has a lounge/dining room, en-suite bedroom for the disabled and kitchen at ground floor with 2 no. en-suite bedrooms at first floor. Materials proposed are to match the bulk of the existing converted barns on site with horizontal timber cladding over a stone plinth.

- 1.6 The specific siting of the proposed cottages is the field immediately to the east of the existing complex. This is currently down to grazing. This land is several metres higher than the complex to the west, and it is proposed that the site for the cottages be excavated to bring the levels into line with the remainder of the site.

## **2. Policies**

### **2.1 Malvern Hills District Local Plan**

Tourism Policy 4 – Hotel Development – Open Countryside  
Tourism Policy 5 – Hotel Development in the Open Countryside – Conversions  
Landscape Policy 3 – Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value

### **2.2 Hereford & Worcester County Structure Plan**

CTC2 – Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value  
CTC9 – Development Criteria

### **2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)**

S1 – Sustainable Development  
DR1 – Design  
DR2 – Land Use and Activity  
RST12 – Visitor Accommodation

## **3. Planning History**

NE05/2249/F: Proposed 2 no. wheelchair accessible semi-detached holiday cottages:  
Refused under delegated powers 16/08/2005

NE04/2138/F: Single storey extension to holiday accommodation: Approved with  
conditions 06/08/2004

NE03/0075/F: Erection of office, laundry, store and garage (superseding applications  
00/1209 & 00/2372). Approved 04/03/2003

NE01/3236/F: Single holiday unit suitable for use by a disabled person to replace  
stables: Approved 29/01/2002

NE00/2372/F: Workshop, garage, laundry and telephone room (Amendment to  
NE00/1209/F): Approved 24/10/2000

NE00/1209/F: Games room, laundry and domestic garage for use in connection with  
holiday lets: Approved 22/06/2000

MH98/0139: Change of Use from bungalow to holiday let: Approved

MH94/0814: Conversion of redundant barn into 3.no holiday lets: Approved

MH93/1030: Conversion of redundant hop building to 2 holiday lets: Approved

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

4.1 None necessary.

##### Internal Council Advice

4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection

4.3 Environmental Health Manager: No objection

4.4 Tourism Manager: "Supports the application... which would bring much needed accommodation for disabled visitors."

#### 5. Representations

5.1 Cradley Parish Council: "We have some concerns about this proposal because it is in open countryside, but we wish to support commercial proposals in the Parish.

- a) Must never be sold off from the main property;
- b) Must not be let for 52 weeks of the year; maximum 40 weeks."

5.2 Acton Beauchamp Parish Council (Adjoining): "Parish Councils split on this application. Some concern expressed over proposed dwellings if business ceases and they would not be approved elsewhere? Also, spread of the enterprise. Others support wheelchair accommodation, but could the present cottages be adapted for disabled access?"

5.3 CPRE: Objected to the previous application on the grounds that the development proposed was new development in open countryside. The present application, although modified, is open to the same objection.

5.4 One letter of objection has been received from Mr & Mrs B. H. Taylor, Green House, Acton Beauchamp, Worcester, WR6 5AA. The points raised are as follows:

- The proposed bio-disc system to deal with foul drainage will not necessarily be effective;
- Some of the existing lets could be adapted for disabled guests;
- This area is classed as open countryside and no new development should be allowed. Precedent has been set by formal rejections of planning applications and informal advice from the current and preceding planning officers.

5.5 The application is accompanied by supporting documentation, including a letter from the applicants detailing the nature of the existing operation and demand for disabled access cottages, which is currently outstripping supply. Information is supplied detailing the findings of empirical research into the subject, indicating that a lack of accessible accommodation prevents a third of all disabled people from taking a holiday.

5.6 Letters of support for the proposal are also received from "Quality In Tourism" and "Tourism for All UK."

- 5.7 Approximately 50 extracts from the visitor's book are also included.
- 5.8 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 issue for consideration in the determination of this application the principle of development having regard to the content of the adopted Local Plan and emerging Unitary Development Plan.
- 6.2 The existing business is well established, providing some specialist-disabled person's holiday accommodation. The application is for an extension of the existing accommodation in recognition of the absence of suitable buildings for conversion. Substantial documentation in support of the application points to the success of the existing venture, highlighting in particular the turning away of custom owing to a lack of vacancies and the knock-on loss of expenditure in the local economy. In particular, letters of support come from the organisations "Quality in Tourism" and "Tourism for All UK". These letters commend the quality of the existing accommodation and also identify a shortfall in accommodation of this sort in the county and beyond.
- 6.3 The policy of greatest direct relevance is considered to be Tourism Policy 4 of the MHDLP. This deals with new build development in the open countryside and states that there is a presumption against new build development outside settlements, unless a variety of exceptions criteria are met. Most relevant of the exceptions criteria is the requirement that the siting of new development be within of immediately adjoining settlements. This is not the case here, the nearest identified settlement being Cradley. The development proposal therefore fails this test.
- 6.4 The documentation supporting the application makes reference to Tourism Policy 8, although this deals specifically with Holiday Caravan and Chalet sites and is not directly applicable to permanent self-catered accommodation.
- 6.5 The presumption against new build hotel development is further reinforced by policy RST12 of the UDP (RDD). This states that outside settlements, the provision of permanent serviced or self-catering accommodation for visitors will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use and adaptation of a rural building. As such, it is noted that the exception criteria is not carried on in the UDP. (It is noted that 3 objections were made against this policy although Policy Officers do not envisage that it will be substantially amended as a result).
- 6.6 Whilst the Local Planning Authority recognises that the applicant's have established a thriving tourism based business, the relevant Local Plan policy requires that further development should take the form of conversions of suitable buildings or otherwise (and exceptionally) constitute new build within or immediately adjoining settlements. This is not the case here and it is recommended, as a consequence, that the application be refused for the following reason.

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

**The application seeks permission for the erection of two substantial semi-detached holiday cottages on existing permanent pasture to the east of the existing complex. At this location the development proposed is neither within or adjoining an identified settlement. As a consequence the proposal is considered contrary to Tourism Policy 4 of the adopted Malvern Hills District Local Plan, which acts to prevent unwarranted sporadic development in the rural environment.**

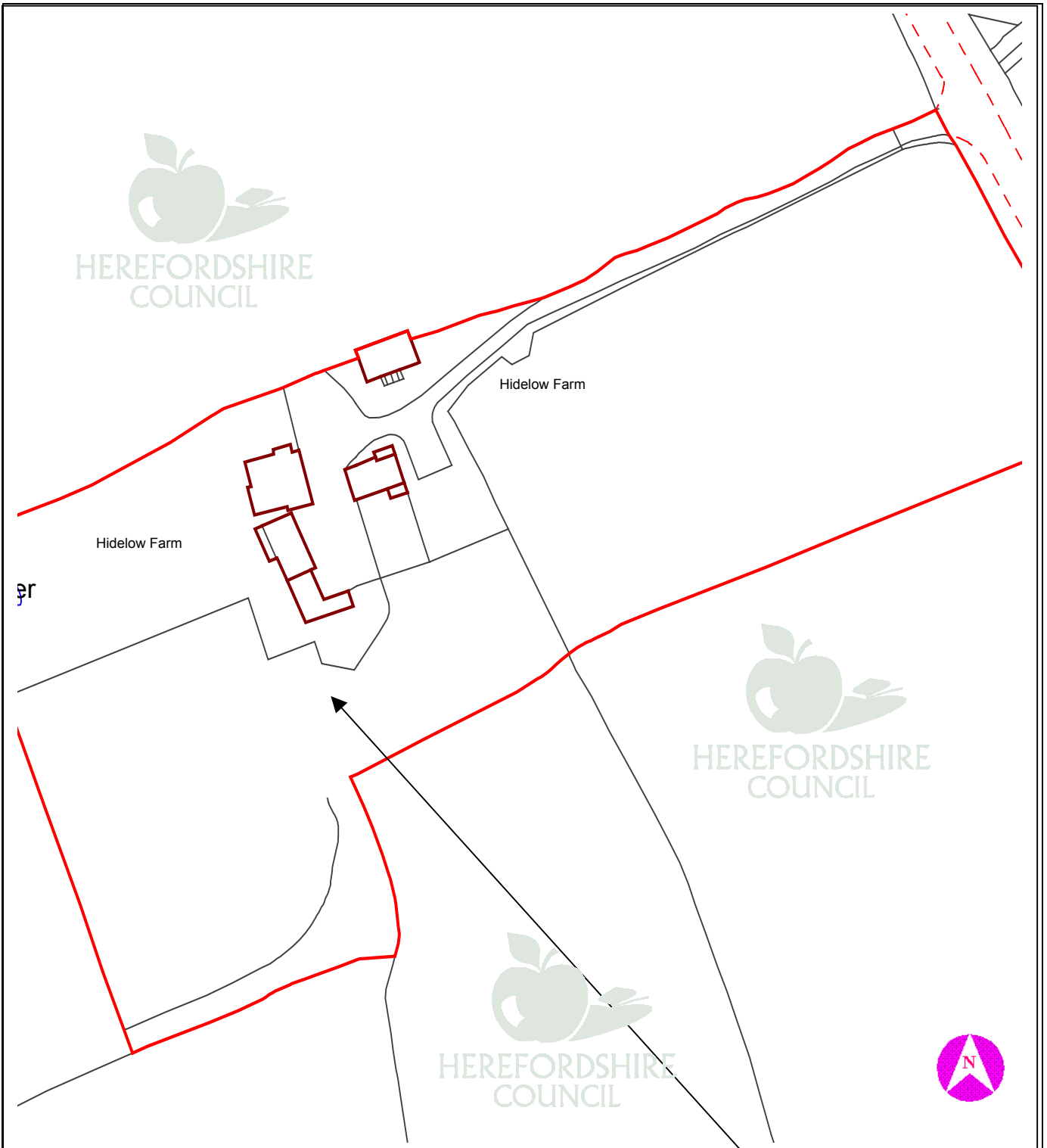
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCNE2005/3838/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** Hidelow House, Acton Beauchamp, Worcester, WR6 5AH

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