

**DCNW2006/0071/F - NEW/REPLACEMENT FARM HOUSE AT THE VALLETS, RICHARDS CASTLE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 4ET****For: Mr & Mrs H Salwey per Mr R T L Salmon, The Hatch, Lindridge, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, WR15 8JT****Date Received:  
10th January 2006****Ward: Mortimer****Grid Ref:  
47582, 70986****Expiry Date:  
7th March 2006**

Local Member: Councillor Mrs O Barnett

**Introduction**

This application was considered by the Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 when Members resolved to grant permission contrary to the recommendation of the report. This decision was accordingly referred to the Development Control Manager (in the absence of a current Head of Planning Services) who has reported it to the Planning Committee for further consideration.

At its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 the Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee was recommended to refuse this application for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed replacement dwelling is of a size that exceeds what could be considered comparable to the dwelling to be replaced. The development is thus contrary to the requirements of Policy A2(d)ii of the adopted Leominster District Local Plan.**
- 2. In the absence of a full ecological survey of the buildings and the site surrounds, the local planning authority is not satisfied that adequate steps have been taken to mitigate the presence of species afforded statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations 1994.**

In the debate the members of the Area Sub-Committee examined the likely impact of the new dwelling on the landscape in this remote location and felt that the size of the proposed dwelling would not be sufficiently significant to warrant refusal.

Members further considered that the wildlife interests could be adequately protected by the use of appropriate conditions.

The Case Officer explained the relative sizes of the old and proposed new properties, the latter being approximately two and half times larger than the former (measured by floorspace created), and the Development Control Manager explained why the wildlife survey work should take place before determining the application as the results should be used to influence the design.

Notwithstanding this advice Members resolved to support the application.

Having reviewed the facts of this application it is considered that this proposal conflicts directly with the relevant policies and the case for support advanced by Members is not considered sufficient to outweigh the substantive policy concerns arising from this proposal.

## **1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The application site comprises an existing farmhouse, which is square in shape except for a modest single storey addition to the north west elevation. It is constructed of brick under a slate roof and has a fairly unusual fully hipped roof gathering to a centrally located chimneystack with two cowls. The dwellings is 9.7m square giving an overall floor area of 191.78 square metres (measured externally, including single storey addition). The eaves level of the existing dwelling (N E Elevation) is 4.7m with the ridge height at 9.2m (chimney height 11m)
- 1.2 The dwelling is sited in open countryside in an elevated position at the top of the hill overlooking Richards Castle and Wooferton. The dwelling is accessed via a long private driveway through its associated farmland. A range of agricultural buildings is located immediately to the North East of the dwelling.
- 1.3 The proposal is for the demolition of the farm house and replacement with a new dwelling on the same footprint. The proposed dwelling is also square in shape with a footprint of 13.4m square with an addition of a conservatory / veranda to the South west elevation which measures 3m by 10m. The dwelling is three storey, including a basement area which is partially exposed with a door and window to the South East elevation. The overall floor area of the proposed building is approximately 480 square metres (measured externally). The eaves height (N E elevation) would be 5.9m and ridge height is 8.9m (10.1m to chimney).

## **2. Policies**

### **2.1 Leominster District Local Plan**

A2 – Settlement Hierarchy  
A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape

### **2.2 Unitary Development Plan (revised deposit draft)**

DR1 – design  
H7 – Housing in the countryside outside settlements

## **3. Planning History**

NW2005/3024/F – New/replacement dwelling – refused on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2005 for the following reason:

1) The proposed replacement dwelling is of a size that exceeds what could be considered comparable to the dwelling to be replaced. The development proposed is thus contrary to the requirements of Policy A2 (d) iii of the adopted Leominster District Local Plan.

2) In the absence of a full ecological survey of the buildings and the site surrounds, the local planning authority is not satisfied that adequate steps have been taken to mitigate

the presence of species afforded statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations 1994.

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Severn Trent water raises no objection

##### Internal Consultees

- 4.2 The Transportation Manager raises no objection subject to the provision of car parking spaces within the site.
- 4.3 The Conservation Manager raises the following issues:

##### (Landscape Officer)

The Vallets is in an isolated, prominent position high on the south-east facing slopes of Hanway Common, which rises up from Richards Castle. Two public rights of way, one of which is the Mortimer Trail cross the common below The Vallets. The site falls within an Area of Great Landscape Value.

The farm complex, comprising both the existing farmhouse and the farm buildings, is quite an imposing feature in the landscape, due to its isolated, elevated position. Although when viewed from the footpaths on Hanway Common, the lower part of the farmhouse is partially screened by the hedgerow and windbreak planting along the south-eastern boundary of the farm complex, the square form, simplicity of elevations and distinctive roofline of the house are noticeable features in the landscape.

I would not support this proposal. I am concerned that the replacement building is much larger and grander in character than the existing house. The Historic Building Officers have indicated that the architecture of the existing farmhouse is of interest and that it is locally distinctive therefore I consider that the farmhouse is an important feature in this upland landscape setting. I feel that it would be preferable to renovate and to extend the existing farmhouse, if required, if this could be achieved in a sympathetic way.

I recommend, therefore, that permission be refused for this development on the grounds that it would be contrary to Policies A.9: Safeguarding the Rural Landscape, Policy A.19: Other Buildings Worthy of Retention of the Leominster District Local Plan (1999) and Policy HBA8: Locally important buildings of the emerging Unitary Development Plan.

##### Ecologist

The building had timber sarking in the roof and, together with the slate overlay, it may well house summer colonies of bats particularly as the current tenant has seen a bat within the house!

I would recommend that the application is withdrawn until the full information requested is presented with application. I am very reluctant to request a condition for further survey on this application – I would be requesting that no development takes place until after this survey in any case. If bats are present no demolition could take place

until the winter months and then only if mitigation and compensation for loss of roosts and nest sites is in place.

**5. Representations**

5.1 Elton Parish Council has no objections

**6. Officers Appraisal**

- 6.1 The proposal seeks the erection of a replacement dwelling in lieu of a building with established residential use rights. In this respect it is acceptable on a point of principle. This is a resubmission of a previous application, the only difference being the raising of the ground level in front of the basement level that attempts to reduce the scale by way of appearance of the 3-storey element of the scheme. Nonetheless the proposal is still a relatively grandiose replacement of a simple yet unusual dwelling. The relevant policy requires however, that replacement dwellings should be of a size comparable to the building to be replaced. In this instance it has been demonstrated that the replacement would be 2.5 times larger in terms of floor area and the volumetric increase would be equally significant.
- 6.2 As such, the proposed development cannot be considered as comparable with the dwelling to be replaced and the objectives of Policy A2 (d) iii are thus not met. It is recommended that the application be refused on these grounds.
- 6.3 In terms of ecology, this resubmission did not supply the information required relating to bats and the ecologist maintains their objection. As such this has been included as a second reason for refusal.

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

- 1 The proposed replacement dwelling is of a size that exceeds what could be considered comparable to the dwelling to be replaced. The development proposed is thus contrary to the requirements of Policy A2(d)ii of the adopted Leominster District Local Plan.**
- 2 In the absence of a full ecological survey of the buildings and the site surrounds, the local planning authority is not satisfied that adequate steps have been taken to mitigate the presence of species afforded statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations 1994.**

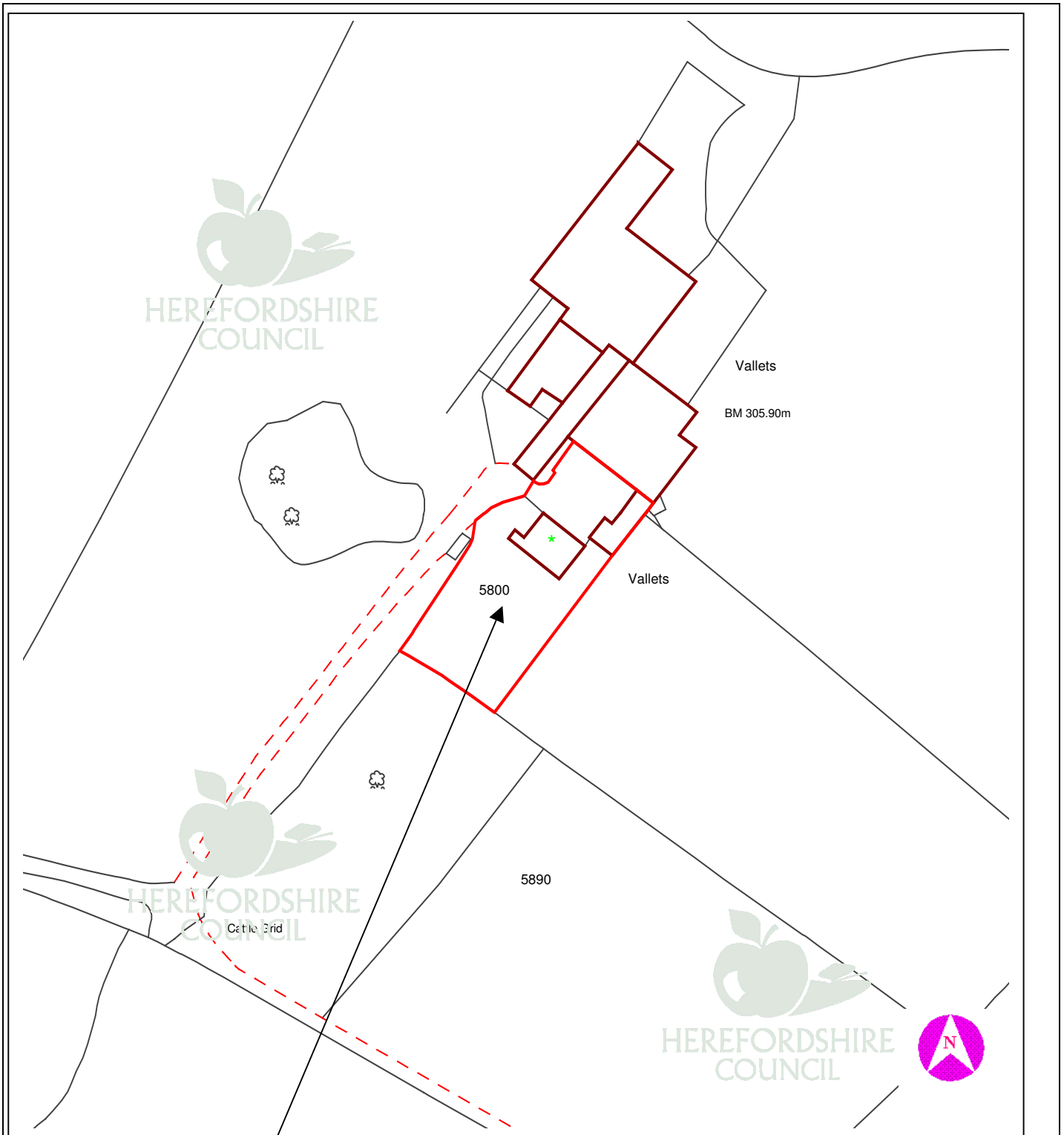
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCNW2006/0071/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** The Vallets, Richards Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 4ET

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