

14 DCCW2006/2184/F - ERECTION OF PERMANENT POLYTUNNELS FOR GROWING FRUIT AT O.S. 3161, UPPERTON FARM, YAZOR, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR4 7BB.**For: Mr. A.M. Powell per Sunderlands, Offa House, St. Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2PQ.****Date Received: 30th June, 2006 Ward: Wormsley Ridge Grid Ref: 39294, 46598
BVPI Expiry Date: 29th September, 2006**

Local Member: Councillor J.C. Mayson

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Upperton Farm is located on the southern side of the A480 Hereford to Weobley road at Yazor. The proposal is to erect permanent polytunnels on land approximately 250 metres south of the main farm buildings across the opposite side of the dismantled Hereford to Kington railway line. The railway line forms the northern boundary and is heavily treed. The west and southern boundaries are established hedges with an orchard forming the eastern boundary. The site measures approximately 4.25 hectares and slopes gently down from north east to south west.
- 1.2 The tunnels will run in the same direction as the slope and the polythene would be removed by 1st October every year and not replaced until 31st March of the following year. The crops to be grown are blueberries and these will be grown from the land. Once planted the plants can survive for up to 50 years hence the requirement for a permanent permission.

2. Policies

2.1 National Guidance:

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):

Policy S7 - Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy E13 - Agricultural and Forestry Development
Policy ARCH3 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments

2.3 Herefordshire Council – Polytunnel Code of Practice

3. Planning History

- 3.1 None.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager: (Archaeology): "If as proposed the polytunnelled area stops short of the monument - (a buffer zone of approximately 100 metres) there would not in my view be particular concerns. The course of the dyke follows a raised topographic terrace in this location, so it would remain clearly visible even with the polytunnels to the west.

Also, the lack of any public rights of way in close proximity lessens (in practical terms) the effective visual impact."

- 4.4 Conservation Manager: (Landscape):

"Visual impact

I am concerned that polytunnels on this site would be visually intrusive to a degree and would have a moderate adverse visual impact. However, if the development is acceptable in principle, then it would be possible to screen to the site to some extent by allowing the boundary hedges to grow up and to plant new native species hedgerow trees where possible. Trees would help to break up views of the polytunnels. Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) would be suitable."

5. Representations

- 5.1 Yazor Parish Council: "Due to careful location and screening, there is no objection."
- 5.2 Offa's Dyke Planning Advisor confirms that the planning application will not impinge on the Dyke in any way.
- 5.3 CPRE are concerned that the Offa's Dyke passes close to the proposed site which is a considerable tourist amenity. CPRE are anxious to protect the open landscape in rural areas and are aware of the deleterious effect that large area of glistening polythene can produce. In this case, if permission is granted, the plastic would be 'in situ' during the late spring and summer months for up to 50 years.
- 5.4 Two letters of support have been received from M. & M. Powell, Moorhampton Farm, Moorhampton, Hereford and Mrs. E.J. Jacobs, Samaru, Moorhampton, Hereford. The main points raised are:
- Do not tend to support polytunnels as they are often a 'blot on the landscape'. however, in this instance the applicant is commended for the consideration he has taken in selecting the particular area.
 - We are the only house which would be able to see them but we have no objections.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 This proposal seeks to provide permanent polytunnel coverage on approximately 4.25 hectares of land between the months of April and September each year. The tunnels are required to be able to commercially grow blueberries which can survive for up to 50 years hence the need for the permanent permission. In this instance the key aspects to consider are:

- 1) Landscape Impact
- 2) Archaeological Impact

Landscape Impact

6.2 The site or surroundings do not hold any landscape designation. It is well located and is afforded excellent screening from the boundary trees and hedges of the dismantled railway as well as providing a backdrop when viewed from the south and west. Further enhancement can be achieved with improved maintenance of the southern and western hedgerows which can be conditioned. It should also be noted that when the trees and hedges lose their leaves the polythene will have been removed and not returned until the trees and hedges start to grow their foliage again. The Conservation Manager has also confirmed that subject to enhanced boundary treatment the proposal is acceptable.

Archaeology

6.3 The Council's Archaeologist has confirmed that the site falls short of Offa's Dyke and due to the topographic terrace in this location it will still be clearly visible even when the polytunnels are cloaked in polythene. Accordingly there are no archaeology concerns. This view is also echoed by the Planning Advisor to the Offa's Dyke Association.

Conclusion

6.4 One of the objectives of PPS7 is to promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors where farming achieves high environmental standards, minimising impact on natural resources and manages valued landscapes and provides high quality products.

6.5 There is no landscape designation in this area and Offa's Dyke at its nearest point is over 100 metres away and the Council's Archaeologist has confirmed no objection. Therefore the proposal is considered to comply with the Development Plan by sustaining a diverse and adaptable agricultural sector subject to appropriate conditions as stated below.

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. A09 (Amended plans).

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the amended plans.

3. The polythene shall be removed from the tunnels on or before the 1st October every year and not replaced until 31st March in any year.

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

4. G04 (Landscaping scheme (general)).

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

5. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general)).

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

6. G11 (Retention of hedgerows (where not covered by Hedgerow Regulations)).

Reason: To ensure that the application site is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

7. G27 (Landscape maintenance arrangements).

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

Informatives:

1. N19 - Avoidance of doubt.

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

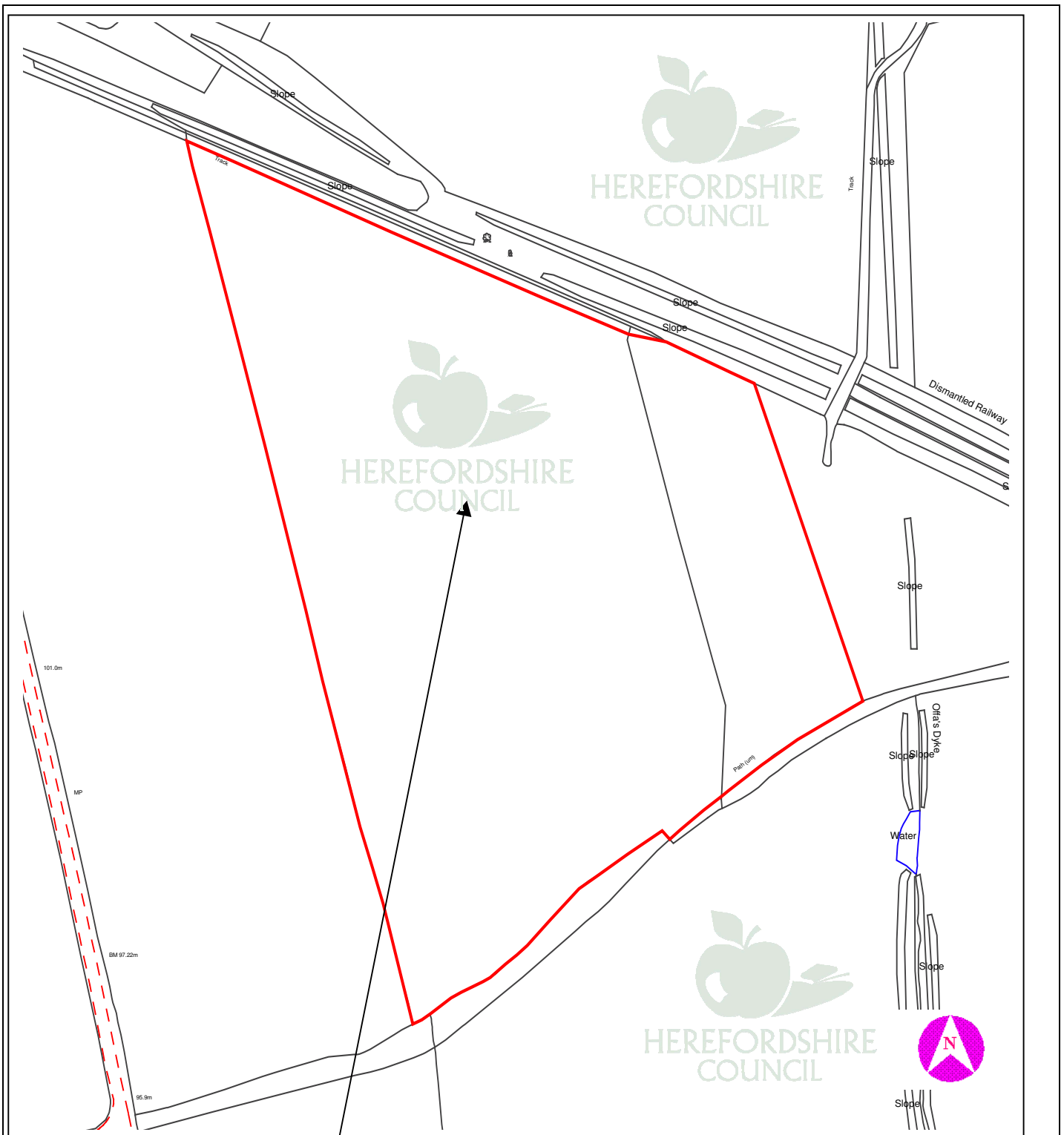
Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning purposes. No further copies may be made.

APPLICATION NO: DCCW2006/2184/F

SCALE : 1 : 2500

SITE ADDRESS : O.S. 3161, Upperton Farm, Yazor, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 7BB

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Herefordshire Council. Licence No: 100024168/2005