

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

2nd June 2004

S/1210/03/F – Gamlingay

Erection of free range egg production building, Woodview Farm, Mill Hill Potton Road, for Mrs L Titmus

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Site and Proposal

1. This application, submitted on 30th May 2003, proposes the erection of 390m² timber building on a brick plinth for free range egg production on a 0.5ha area of land to the rear of Woodview Farm, Potton Road, Gamlingay.
2. Between the site and Potton Road, is additional land owned by the applicant containing a dwelling and former farm shop, now used as a day nursery. Vehicular access is from the Potton Road.
3. On the other three sides is agricultural land, the land immediately to the south being owned by the applicant
4. The building is 4.1m high to the ridge and would house 4000 birds. The site is currently open to view when approached from the south
5. Additional information on the enterprise is contained under Applicant's Representations below.

Planning History

6. There have been no previous applications on the red edged site.

Planning Policy

7. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") states development in the countryside will be restricted unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location; where there is an unacceptable risk to the quality of ground or surface water and; where there could be damage, destruction or loss to areas that should be retained for their biodiversity, historic, archaeological, architectural and recreational value.
8. **Policy CS3** of the Local Plan states that development of sites where drainage to a public sewer is not feasible will not be permitted if proposed alternative facilities are considered inadequate and would pose an unacceptable risk to the quality or quantity of ground or surface water, pollution of local ditches, watercourses or sites of ecological importance.
9. **Policy CS4** of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted which

poses an unacceptable risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater.

10. **Policy CS5** of the Local Plan states that planning consent will not be granted for development where the site is liable to flooding, or where development is likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by materially impeding the flow or storage of flood water; increase flood risk in area downstream due to additional surface water runoff or; increase the number of people or properties at risk.
11. **Policy EN1** of the Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character and local distinctiveness of Landscape Character Areas.
12. **Policy EN3** of the Local Plan states that in those cases where development is permitted in the countryside the Council will require that the scale, design and layout of the scheme, the materials used and landscaping works are all appropriate to the particular Landscape Character Area.

Consultation

13. **Gamlingay Parish Council** recommends refusal. "Opposed as it is felt by this Council that an Environmental Impact Assessment should first be conducted especially given the proximity of a children's day nursery next door to the site and the flowing of a brook nearby. Notwithstanding the safety implications of transportation vehicles to this site sharing the same access and parking facilities as the day nursery, the Council is also concerned about access to and from the site via the heavily-used Potton Road and its location opposite a busy recycling plant. An ability to view oncoming traffic from the right on exiting this site would be impaired given the uneven level of the road. The Council feels consideration should also be given to the cumulative effect an increasing number of chicken farms in the Gamlingay area would have on the local community and environment."
14. The **Environment Agency** recommends a condition requiring a scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control to the water environment is attached to any consent to ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage. The Agency also offers safeguarding comment.
15. The **Local Highway Authority** requested that the applicant submit additional detailed information relating to existing and anticipated daily traffic flows to the site. These comments are repeated in respect of the additional information received from the applicant.
16. The comments of the **Environmental Health Officer** are attached as Appendix 1.
17. The **Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board** and **Mid Bedfordshire District Council** have made no comments.

Representations

18. None received.

Applicants Representations

19. The applicant states that the total number of hens on the building would be 4000 once the smaller shed (S/1209/03) is phased out in favour of the larger one. The

current EU legislation for free-range hens is 2500 birds per hectare so there is a capacity for 6000 birds.

20. Any dead birds will be incinerated on the farm and the applicant has agreed in the long-term to purchase an incinerator and understands that to have an on farm incinerator will become law in 2005. It is proposed to sit the incinerator on the northern boundary, half way down the site, just outside the farmhouse garden perimeters. In the short-term, as discussed with Environmental Health Officers any fallen stock would be stored in a sealed container and disposed of at the Duxford pet crematorium or the maggot farm at Longstowe.
21. In respect of pest control the applicant states that bait traps will be used both inside and outside the building. Professional pest control from a registered firm would be sought if vermin get out of hand. Sprays will be used to keep fly's to a minimum.
22. The shed will be cleaned out once a year usually when the hens are around 80 weeks old. Manure will be collected by a neighbouring farmer for spreading on his fields and cultivated immediately into the soil.
23. The volume of transport to the site will be kept to a minimum. There will be a feed lorry once a month. Eggs will be delivered or collected twice a week. Delivery of new hens and collection of spent hens is limited to once a year.
24. The current water systems used are bell drinkers as this is a hard water area. Foul water is confined to a shed deep pit system and water from the building is discharged through guttering into the sub-soil.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

25. The key issues to be considered are environmental impact, impact in the landscape and highway safety.
26. In my view the application is of insufficient scale to warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment. Although a Schedule 2 Development, under the Regs, the area of new floorspace falls below the 500 sq metres threshold in the Regs and the proposal is not located in a designated environmentally sensitive location.
27. The Chief Environmental Health officer is satisfied that with the safeguarding conditions suggested this operation can take place without any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring users of land or area generally, including the day nursery at the front of the site. The applicant has viewed the suggested conditions and has confirmed that they can be met.
28. The applicant states that in the longer term it is the intention to install an incinerator. Although I have suggested to the applicant that full details be submitted at this stage for consideration with the current application these have not been forthcoming and will need to be the subject of a separate consent. The Chief Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that whilst such provision on-site would be preferable it is not essential.
29. The Environment Agency has no objections provided a condition regarding surface water drainage is imposed.
30. I have previously asked the applicant to amend the application site area to include all areas outside the building to be used by the birds. To date this has not been forthcoming.

31. The applicant owns land to the south of the site and in my view has the opportunity to adequately screen the building, which is 4.1m high to minimise its impact in the landscape.
32. I note the comments of the Local Highways Authority, however this is a small-scale family operation and in my view the amount of additional traffic that will be generated would not justify a refusal on highway grounds. I have, however, asked the applicant to supply the more detailed information on traffic levels requested by the Highway Authority.

Recommendations

19. That subject to further details from the applicant in respect of an amended plan showing the area outside of the buildings that will be used in connection with the unit and detailed traffic information requested by the Local Highways Authority that delegated powers of approval be granted. Conditions to include the requirements of the Environmental Health Officer, the Environment Agency and landscaping.

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/2**
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: CS3, CS4, CS5, EN1 and EN3**
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Amenity of users of land in the vicinity
 - Highway safety
 - Visual impact on the locality
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Application File S/1210/03/F

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