

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

14th May 2014

Planning Application 2014/011/FUL

Application for on-farm slaughter facility at Windy Bank Farm through the change of use of the existing farm buildings and the construction of a new access from the South West of the site, off Astwood Lane.

Windy Bank Farm , Astwood Lane, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire, B96 6HH

District: Astwood Bank
Applicant: Mr Terence Simpson
Expiry Date: 21st March 2014
Ward: Astwood Bank And Feckenham

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Ailith Rutt, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534064 Email: ailith.rutt@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site lies in the Green Belt on the rural road network, where Astwood Lane joins the access road to the Business Park. The site is one of several fields that form Windy Bank Farm. The land rises to the east from the lane. The boundary between the field and Astwood Lane is a grass verge with hedging and a post and rail fence.

In the north west corner of the field at the junction, there are three existing barns, the two smaller of which are the subject of this application. They are metal framed agricultural barns with timber cladding and metal rooves.

Proposal description

The application proposes the change of use of these two barns from purely agricultural use to use as a slaughter facility. The barns would remain the same size and appearance from the outside and all conversion works necessary would be carried out internally.

The application also proposes a new access from further south along Astwood Lane, through the adjacent field, in order that traffic conflicts at the access to the business park are avoided. This would comprise the replacement of the fence with a gate, and the laying of a hard surface through the field for use by vehicles accessing the slaughter facility. The proposed use would generate approximately 14 additional FTE jobs.

The application is supported by a design and access statement. Additional information has been provided to address points raised through the consultation process.

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

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BRA05 Reuse and Conversion of Buildings
CS02 Care for the Environment
BBE13 Qualities of Good Design
BBE14 Alterations and Extensions
BBE28 Waste Management
BNE01A Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
CT12 Parking Standards
BRA01 Detailed Extent of Control of Development in the Green Belt

Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4: Submission Version

Policy 8: Green Belt

Policy 27: Rural Economic Development

Others:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy (WWCS)

Relevant Planning History

2008/143/COU	Change Of Use Of A Steel Portal Framed Building To A Meat Processing Plant To Service Local Needs	Refused	18.06.2008
2008/379/AGR	Steel portal framed agricultural building for storage of hay and straw	Accepted	22.12.2008
2001/409/GDO	Agricultural Notification Under GDO - Steel Portal Frame Building	Accepted	30.10.2001
1998/423/GDO	Agricultural Notification Under GDO - Pole Barn	Accepted	09.11.1998

Consultations

Highway Network Control

No objection subject to conditions and informatives relating to the provision of access facilities prior to the commencement of the use of the development.

Agricultural Consultant

No objection as proposal would serve local area and be considered in commercial terms as it would cater for animals reared both on and off site. Welcomes decrease in travel from a cost and animal welfare perspective. Sought clarification that adequate facilities

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for caring for the animals between delivery and slaughter have been provided on the farm. These have been provided satisfactorily.

Development Plans

- o The proposal falls within the Green Belt and an abattoir is considered to be an appropriate use in a rural area
- o The proposal would utilise existing agricultural buildings and would not create additional floorspace
- o The anticipated scale of on-site parking would not be such to harm the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt
- o The permanence and structural stability of the buildings is unknown and it is recommended that further clarity is sought
- o There are no details regarding the hardstanding for the parking/turning areas. Given its rural location it will be important to ensure suitable materials are used
- o Subject to confirmation that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, from a policy perspective this application is supported.

Contaminated Land- Worcestershire Regulatory Services

No adverse comments to make

North Worcestershire Water Management

Have examined evidence and their own records and raise no objection subject to the imposition of a condition regarding drainage and water discharge.

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

There is sufficient ecological information to progress the application in line with the law and planning policy and there do not appear to be any overriding ecological issues here so we do not wish to object to the proposals.

They note and support the recommendations made in the ecological report and consider that they represent sensible mitigation and enhancement for the scale of works proposed and suggest these be controlled through the imposition of a condition.

Public Rights Of Way

No objection - applicant should note requirements of other legislation regarding any impacts of the construction phase of the development on the adjacent public rights of way.

Public Consultation Response

13 letters of objection have been received, raising the following points:

- noise and disturbance to surrounding residential properties

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- impact on surrounding residential amenity
- increase in traffic movements on already busy narrow rural road network
- access proposed on blind bend so would lead to highway safety concerns
- impact on wildlife
- odour
- inappropriate so close to a children's soft play facility
- harm to biodiversity would be caused
- unsustainable location for employment creation as bus service is poor
- inappropriate use in the Green Belt

37 letters of support have been received for the following reasons:

- reduces travel distance and time and cost for local farmers who currently have to travel to Kenilworth, and thus improves effects on animal welfare
- sustainable location near where the need arises
- better for animal health and disease control to have facilities like this within the areas where they are needed
- modern regs mean that there are no noise, smell or contamination concerns
- would be an asset for the local farming community
- economic benefits to local farmers
- job creation
- would result in locally sourced food
- has to happen somewhere and here is a good place for it

One letter has been received raising matters on both the lists above and not clearly stating whether in favour or against.

Assessment of Proposal

The site lies in the Green Belt and as such only uses and developments defined as 'appropriate' are normally considered to be acceptable in policy terms. The NPPF includes the reuse of rural buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction as an appropriate use within the Green Belt and has no restrictions on uses that might be acceptable; therefore the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

However, the details of the proposed use and its impact on the landscape, the character of the area and the surrounding infrastructure must also be taken into account when reaching a decision in this case.

The proposed use, as noted by policy officers, is considered to be appropriate to this location in a rural area, near its customers such that it would be of benefit to local businesses economically and also to animal welfare through the reduction of stressful transport and travel times.

The design, location and appearance of the buildings would remain as they are such that there would be no additional harmful impacts on the openness of the Green Belt from

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them. The proposed access route would be re-surfacing works only and thus not result in significant additional impacts on the landscape, as there is no additional fencing or other associated work shown on the proposed plans. The additional impact of a small number of staff cars parked on the site is not considered to be sufficiently significant to result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt, especially given its siting between a tree-lined boundary and the buildings themselves.

The additional information provided by the applicant demonstrates that the buildings are of sufficiently permanent and substantial construction that they can be converted for the proposed uses, and that their appearance externally would change minimally, as they would be lined on the inside in order that they were sealed, hygienic and easily cleaned. It is therefore considered that the buildings meet the test in the NPPF and are suitable to be converted.

Highways parking and access arrangements have all been considered by the county highways team and they have confirmed that sufficient parking provision has been included in the proposal, that the access point meets the required standards and that the nature of the traffic movements associated with this use is likely to be such in type and volume that the surrounding rural road network has the necessary capacity and size to accommodate this. The proposed materials for the surfacing have been indicated, however it is recommended that a condition be attached so that the materials to be used can be agreed in order that they are sympathetic and appropriate.

The nature of the use proposed is such that it requires vehicle trips, however it is considered more sustainable to locate such a facility in this location near the users of the facility than to use this site as a holding point before sending a collection of animals on a shared onward journey together. Therefore, in terms of sustainability, this proposal cuts out long journeys by large vehicles from the overall food chain and as such is considered to be acceptable in sustainability terms. The reuse of existing buildings is also more sustainable than the provision of new ones.

The nature of the proposed use is such that all the operations would be carried out within the buildings, and meet all the necessary requirements of other relevant legislation which is outside of the control of the planning process. No concerns regarding the impact of the noise or odour arising from the proposal have been raised by the expert consultees, and it is therefore considered unlikely that any harm would be caused in this way. Not only would activities be within the buildings on the site but these buildings are at a significant distance from residential properties such that no harm by reason of either noise or smell would result.

It is not considered likely that any harm to wildlife would be caused as a result of this proposal, due to the re-use of existing buildings rather than the loss of open land to development. The loss of some grass to the surfacing of the new access is not considered likely to result in any significant loss of or harm to biodiversity.

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Objectors have raised the proximity of the proposal to a children's play facility which is an indoor facility and located approximately 450m from the site. It is therefore considered unlikely to result in any harmful effects.

The proposal is perceived to be beneficial in a variety of ways, including a small quantity of local job creation which meets the policy objective of encouraging a thriving rural economy.

It is considered necessary to recommend that various conditions be imposed on any permission granted. It is not considered appropriate that the use be carried out full time round the clock, as the intention is for this to be a small scale facility serving the local farming community. Therefore, it is recommended that the hours of operation of the facility be restricted. This will also result in the prevention of additional vehicle movements out of those hours and thus reduce any potential impact on the adjacent road network. It is suggested that the works be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans and details, and that the drainage details should be provided for agreement, and these seem to be appropriate to impose in this case.

RECOMMENDATION:

that having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions and informatives:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason :- In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans and documents submitted in support of the application:

Appropriate references to be added here, to include plans, documents and ecology survey and mitigation details

Reason: To accurately define the permission for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance in order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

- 3) No development hereby permitted shall commence until full drainage plans have been submitted and approved, and these are to include details of the disposal of potentially contaminated water. These plans need to be approved in writing prior to

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works beginning and the development shall proceed in accordance with these details.

Reason: In order to ensure satisfactory drainage conditions that will not create or exacerbate flood risk on site or within the surrounding local area and to comply with Policy B(BE)28 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

- 4) The slaughter house facility hereby approved shall only operate between 5am and 3pm daily, and deliveries/collections shall not be made outside of these hours.

Reason: In the interests of securing a local development on a small scale for a small local community supply and in accordance with the NPPF.

- 5) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the access, turning area and parking facilities shown on the approved plan have been properly consolidated, surfaced, drained and otherwise constructed in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority and these areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for those users at all times.

Reason: In the interests of Highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining Highway.

- 6) Prior to the commencement of development, details of the materials to be used on the external faces of the buildings and the surfacing of the access and parking area shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall proceed in accordance with any details thus agreed.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, the openness of the Green Belt and in accordance with Policy B(BE)13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

Informatives

The local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to queries arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through negotiation and provision of extra information.

It is noted that the policy numbers in the emerging local plan are different from those referred to by the applicant, however the correct and relevant policies have been considered on both sides at all stages.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because two (or more) objections have been received.