

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan. Ref Expiry Date
Mr. M. Turan 'A'	Erection of agricultural storage building for GB machinery and fodder (retrospective) - Belcote Farm, Mearse Lane, Belbroughton	GB	B/2007/0691 10.10.2007

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

Consultations

Belbroughton PC	Consulted: 13.07.2007. Parish Council cannot comment as it needs guidance on rules governing agricultural buildings (08.08.2007)
WCC(HP)	Consulted: 13.07.2007. No response to date.
ENG	Consulted: 13.07.2007. No objections, subject to comment (09.08.2007)
Agricultural Advisor	Consulted: 13.07.2007. Objection received: 31.07.2007 (for the original scheme) concluding that the building is not reasonably required for the purposes of agriculture. A further fax was received on 08.10.2007 following the receipt of an additional supporting statement from the applicant's solicitors which stated that the land would be used for arable purposes. Advisor states that if unit is to be returned to arable production, then proposed building is reasonable.
Publicity	Site notice posted: 31.08.2007; expires: 21.09.2007

The site and its surroundings

The site is located off a separate access point to Belcote Farm which runs in a semi-circle shape from Mearse Lane to the retrospective building. This access point is edged on both sides with a large kerb and does not form part of this application. The retrospective building is also located in a highly prominent position and is clearly visible from Mearse Lane.

Proposal

The building in question is retrospective and measures 25.4 metres x 37.0 metres, with a height of 8.7 metres, and a pair of roller-shutter doors each measuring 5 metres in width.

Please note that this application forms one of three applications which shall be presented to this Committee. The other applications are:

1. B/2007/1092 Retrospective application for the creation of a hard-standing yard area adjacent to building for agricultural purposes.
2. B/2007/1094 Retrospective application for the creation of access track for agricultural machinery to Belcote Farm.

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE1, QE2, QE3
WCSP	SD.2, D.38, D.39, CTC.1
BDLP	DS2, DS13, C4, C30A
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS7, SPG5

Relevant Planning History

B/2007/1094	Retrospective application for the creation of access track for agricultural machinery to Belcote Farm. Pending.
B/2007/1092	Retrospective application for the creation of hard-standing yard area adjacent to building for agricultural purposes. Pending.
B/2006/0332	Erection of an agricultural storage / general purpose building. Details not required: 24.04.2007
B/2006/0148	Erection of an agricultural storage / general purpose building. Details not required: 24.04.2007. Further details required: 17.03.2006
B/2005/0964	Change of access field for agricultural purposes. Granted: 25.11.2005

Notes

The main issue to consider with this application is whether the proposal would represent appropriate development in the Green Belt and, if not, whether special circumstances exist that would outweigh the harm caused.

Reasons for the Proposal

The applicant's Agent states that the agricultural unit would be used for arable purposes and the building would be required for the purpose of storing grain, machinery and straw for insurance and security purposes. There are no other facilities within the fifty acre holding.

Green Belt Issues

Guidance in PPG2 - "Green Belt" and policies within both the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the Worcestershire County Structure Plan state that the erection of new agricultural buildings is classified as appropriate development in the Green Belt provided there is a clear agricultural need. Policy DS2 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan sets out the instances where development is considered appropriate in the Green Belt as stemming from the advice given in PPG2. Criteria (a) of this policy relates to development for purposes of agriculture.

Policies on New Agricultural Buildings

Policy C30a of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan states that proposals for new agricultural buildings which are subject to planning controls will be considered favourably where the need for the building is established to the satisfaction of the District Council and complies with the following criteria:

- (a) the proposal must be in accordance with the provisions of policies C4 and C5 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (relating to impact on the surrounding landscape and landscape features);
- (b) the scale and design of the building should be appropriate to its intended use;
- (c) the proposal should form part of a group of buildings where practicable; and
- (d) appropriate materials and dark matt colours should be employed wherever practicable.

Part of policy C30a therefore suggests that, where possible, the proposal should form a group of buildings and refers to policy C4 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan that resists developments which would have a materially detrimental effect on the landscape. SPG5 and PPS7 provide further guidance on the issue of siting and states that normally new buildings should form part of a group rather than stand in isolation. Clearly, this building would be in an isolated position and, whilst sited alongside a hedge, the scale and height of the building means that it will be clearly visible from Mearse Lane.

I note, however, that there are no opportunities on the holding to site a building adjacent to existing buildings and, given the relationship to Belcote Farm itself, the proposed siting appears acceptable.

Turning now to the scale and design of the building, it is acknowledged that a building of a certain size may not require planning permission for the purposes of agriculture and reference is made to a previous application B/2006/0332 which was for a much smaller agricultural building measuring 18 metres x 25 metres, with a height of 8 metres. The current proposal would be significantly larger, measuring 25.4 metres x 37.0 metres, with a height of 8.7 metres, and the comments from the Agricultural Consultant should carry substantial weight in the determination of this application. A brief summary of recent events is highlighted below.

This application was received by the Council on 15th August 2007 and at that time the site was not being used for arable purposes. This was noted by the Agricultural Consultants who expressed concern with the proposal and the current use of the site. However, the report from the Agricultural Consultants made it clear that a building of this size would not be unreasonable if the site was being used for arable purposes (see **Appendix 1**).

A letter was received from the applicant's solicitor on 2nd August 2007 confirming that the site was being used for arable purposes. This was also reinforced during the Committee site visits on 4th October 2007 where it was evident that the previous grass fields had been freshly ploughed in preparation for farming.

The 2nd August 2007 letter (mentioned above) was forwarded to the Agricultural Consultant and a response was received on 8th October 2007, which is summarised below: -

If the unit returned to arable production then the proposed building would be reasonable required for the purposes of agriculture. I would also draw your attention to the conditions that I recommended in my earlier appraisal dated 31st July 2007.

These conditions suggested that a temporary condition could be implemented, or a condition could be implemented to ensure that the building is fully removed from the site if it ceased to be used for agricultural purposes. Given the nature of the activities on the site and the commencement of an agricultural enterprise on site, it is considered that a minimum two-year temporary permission should be granted to allow for planting and harvesting, and this would also provide the Council with the opportunity to monitor the site to ensure that it is being used for its intended use.

The materials used on site are considered acceptable and, as such, no conditions are required to address this matter.

Conclusions

It is considered that the proposal would be reasonably required for agricultural purposes and would, by definition, constitute an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. For these reasons, it is recommended that permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

1. C23 (temporary 2 year period)

Notes

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the West Midlands Spatial Strategy (Regional Planning Guidance Note 11), Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 (BDLP) and other material considerations as summarised below:

WMSS	QE1, QE2, QE3
WCSP	SD.2, D.38, D.39, CTC.1
BDLP	DS2, DS13, C4, C30A
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS7, SPG5

It is the Council's view that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the development plan and that, on balance, there are no justifiable reasons to refuse planning permission.