

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
Mr. G. Vale 'A'	Proposed new tractor shed and implement store. Resubmission of application 09/0448 - Fox Haven, Old Birmingham Road, Marlbrook, Worcestershire, B60 1NU	GB	10/0128-CE 28.05.2010

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

Consultations

WH	Consulted - view received 16.03.2010. No objection.
Agricultural Consultant	<p>Consulted - view received 19.03.2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No objection to the principle of some form of agricultural building to accommodate machinery and equipment required to manage the holding and also for hay storage. No concerns over the size of the proposed building. However, it considered that the building is more akin with the design of a residential building than an agricultural store. Its design is considerably over-engineered for agricultural purposes. ▪ There is no agricultural need for the roof lights. ▪ The design of the building is not ideal for secure agricultural storage. The height will mean that it will only be accessible by small machinery and not by a full size tractor. ▪ The layout of the building makes it awkward to use. A square / rectangular building would be far more practical.
Tree Officer	Consulted - view received 29.03.2010. No objection subject to conditions.
Conservation Officer	Consulted - view received 09.03.2010. The proposed shed would not have any impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.
Lickey and Blackwell PC	Consulted - view received 23.03.2010. Objection. The site is in the Green Belt and the size, in such a sensitive area, is excessive for the stated use. Given the history of the site, if the development is approved, a condition is suggested stating that the building is not to be converted to residential use at a later date.
The Lickey Community Group	View received 06.04.2010. Objection. Additional building in the Green Belt adjacent to an area of Outstanding Landscape Value. The development appears more residential in nature than that of an agricultural storage building. It is questioned whether the building will be built fit for human habitation or to a lesser specification. The building appears larger than necessary in terms of floor space and height bearing in mind its prominent position.
Publicity	<p>31 letters sent 09.03.2010 (expired 30.03.2010). 5 letters sent 15.03.2010 (expired 05.04.2010). 1 site notice posted 12.03.2010 (expired 02.04.2010). 1 press notice published 18.03.2010 (expired 08.04.2010). 8 objections received raising the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inappropriate development in the Green Belt. ▪ This is a border Green Belt area between 2 villages and should be

kept as that.

- Concern is raised about the size and height of the building.
- It is questioned why the applicant did not retain some of the outbuildings at Hazy Hill Farm for a tractor shed instead of converting them to residential units.
- Concern is raised that the proposed building and surrounding area will be converted to residential development.
- If planning permission was granted, this could benefit Vales the Builders with future applications for the surrounding Green Belt.
- It is questioned whether the production of hay from 1 field will make enough money to warrant the expenditure on such a large building.

The site and its surroundings

The application site is located to the east side Old Birmingham Road and adjoins the boundary of Lickey village to the north. It is 11 hectares in size and consists of 5 fields, an area of woodland and a group of buildings. The buildings consist of 5 dwellings (2 falling outside the ownership of the applicant) and outbuildings. They are set some 40 metres back from Old Birmingham Road and are accessed via a shared driveway. This application relates specifically to an area of grassed field located between the existing buildings and Old Birmingham Road and to the north of the driveway. This section of the site is partly screened from the road by a medium height hedge and trees. The application site is located in a designated area of Green Belt.

Proposal

This application proposes a single storey storage building located on the area of field mentioned above. The building will be timber clad with a tiled roof. It will provide 5 separate storage areas for agricultural vehicles, tools, implements, wood and general storage.

This application is a resubmission of 09/0448 which was withdrawn. With the exception of the removal of one window, the scheme remains as previously proposed.

Relevant Policies

WMSS QE3, QE6
WCSP CTC.1, CTC.5, SD.2, D.38, D.39
BDLP DS2, DS13, C4, C5, C30A, C17
Others PPS1, PPG2, PPS7, SPG5, Lickey and Blackwell Village Design Statement

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history relates to the application site and 2 dwellings now falling outside the ownership of the applicant (collectively know as Hazy Hill Farm):

09/0448 Proposed new tractor shed and implement store. Withdrawn 21.08.2010.
B/2003/1157 Detached dwelling and double garage - outline application: refused
16.10.2003.

B/2003/0473	Conversion of garage to bungalow: approved 10.06.2003.
B/2001/1515	A detached garage, boundary wall and security gates. Approved 14.01.2002.
B/1999/0687	Conversion of existing garage / workshop / implement store to detached bungalow: refused 11.10.1999.
B/1998/0255	Proposed implement store. Refused 13.07.1998.
B/1995/0571	Change of use from existing barn into 4 bedroom dwelling and replacement of existing double garage. Approved 11.09.1995.
B/1994/0877	Change of existing out-buildings, garage and stores into 2 dwellings (as amended by plans received 29.11.1994 and 19.12.1995). Approved 18.03.1996.
B/1994/0295	Change of use of existing barn into 4 bedroom dwelling and replacement of existing double garage: approved 06.06.1994.
B15814	Proposed conversion of existing barn and outbuildings into 3 dwellings. Refused 18.01.1988. Appeal dismissed 02.02.1989.
B9547	Erection of garage block (as amended by plans received 05.04.1982). Approved 19.04.1982.
B8286	Erection of garage and farm implement store (as amended by plans received 12.01.1981). Approved 26.01.1981.

Notes

The main issues with this application are whether the proposed agricultural building is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt and its siting, scale and design. Consideration must also be given to residential amenity and tree issues.

Green Belt, siting, scale and design

Policies in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and Worcestershire County Structure are in general accordance with the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts in stating that inappropriate development will not be allowed in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances exist. Policy DS2 of the BDLP sets out the instances when development may be considered appropriate in the Green Belt and this includes development for the purposes of agriculture. The principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable.

Policy C30A of the BDLP relates specifically to new agricultural buildings and states that such development will be considered favourably where it complies with the following criteria:

- a) the proposal is in accordance with policies C4 and C5;
- b) the scale and design of the building is appropriate for its intended use;
- c) the proposal forms part of a group of buildings wherever practicable; and
- d) appropriate materials and dark matt colours are employed wherever possible.

The Agricultural Consultant is of the view that the principle of a building for the storage of agricultural machinery and equipment is acceptable and considers the scale of the building to be suitable for the needs of the holding. The proposed building will be seen in

the context of the existing group of buildings and is positioned adjacent to an existing access onto the driveway. I therefore consider the siting of the proposal to be appropriate. It would appear that the applicant owns only small pieces of machinery and, as such, the height of the openings to the vehicle store is considered to be acceptable.

The applicant has put forward a view that the building will have a simplified functional agricultural appearance akin to a stable block or open front cart shed, will complement the existing buildings and will sit comfortably in its rural setting. However, I agree with the Agricultural Consultant, that the building will have the appearance of a domestic garage / outbuilding rather than an agricultural store. The overall design and form of the building is significantly over engineered for agricultural purposes. The use of a hipped roof, in my opinion, is not characteristic of modern or traditional agricultural buildings in the District. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5: Agricultural Buildings Design Guide advises that buildings should have a low profile. The roof pitch required to accommodate tiles pushes the height of the building up to 5 metres. This height is excessive and unnecessary from a functional point of view. There is also no agricultural need for the 3 roof lights especially as they are positioned directly above the open sided elevation of the building. I consider the roof lights, together with the unnecessary timber braces beneath the openings, add to the domestic appearance of the building. Whilst agricultural buildings are an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, domestic outbuildings sited away from the main house are not. Due to its domestic appearance, I am of the view that the proposed building will have the visual impact of extending the domestic curtilage of Fox Haven. This is clearly a form of encroachment onto undeveloped land. PPG2 states that one of five purposes of including land within the Green Belt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. As such, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to the purposes of Green Belt policy.

The Agricultural Consultant is of the view that the layout of the building, comprising of 3 different spaces with no internal connections, will make it awkward to use. A single internal space, separated into 3 different areas, would be more appropriate. The proposed layout of the building also results in it being excessively wide, unnecessarily increasing its impact on the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt. The proposed building would be partly screened from Old Birmingham Road by the roadside hedge. However, this hedge varies in density and height and the overall form, width and height of the building would be clearly visible from the road. In any case, I do not consider the level of screening would overcome the impact of the inappropriate design in terms of encroachment issues.

The applicant considers that the building proposed is more suitable to the setting of the existing dwellings and outbuildings than other forms of agricultural building available and suitable for such a purpose. However, I am unconvinced that the required storage space could not be provided within a building with a simpler and more utilitarian appearance. With the appropriate choice of materials, there is no reason why such a building would detract from the setting of the existing group of buildings.

A number of local residents have raised the issue of why the applicant has previously converted agricultural storage buildings to residential uses instead of retaining them to meet the needs of the proposed buildings. In 1981, Hazy Hill Farm consisted of a farmhouse and a red brick barn. In this year, the applicant gained consent for a garage and implement store. In 1982, the applicant gained consent for a further garage block.

This was an extension of the existing barn and included a farm implement store with direct access for tractors onto the adjoining field. In 1994, 1995 and 2003, consent was granted for the conversion of both of these buildings, together with the red brick barn, to dwellinghouses. The applicant has explained (letter dated 9th February 2010) that until recently, the grassland on the application site has been cut by a local farmer. This arrangement was in place for over 30 years but has now ceased due a reduction in the demand for hay. The applicant is now responsible for the area and has or is in the process of acquiring equipment necessary for its maintenance. If this is the case, it must be questioned why, within the 30 years the hay was cut by the farmer, it was necessary to build 2 farm implement stores. This matter has been raised with the applicant who has stated that it was due to changes in circumstances. The details of these circumstances have not been provided. Further to this, I would note that the existing extension to the garage and the summerhouse, together with the driveway (most of which lies outside the domestic curtilage), do not appear to have received the necessary planning permission.

Residential amenities

The proposed building is located over 25 metres from the nearest residential property. I consider this separation distance to be sufficient to protect the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Tree issues

Policy C17 of the BDLP states that development proposals should retain existing trees wherever possible. The proposed building will lie close to a large tree by the side of the driveway. The Tree Officer is of the view that the development is possible if suitable methods are used during construction to avoid damage to the roots and ensure the ground is not compacted. Such methods could be secured by way of conditions if planning permission was to be granted.

Other matters

The application site adjoins Barnt Green Conservation Area along its south east boundary. The proposed building will be located over 400 metres from this boundary and will therefore not affect the setting of the conservation area.

Conclusion

The design and form of the proposed building is such that it would appear as a domestic garage and outbuilding. The position of such a building outside of a domestic curtilage will result in the incremental encroachment of the domestic cluster of buildings at Hazy Hill Farm into the adjoining undeveloped field. This will cause harm to the character and appearance of the Green Belt. In addition, the proposed building is of a layout which is unsuitable for its intended use and fails to reduce its impact on the openness of the Green Belt. I therefore find the application to be contrary to policies C4 and C30A of the BDLP, SPG5 and PPG2.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

The proposed building, by reason of its design and form, will have the appearance of a domestic outbuilding. This will be detrimentally harmful to the openness, character and appearance of the Green Belt and surrounding landscape and will fail to protect the Green Belt from encroachment. In addition, the layout of the building is inappropriate for its intended use. The proposed building is therefore contrary to Policies C4 and C30A of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2004, Supplementary Planning Guidance 5: Agricultural Buildings Design Guide and the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.