

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
Mr. R. Pinfield 'A'	Erection of an agricultural building for free range hens - Park Farm, Kidderminster Road, Park Gate, Dodford, Bromsgrove, B61 9AL	Residential	10/0433-SC 23.08.2010

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

Consultations

WH Drainage Engineer	No objection subject to conditions. 17.06.2010.
Kernon Countryside Consultants	No concerns regarding the proposals from an agricultural perspective. 24.06.2010.
Environmental Health	Comments received 13.07.2010: Proposed unit should be required to comply with DEFRA Code of Good Agricultural Practice 2009.
Dodford with Grafton Parish Council	Comments received: 21.06.2010. Dodford with Grafton Parish Council have concerns this may be erected at the top of a hill and could have impact on residential properties in Fockbury Road. Suggest screening be provided. The Parish Council feel they have not been given enough information about the size and impact on conservation so are unable to consider the application fully.
Publicity	Site notice posted 15.06.2010 expires 06.07.2010 Press notice posted 10.06.2010 expires 01.07.2010

The site and its surroundings

This application relates to an existing agricultural holding located on the northern side of Kidderminster Road, Dodford. The current holding extends to 12 hectares and is serviced by a cluster of existing farm buildings located immediately to the north of Park Farm house. These existing farm buildings are currently utilised for livestock purposes. To the east of the main farm house are a number of flats contained within a converted farm building granted planning permission in 1990. The farm house and converted barns are set back some 70 metres from Kidderminster Road but are clearly visible. Two current road accesses serve the farm. The westernmost access appears to serve only the 'working' farm, whilst the access located to the east is the main entrance for the main farmhouse and converted barns.

The application site is located primarily to the rear of the existing farm complex and is within designated Green Belt surrounded by existing green fields used for livestock purposes.

Proposal

This application proposes a new agricultural building to be used for the housing of 24,000 free range laying hens, together with associated egg collection, packing facilities and feed bins. The applicant proposes a re-aligned highway access located approximately 12 metres to the north-west of the existing western most access. This new access is proposed to serve traffic generated by the proposed new poultry building to be located approximately 70 metres to the north of the existing cluster of farm buildings.

The proposed building is to be located within an existing field, within a natural depression in the topography of the land. To the south of the proposed building, the land rises steeply to a plateau of hard-standing that is currently used to store agricultural machinery. The land to the north and east also slopes upwards, with Fockbury Road located approximately 250 metres to the north and 250 metres to the west also. Existing mature trees are located approximately 10 metres to the east of the proposed building and the surrounding fields are characterised by mature field boundary hedges and tree growth.

The proposed building measures 66 metres by 30.45 metres, providing a total floor area of 2010m². The walls extend 3.35 metres to the eaves and 7.43 metres to the ridge. The building is of steel frame construction and will be clad with box profile polyester coated sheeting. Six ventilation shafts protrude from the roof on each side of the ridge, but do not exceed the maximum ridge height. Nineteen pop holes on the southern and northern elevation provide access to and from the building for the proposed flock. These pop holes are opened at 8:00 a.m. daily and closed at dusk. The western elevation is characterised by six large double doors that allow vehicular access and facilitate the cleaning out of the building. The eastern elevation has two smaller doors to provide access to a service area for egg collection and packing. Two metal cylindrical feed hoppers, maximum height 3.4 metres, are to be located at the south eastern corner of the building.

Relevant Policies

WCSP CTC1, D38, D39
BDLP DS2, DS13, C4, C30A, TR11
Others SPG5, PPS1, PPG2, PPS7

Relevant Planning History

B/20121/1990 Conversion of redundant farm building into 4 dwelling units (as amended by plan received 04.02.1991). Granted 10.12.1991
B/2002/1135 Steel portal frame hay and straw store - Notification (DTLNRQ).
B/2003/1357 Hay and straw store, resubmission of B/2003/1241 - Agricultural Notification - GRANT (DTLNRQ).
B/2007/0696 Lean-to hay and straw storage - Agricultural/Forestry Notification (DTLNRQ).

Notes

The key issues in the determination of this application are the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt, the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and whether the scale of the proposal is justified by the agricultural need of

the holding. Additionally, it will also be necessary to consider the highways implications of the proposed new access. Therefore, the main policies against which the application is assessed are policies DS2, C30A, TR11 of the BDLP, national policies PPS 7, PPG2 and the Council's supplementary guidance contained within SPG5.

Policy 3.4 of PPG2 and Policy DS2 of the BDLP define agricultural development as an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. The proposed development is therefore considered to be appropriate in principle. Policy C30A provides that agricultural buildings will be considered favourably subject to landscape, design and siting considerations.

Design, Siting and Impact on Landscape

In considering the current proposal, it is acknowledged that integrating large scale agricultural buildings into rural landscapes necessarily presents difficulties. In this instance, the applicant has clearly taken advantage of the contours of the land in siting the building approximately 70 metres to the north of existing farm buildings. In the proposed location of a natural topographical depression, with the surrounding land rising to the south, north and east, the prominence of the building in the landscape is lessened. Comments relating to siting provided by the Council's Agricultural Consultant indicate that locating 'free range' buildings away from the existing farm complex is also justified in agricultural terms by virtue of maximising the available surrounding vegetation.

The Parish Council's concerns relating to location and the impact on the residents of Fockbury Road are noted. In consideration of this, it is viewed that the combination of 250 metres separation distance to Fockbury Road in addition to the northwards uphill slope and mature field boundaries will mitigate any visual impact on residential properties located to the north. With regards to the nearby residential properties in the converted barn of Park Farm, it is noted that existing farm buildings housing livestock are located between the application site and the converted barns. The proposed building is also shielded from views from the south by virtue of the topography, mature field boundaries and existing buildings. It is recommended that the colour of the proposed cladding will be controlled by condition requiring the submission of material sample.

In terms of the design and scale of the proposal, the Council's Agricultural Advisor is of the view the building is appropriate for the size of holding and intended use. The proposed building is of a typical agricultural design and construction and it is accepted that the function and purpose of the building is clearly linked to an agricultural use of the surrounding land.

Highways

The main issue to consider with regards to the proposed realigned highways access is the potential affect on highway safety. Policy TR11 of the BDLP requires that 'all development incorporates safe means of access and egress appropriate to the nature of the local highway network.'

Kidderminster Road is a classified A road and the County Highways Officer has assessed the proposal and has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the application of conditions. Of particular note, it is recommended that the existing

westernmost access is permanently closed prior to the commencement of use of the proposed development.

It is noted that the Agricultural Advisor suggests that the applicant's submitted traffic generation may slightly under-estimate the number of deliveries of feed required. However, even with figures adjusted according to the Agricultural Advisor's estimation, the average traffic generation for the proposed unit remains relatively low at just over 5 vehicles per week. Given the residential units at Park Farm have separate highway access and drive; it is not viewed that these increased vehicular movements will cause additional amenity or safety issues.

Residential Amenity

SPG 5, the Council's adopted 'Agricultural Buildings Design Guide' states, 'The effects of noise and smell on nearby dwellings should be taken into account in detailed site and design planning. Shared access should be avoided where this involves use of a public road.'

As noted above, the new facility will not share access with existing residential dwellings. The Council's Environmental Health department have been consulted with regards to the proposal and have raised no concerns subject to compliance with DEFRA good practice guidance.

A development of this size will inevitably have implications in terms of environmental impact. Referring to the question of noise and smell, the applicant's appointed specialist agricultural and rural planning consultant indicates that buildings of the type proposed produce negligible smell nuisance and that it will comply with "Code of Good Practice for the Protection of Air 1998 and as amended". Twice a-week, manure will be collected from the building and taken off site for disposal on arable land as fertiliser. Having regard to the existing farm operations and the separation to the nearest dwellings (80 metres to the south and 250 metres to the north), it is viewed that the amenity impact over and above the existing farm operations will not be of a sufficient level to warrant refusal.

Drainage

The Council's Drainage Engineer has been consulted and has raised no objection subject to conditions. The site lies within flood zone 1; the lowest risk zone as defined by the Environment Agency.

Conclusion

The siting of the building within a natural depression in the landscape, relatively close to the existing farm complex, would keep its harm to the openness of the Green Belt to a minimum. Additionally, the proposed realigned highway access presents no safety issues and the proposed use of the development is not viewed as creating amenity issues over and above what might reasonably be expected for a working farm. It is therefore considered that the scale, design and siting of the building would be appropriate for its intended agricultural use and, on this basis; it is considered that the proposal would be an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

Taking the above points into consideration, it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

1. C01
2. C03
3. HC8
4. HC13
5. C007

Notes

1. HN5
2. Disposal of litter and other substances are to be in accordance with DEFRA requirements.

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2004 (BDLP) and other material considerations as summarised below:

WCSP	CTC1, D38, D39
BDLP	DS2, DS13, C4, C30A, TR11
Others	SPG5, PPS1, PPG2, PPS7

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.