

**OFFICER: Chris Pulsford (01935) 462072**

**APPL.NO: 07/01311/COU APPLICATION TYPE: Change of Use**

**PARISH: Long Sutton WARD: TURN HILL**

**DESCRIPTION: Alterations and the change of use of farm building (part) to Use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution)(GR 346252/125962)**

**LOCATION: Littlefield Farm Littlefield Lane Long Sutton Langport Somerset TA10 9NS**

**APPLICANT: Mr H Fry**

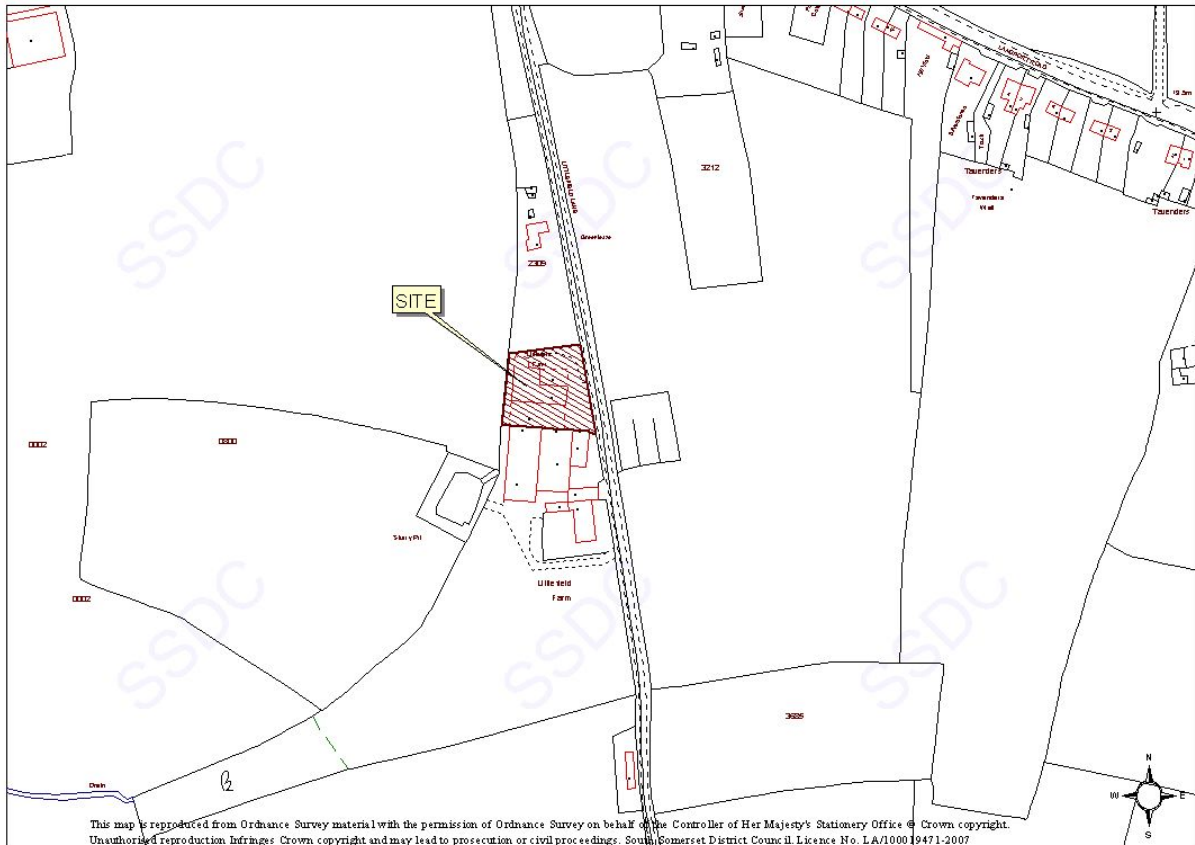
**AGENT: Clive Miller And Associates Ltd The Old Paper Shop North Street Langport Somerset TA10 9RQ**

**DATE ACCEPTED: 16 March 2007**

### **Reason for Referral to Committee**

At the request of the ward member to consider the highway safety implications.

### **Site Description & Proposal**



The site lies on Littlefield Lane, some 300m from its junction with the A372. It comprises 810m<sup>2</sup> of farm buildings, being part of those at Littleton Farm. They are largely redundant since dairying at the farm ceased in 2005. The remaining buildings are to be retained in connection with the use of the 100 acre farm for arable and beef cattle. The proposal is intended to supplement farm income as a diversification scheme and a Farm Business Advice Service Report has been submitted in this respect. A Flood Risk Assessment is also submitted. Some areas of the sides of these buildings are open and it is proposed to enclose them.

## **Relevant History**

00/02106/FUL Erection of agricultural building and extension to agricultural building - permitted.

## **Policies**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decisions must be made in accordance with relevant development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

South Somerset Local Plan

Policy EH6, Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside (to non-residential uses)

Policy ME5, Farm Diversification

Policy ST5, General Principles of Development

## **Consultations**

*Parish Council:*

No objection. The Parish Council is, however, concerned that heavy traffic, in terms of numbers and weight of vehicles, could be a problem in such a narrow lane. The PC therefore requests that if SSDC approves the application, it attaches a condition requiring a new application should the number of movements ever be planned to rise significantly above the level at the time when the property was a working dairy farm (the figures are stated in the applicant's agent's covering letter).

*Environment Agency:*

There would be no material exacerbation of flood risk as a consequence of this development and the Agency does not oppose it on flood defence grounds.

*Environment Protection Officer:*

No observations.

*County Highways:*

The site gains access onto Littlefield Lane, which is a lane of singular vehicle width and has limited opportunity for vehicles to pass. Whilst it is felt that adequate visibility can be achieved from the site on to Littlefield Lane, there are concerns regarding the amount of visibility that can be achieved from the junction of Littlefield Lane with the County Route, A372. Visibility in either direction is restricted and impinges on third party land of which the applicant does not have control over. As a result, limited improvements could be made to improve road safety at this point.

Given the limitations of Littlefield Lane itself, as well as the junction of Littlefield Lane with the A372, the Highway Authority would not wish to see a proposal that would result in an increased use made of the lane, as it would be prejudicial to highway safety.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the farm itself is likely to generate a significant level of traffic movements, the proposal to alter the existing farm buildings to class use B8 is likely to lead to an increased use made of the lane. Therefore I would recommend that the application be

refused on highway grounds for the reasons 1 and 2, which are set out in the recommendation below.

*Natural England:*

No comment.

*Agricultural Development Officer:*

Small livestock enterprises of this size are now generally economically unviable unless they develop a niche market or diversify into alternative income generating schemes.

## **Representations**

A local resident considers that storage & distribution should not include any toxic or combustible materials, emit noxious odours or undue noise or take place outside the hours of 8.00 to 18.00.

## **Considerations**

The conversion and re-use of these buildings for the proposed development accords with the terms and criteria of Policy EH6. As a Farm Diversification Scheme, the proposal generally meets the aims and objectives of Policy ME5, with the exception of criterion 5 in relation to highway safety. As pointed out by the Highway Authority, Littlefield Lane and its junction with the A372 are considered inadequate to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by this proposal.

## **Recommendation**

Application Refused.

1. Littlefield Lane by reason of its restricted width, poor alignment and sub standard junction with the A372 is considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and to Policies ST5 and ME6 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.
  2. Any increased use made of the existing sub-standard junction of Littlefield Lane with the A372 such as would be generated by the development proposed would be prejudicial to road safety. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and to Policies ST5 and ME6 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.
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