

OFFICER: Lee Walton (01935) 462324

APPL.NO: 08/00367/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application

PARISH: High Ham WARD: TURN HILL

DESCRIPTION: Erection of a new plant and machinery store (GR: 343580/127565)

LOCATION: Land Os 6155 part, Picts Hill, High Ham, Langport, Somerset TA10 9EX

APPLICANT: Mr M J Dunlop

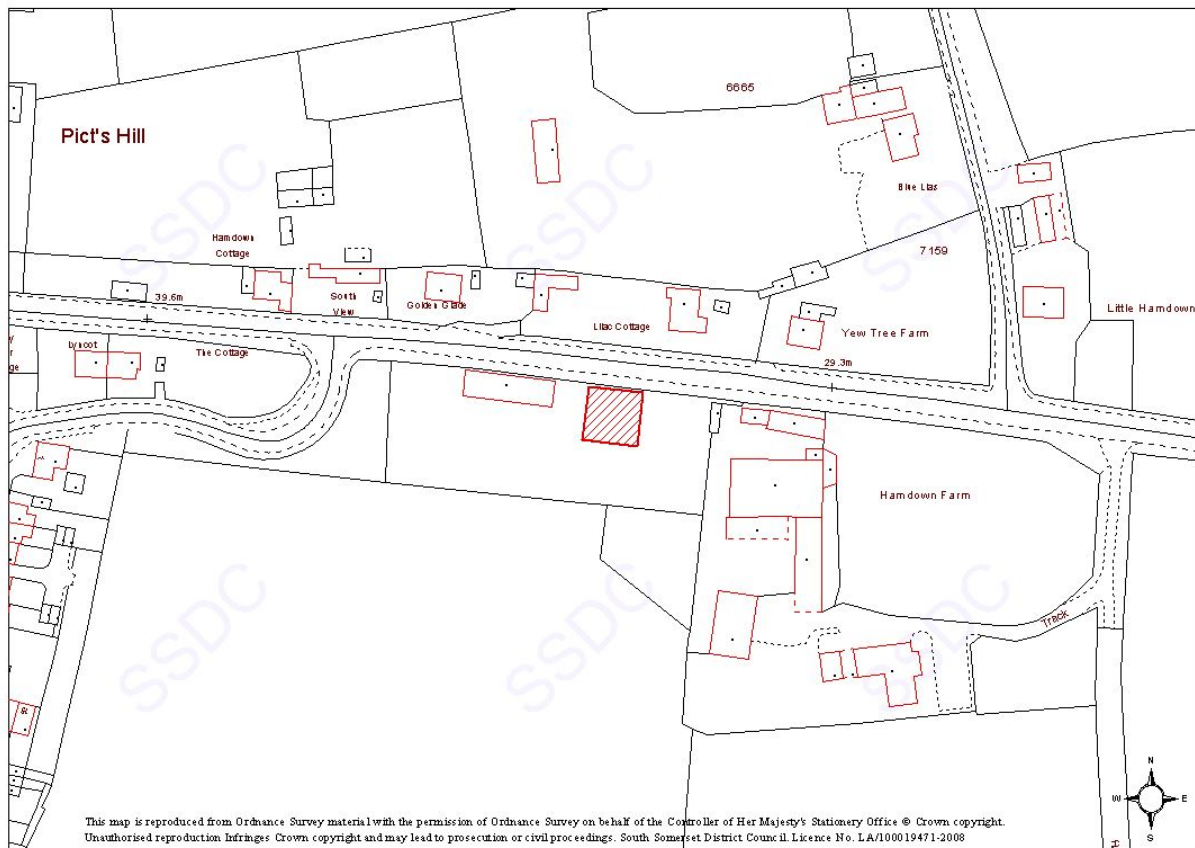
AGENT: Paul Dance, Foxgloves, 11 North Street, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6QR

DATE ACCEPTED: 18 January 2008

Reason for Referral to Committee

At the request of the Ward Member, to allow the Committee to assess the visual impact of the building and the economic benefits.

Site Description and Proposal



The site is designated in the countryside beyond any development area. The site lies adjacent to the highway - the main Langport- Somerton road. The land sits on slightly higher ground compared to the road, with a hedgerow that defines the site's boundary with the road.

The surrounding area is formed by sporadic ribbon development that can be seen to have been consolidated over time with the Hamdown Court residential development a little to the west of the site. Access to the applicant's site lies exposed to the roadside. A mono-pitched structure exists within the site and is partly visible approached along the main road from Langport, but is otherwise reasonably screened and its low profile helps to play down its presence within the site. Residential properties are located across the road, with a farm immediately to the east of the site.

The proposal is for the construction of a detached barn style building. The site is used as a builder's depot. The proposed building is needed to store vehicles, with the building's height dictated by the proposed serving facilities associated with the enterprise, shown on the submitted drawings. The proposed structure's ridge would stand 7.8metres in height, with the building stood 15 metres away form the existing structure that itself stands 4 metres in height.

Planning History

07/00155/COU - Change of Use to builders store and yard. Approved.

04/02044/FUL - Erection of one bungalow. Refused.

93/01020/FUL - Change of Use of land from agricultural to use as parking area for 3 taxis and 1 minibus. Refused.

Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under 54A 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.

Relevant Development Plan Documents:

Regional Spatial Strategy

VIS1 - Expressing the Vision

VIS2 - Principles for Future Development

EN4 - Quality of the Built Environment

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan 2000

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

South Somerset Local Plan 2006

ST3 - Development Areas

ME4 - Expansion of Existing Business in the Countryside.

ST5 - Principle of Development

ST6 - Quality of Development

Consultations and Representations

Parish Council - No objection

County Highway Authority - No observations

SSDC Technical Services - No comments

Environmental Protection - Proposed conditions: no burning, no manufacturing outside confines of building, no machinery shall be operated outside of 7am to 9pm.

Economic Development - No objection.

3 neighbour notifications were issued. There have been 2 responses. These relate to: additional noise and disturbance, hours of use on site, no resemblance to the existing store, a new large building, industrial estate would be more appropriate,

Planning Considerations

The proposal seeks a detached new build alongside the highway.

Policy ME4 permits proposals for the small-scale expansion of existing businesses (B1, B2 and B8) outside of development areas where proposals demonstrate both needed and are appropriate; existing buildings are re-used where possible, no adverse effect on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings. The supporting text runs: these businesses have often made significant investments in existing sites and may be restricted in choices of suitable alternative sites within the District to expand.

The site lies alongside the main road within an area where development has consolidated its presence but there remains a strong rural character, although there is a threat through consolidation of development to the roadside. The site lies on higher ground adjacent to the highway with a strong hedgerow with little opportunity for views outwards across the countryside to the south so far as travellers using the road will be aware. Visual harm is apparent from its siting alongside the road and from the proposed height and presence that will be apparent when travelling along the road. The right to a view (related to the adjacent residential occupants) is not a planning matter although visual amenity through public gaze as well as protecting the intrinsic qualities of the countryside are matters for concern.

The form of the existing building is very different from the proposed structure. The building is required for security that is itself not a main planning issue and further enhancement of boundary security could be undertaken without necessarily recourse to the planning system. The use of the proposed structure is shown to be capable of providing facilities to service company vehicles, and if this is alone the reason for its erection other than the security already referred to its erection should be avoided with alternative facilities sought off site. .

Intensification in use of the site is a possible concern. Further consideration might be given to development through extension of the existing premises although it is recognised that this offers certain constraints. The type of use that is shown could be more readily accommodated within an industrial estate. The current site is not necessarily well suited to additional pressures that seek to consolidate development on site given the location.

The proximity of neighbouring residential occupants needs some consideration again suggesting that alternative accommodation might first be sought. This is an important fringe site and although visual amenity is not so apparent with glimpses of the structure and of its presence alongside the road is considered detrimental to the countryside where development is otherwise strictly controlled.

The earlier permission ref: 07/00155/COU required a close-boarded fence for the open storage area that formed part of that permission. The area concerns relates to the current proposed site. In terms of security although not a planning matter some address may be had in securing the area referred to. Re-use of buildings in the countryside is encouraged as is small scale expansion under policy ME4 although in this case the additional building is questioned and the appropriateness of intensifying use of this type of site is discussed further below.

Following consultation respondents have referred among other things to the hours of use on site. This aspect might be appropriately conditioned.

In conclusion, the site is located beyond settlement limits. Policies STR6 and ST3 state that development should be strictly controlled. The works themselves would be seen only to a limited extent and although this proposal might benefit economic activity, it would not maintain or enhance the environment. Advice in PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms states that intensification of industrial or commercial developments may make them unacceptably intrusive in the future. This proposal has the potential of becoming a bad neighbour in the countryside in such a way that the current built

form provides for economic benefit although the site's intensification through development of the site given its proximity and relationship to adjacent residential properties may not be warranted.

Environmental Impact

This development does not fall within the scope of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 and so Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

RECOMMENDATION :

Refuse

Application Refused

01. The proposal, by reason of size, scale and location will have a detrimental effect on the character and quality of the area, with no reasonable need offered for the structure's presence in this countryside location, related to the highway its proximity affects visual amenity, openness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside contrary to policies STR6, STR1 and 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan 2000 and policies ST3, EC3, ST5, ST6 and ME4 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.
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