

Planning Reference No:	10/2194N
Application Address:	Little Abbey Farm, Pinsley Green Road, Wrenbury, Nantwich
Proposal:	Two Agricultural Buildings to Extend Existing Poultry Rearing Unit.
Applicant:	Mr A Parker
Application Type:	Full Planning Application
Grid Reference:	358607 346169
Ward:	Cholmondeley
Earliest Determination Date:	21 st July 2010
Expiry Dated:	9 th September 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	29 th July 2010
Date Report Prepared:	29 th July 2010
Constraints:	Wind Turbine Development consultation area

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions.

ISSUES:

- Principle of development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside
- Highway matters
- Ecology
- Amenity

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Planning Committee because the application seeks permission for a building with a floor area in excess of 1,000 square metres.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

Little Abbey Farm is located on the west side of Pinsley Green Road and north of the Wrenbury to Whitchurch Railway line. The establishment includes the farm house and a related outbuilding, two existing poultry rearing units and another clad outbuilding. The application seeks planning permission for two additional poultry rearing units to be located to the west of the two existing units. The land is generally level and the fields are bounded by established hedgerows. The site is located in open countryside approximately 1.6km south of the village of Wrenbury.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for two agricultural buildings measuring 91m x 24.6m and standing 4.4m to the ridge of the roof. The walls and roof of the buildings would be constructed in Juniper green cladding to match the existing buildings on site. The proposal also includes two circular galvanised feed hoppers to be sited between the proposed buildings measuring 3m in diameter and 6.5m high.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

ENQ/10/3712 Screening opinion. EIA not required. 5th May 2010
P01/0199 Pullet rearing building approved 7th June 2002
P95/0616 Pullet rearing building approved 13th September 1995.

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

Local Plan Policies

BE.1 Amenity
BE.2 Design
BE.3 Access and Parking
BE.4 Drainage Utilities and Resources
NE.2 Open Countryside
NE.5 Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 Protected Species
NE.14 Agricultural Buildings Requiring Planning Permission.

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

6. CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Manager: No highway objections.

Environment Agency: No objections.

Ecology: The Assessment is adequate to satisfy the Council that Great Crested Newts are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development. A condition should be attached to any permission to ensure that the proposed planting is implemented.

Landscape Officer: The existing hedgerows will not be affected by the development. New tree planting has recently taken place at the site. The details of the landscaping scheme are submitted and a condition will be required to ensure implementation.

Environmental Health: Views awaited at the time of writing this report.

7. VIEWS OF THE WRENBURY PARISH COUNCIL

No objections.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

Two letters, one expressing concern, the other expressing comments/ objections.

Representations are from Grey Roofs, Pinsley Green and The Orchards, Marbury Road, Pinsley Green. The concerns/ objections can be summarised as follows:-

- Accept that smells are part of living in the countryside but the development will result in an overwhelming smell of chicken manure all year round
- Smells are not released gradually but all at once and two more units will add to its strength and disgusting nature.
- Grain tankers make noise when emptying their loads on site and it keeps local residents awake at night. Can this activity be completed in the day time?
- Concern about the doubling of vehicle movements. Vehicles currently visit the site on a 24 hour basis. Could night time collections and deliveries be limited? Heavy lorries will make the narrow lanes more dangerous. Most of the local roads are not wide enough for a large vehicle and car to pass.
- Existing fans create a constant droning noise as well as a loud noise when they cut in and out. However doubling the number of units suggests that fans will run for a longer period.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement (*prepared by Bower Edleston and dated June 2010*)

- The site is an intensive poultry rearing unit established on 10 acres of land with two existing poultry rearing buildings.
- EU Regulations require additional space to be provided for poultry rearing and there is a requirement to expand the existing business.
- The submission includes details on protected species, vehicle movements and details of the proposed fans to be used in the building.
- Landscaping which has recently been provided on site will be replanted in accordance with the details shown on the amended plans.

Additional Supporting Information

- The unit produces 5.5 crops per year and a rearing cycle is 63 days with the livestock present for 52 days and the shed empty for 11 days between each crop.
- The site has an Environmental Permit which has been in operation since 1997. This includes odour and noise management plans to which the operation works.
- The site has an existing drainage system and discharge from surface water run off will be into the existing drainage system.
- The building will be vented by tunnel ventilation with dust blown to the back of the shed by fans for storage and removed when the building is emptied. The dust will be washed into a tank and spread on the fields. The fans will be 800mm fans which will generate a noise level of 65dB(a) when measured at an angle of 45 degrees at a distance of 2m. This reduces to 54 dB(A) at 7m distance.
- Currently 105 tonnes of manure are produced per crop and this will rise to 225 tonnes which will be collected by tractor and trailer and equate to 22.5 lorry movements per year. The manure will be removed and spread on fields.
- The existing business produces a total of 234 vehicle movements per year from 5.5 crops per year (42.5 movements per crop). This figure comprises movements for manure collection, food delivery, crop collection
- This will increase to 465 vehicle movements per year (84.5 movements per crop) as a result of the two additional poultry units.

- The Environment Agency have completed an ammonia screening assessment on behalf of the applicant to ascertain impacts on locally protected habitats within 2, 5 and 10km of the site. They conclude that based on the number of places no further assessment is required

Great Crested Newt Habitat Survey (*prepared by Ecologically Bats and dated December 2009*)

One pond was surveyed in December 2009 and is located 39m from the development site. It was considered to have below average potential for Great Crested Newts because of its poor condition and isolation. Other ponds shown within 500m of the development site on maps have either disappeared or are dry for much of the year. There is a lack of connectivity between the surveyed pond and the site for development and much better connectivity from this pond to habitats away from the development site.

The development site is unlikely to be used by Great Crested Newts and it is therefore concluded that the development site has only a low to negligible potential impact on Great Crested Newts.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is located in open countryside and policy NE.2 allows for essential buildings for agriculture in such areas. The buildings are required for poultry rearing and are therefore considered essential for the raising of the livestock. Policy NE.14 requires that the building be ancillary to the use of the land for agriculture, be essential for the operation or to comply with livestock welfare or environmental legislation and maintain the economic viability of the holding. In addition, the building must be satisfactorily sited in relation to other buildings and sympathetic in terms of design and materials. Adequate provision should be made for the disposal of foul and surface water drainage and animal wastes, with adequate vehicular access. Development should not be detrimental to nearby residential amenities and not be of a design which could be readily converted to residential use.

The proposed buildings would increase the viability of the holding and are required for livestock welfare. Their provision relates to the current use of the site. The buildings would be sited in relation to the existing two poultry rearing sheds of similar size and materials and are therefore considered appropriate in their size, design, appearance, and materials. Surface water would be disposed of using the existing soakaways with expansion if required. Waste would be cleared from the site when the building is emptied.

A crop cycle is 63 days with 52 days for rearing and 11 days for clearing, cleaning and re-stocking the building. The applicant has confirmed that all four sheds would operate to the same cycle being stocked and emptied at the same time. Manure would be removed from the sheds after each crop i.e. 5.5 crops per year. The current practice is for the waste to be spread on land at Marbury. However the applicant is in discussion about the waste being removed from the site for use outside of Cheshire, not for spreading on agricultural land. The existing access and turning areas would serve the new sheds as well as the existing buildings.

There are therefore no objections in principle to the provision of two additional poultry rearing sheds at the site.

Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside

The development falls within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Regulations. A Screening Opinion submitted under these Regulations confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

As stated above the design, size, scale and materials of the poultry sheds and hoppers are similar to the two already on site.

The existing buildings are sited away from the boundary hedgerows and young tree planting has been provided to the south and east of the existing buildings between the hedgerow and the sheds. An area of young tree planting currently provided to the west of the existing building would be moved and supplemented with further planting to form an additional planting belt inside the western hedgerow which would link around the south of the proposed buildings to the existing planting on this side of the site. Whilst the roof areas of the sheds and upper parts of the hoppers would be seen from the road to the south west of the site, with the exception of two or three small gaps, the existing hedgerows do provide a good screen around the site as a whole for people on Hollyhurst Lane close to the site. This is because the hedge is on top of a small bank. Further the existing boundary would be further enhanced by the tree planting which has recently been completed and the additional planting which would take place as part of the development.

Whilst the Wrenbury to Shrewsbury railway line passes close to the site and is set above the level of the hedgerow around the site there are no objections to the development due to the site being visible from the railway line. The line has limited use and as the tree planting matures the views would be further screened.

There are therefore no objections to the development in terms of impact of the development on the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Highway Matters

The submitted information explains that there are 239 vehicle movements per year. This equates to a total of 43.5 vehicles movements per crop i.e. per 63 days cycle with 10.5 of these being for manure collection, 15 for food delivery, 17 for crop collection and one vehicle or possibly two vehicle movements to deliver the crop. This would increase to 22.5 vehicle movements for manure collection, 27 for food delivery, 35 for crop collection giving a total of 86.5 movements per crop and 2 (possibly 3) vehicle movements to deliver the crop giving a total of 476 movements per year.

Whilst the site is accessed along relatively narrow country lanes, poultry units by their nature are located in rural areas. The number of vehicle movements is presently less than one per day and would increase to one or two vehicle movements per day. The Strategic Highways Manager raises no objections to the development and it is not considered that the increase in vehicle movements as a result of the development would be sufficient to justify refusal of the application.

Ecology

A Great Crested Newt Habitat Survey completed in December 2009 for the Environmental Impact Assessment concluded that Pond 1, 39m to the north of the proposed site, had a below average Habitat Suitability Index and was unlikely to support a Great Crested Newt

population. The report has been accepted by the Council's Ecologist who considers that there would be no adverse impact on the species. It is not considered that the report needs to be revisited in view of the fact that the original survey took place in winter. Reasonable Avoidance measures can be used on the site to ensure that Great Crested Newts do not enter the development site. Reasonable Avoidance Measures include stocking materials (including building materials) on pallets rather than on the ground, loose materials to be stored in bags, excavations to be filled in on the day of digging where possible and if not, such excavations should not be left open over night. Additionally an informative should be attached to the permission to confirm that if any protected species is found work should cease and a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist be called to advise.

Amenity

The two closest dwellings are Grey Roofs which is located on the opposite side of Pinsley Green Road and The Orchard which is located to the south west of the application area. Neither of these dwellings are so close as to be adversely affected by the bulk and mass of the proposed buildings. However residents express strong concerns about the smell and noise from the development.

Residents have concerns/ objections in relation to the noise from fans and from lorries particularly feed lorries which do arrive and deliver during the night. The applicant has agreed that feed lorries would not in future arrive and depart between the hours of 20:00 on one day and 07:00 hours the following day. Currently other lorries do arrive at midnight to remove the livestock from the buildings and following loading depart from the site in time to arrive at Anglesey about 9.00am. This is needed to meet the requirements of the operation taking the poultry at the end of the cycle. The applicant does not consider that these loading activities cause a problem for residents and in any event the emptying of the sheds only takes place 5.5 times per shed per year. A condition should be attached to the permission in relation to the hours for the delivery of feed.

The views of the Environmental Health Officer are awaited. However the submission demonstrates that the noise from fans decreases away from the building. Further the site operates under an Environmental Permit which includes measures to control noise and odour.

Other Matters

The comments of the Fire and Rescue Service should be forwarded as an informative to the applicant. In addition an informative should be added to confirm that if Great Crested Newts are found on the site the advice of an ecologist should be sought.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The site as a whole is surrounded by established hedgerows which provide good screening from a number of public view points. It is considered that the provision of two additional poultry units together with two hoppers would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the locality particularly once the proposed planting has become established. Whilst the development would increase vehicle movements to the site it is not considered that the increase in numbers of trips would be sufficient to adversely impact on highway safety in the locality. The site operates under an Environmental Permit which includes measures to control odour and noise. The views of

the Environmental Health Officer in relation to odour and noise control are awaited and will be reported in the Late Information Report presented to Members before the Committee meeting.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE with the following conditions:-

- 1. Commence development within 3 years.**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 4. No feed lorries to arrive at the site, deliver feed and leave during the period 20:00 hours and 07:00 hours the following day.**
- 5. Implementation of landscaping scheme within 12 months of the provision of the first building.**
- 6. Submission of a scheme for the maintenance of the landscaping and implementation of it.**
- 7. Use of Reasonable Avoidance Measures for the duration of construction.**

Location Plan

