

TALATON
(Whimble)

05/1056/MFUL
(MFULL)

21 June 2005

Applicant:

Mr R Elliott

Location:

Lashbrook Farmhouse
Talatton
Exeter
Devon
(NGR: 307470/99219)

Proposal:

Polytunnels

Consultations

County Highway Authority

South West Water

No objections

Does not wish to comment

Environment Agency

Suggested conditions: suggest a range of conditions.

Planning History

App. No.	Year	Proposal	Date and Decision
P0996	2004	Removal of Agricultural Occupancy condition	07.09.2004 Refused
P1503	1991	Agricultural Dwelling and Garage	04.11.1991 Approved
P1617	1988	Conversion of Farm Buildings to 6 dwellings	16.12.1988 Approved
P1607	1998	Construction of Farm Shop & Retention of Cold Store Unit	22.10.1998 Approved

Representations

1 letters of objection has been received stating:

Previous prospective purchasers were advised by EDDC that site could only be purchased for proper agricultural farming – not poly tunnels, equestrian centre or any use other than crops.

Parish/Town Council

Talatton Parish Council has no objections.

Ward Members

Councillor A E J Dinnis: –

27.05.05 Deferred. Question: Would like to know if application complies with the agricultural tie on Lashbrooke Farmhouse, or is the erection of the polytunnels the reason for compliance. Very exposed site so landscaping would be necessary.

17.06.05 Refused. "Concerned that the poly tunnels will be visible from a long way, as this is one of highest points in Talaton overlooking Feniton. Screening always takes a long time to fulfil its purpose".

Location

The site refers to a parcel of agricultural land located immediately to the north of Lashbrook Farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings, in the open countryside to the south east of Talaton. The landscape is typically agricultural in character with an isolated cluster of residential buildings immediately to the north west of the application site.

The site itself is enclosed by a Devon hedgebank with sporadic trees atop along the west site boundary, which flanks the highway. A hedgebank defines the north and east boundaries and post and wire fencing along the southern boundary with Lashbrook Farmhouse. Levels vary within the site and the general topography is such that land levels fall away to the west and south. Within the wider landscape, levels fall away to the east giving distant views across the countryside.

Whilst a number of traditional agricultural buildings at Lashbrook Farm have been converted to residential accommodation, there are a number of more modern livestock buildings located to the south of the site, which appear to be in operation.

The Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the erection of 2 polytunnels, measuring a footprint of approximately 43m x 24m and 54m x 24m respectively. These polytunnels are 3.65m high and are proposed to be located to the western corner of the field, adjacent to the highway and the existing access.

Planning Policy

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)
PPS7 (The Countryside)

Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016

ST1 (Sustainable Development)
CO1 (Landscape Character and Local Distinctiveness)
CO6 (Quality of New Development)
TR10 (Strategic Road Network)

Emerging East Devon Local Plan (Revised Deposit) September 2003

Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)
Policy S4 (Countryside Protection)
Policy EN21 (Control of Pollution)
Policy TA6 (Adequate Road Network and Site Access)

Observations

Planning Policy

PPS7 (The Countryside) promotes good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside. In respect of Agricultural Development, consideration is given to the following criteria; impact on the

character and amenity of the countryside/landscape, accessibility to infrastructure/workforce/markets, maintaining viable communities, promoting a competitive and sustainable agricultural economy, protecting natural resources/versatile agricultural land/biodiversity. Both Structure and Local Plan Policies reiterate these issues and afford special protection to the character, amenity and environmental qualities of the countryside.

Impact on the character of the countryside and landscape setting

The proposed polytunnels would be located adjacent to the existing agricultural buildings associated with Lashbrook Farm. As such, development would be concentrated around the farmstead and would not result in a dispersal of buildings across the wider landscape that would detract from the open character and appearance of the countryside. The surrounding landscape is discernibly agricultural in appearance and polytunnels are visible on the landscape to the west of the application site.

Polytunnels are typically low lying but their material finish makes them readily apparent in the landscape. The visual impact of the proposed polytunnels at Lashbrook Farm would be reduced given the existing vegetation backdrop and the proposed planting scheme immediately to the east, which would screen the development from more distant views across the countryside. It is recognised that landscaping schemes take time to establish, however, in this case, it would be difficult to reasonably object to development on this basis. The proposal is not considered to detract from the character or amenity of this agricultural setting, which does not fall within any special landscape designations. No objection is raised by the Environment Agency, subject to appropriate conditions.

Impact on residential amenity

Whilst the site is located in close proximity to a number of residential properties, due to the scale and nature of the development proposed, it is not considered to be harmful to the residential amenities of these neighbouring occupants.

Highway Safety

The proposal does not indicate that there will be any direct retail sales from the site. There is an existing access into the site and the Highway Authority have raised no objections to the proposal in respect of highway safety. Sales of farm produce does not require planning permission.

Other Issues

The proposed development is located in close proximity to the existing operations at Lashbrook Farm and the applicant resides at the farmhouse. The applicant has been involved in horticulture for 37 years and advises that the polytunnels are for growing plants to the wholesale market and that they are starting up this new business, following the sale of their former operations at Hollybrook Nursery in West Hill.

A letter has been received concerned that the proposed polytunnel development does not comply with the requirements of the agricultural occupancy condition at Lashbrook Farm. This matter has also been raised by the Ward Member. Whilst this is a legal issue connected with the property, the planning application is specifically concerned with the erection of polytunnels and their impact on the character and quality of this landscape and the other issues referred to above. It is up to the occupants to demonstrate that their main income is from agriculture, but given they have recently sold a viable nursery and are commencing another, it does not appear likely that the condition is being breached.

Conclusion/Summary

The polytunnels would be located against a backdrop of existing agricultural buildings and the existing and proposed landscaping would help to soften their impact in the wider landscape. The operation would be run by the owners of the adjacent farmhouse and there is an existing access serving the site. Due to the scale and nature of operations proposed in this agricultural setting, no significant adverse impact is considered for the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal meets with the provisions of planning policy and is recommended for approval accordingly.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

Conditions

No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, showing details of the proposed planting along the eastern boundary of the site as indicated on the approved plans. The landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season after commencement of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be maintained for a period of 5 years. Any trees or other plants which die during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season with specimens of the same size and species unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - In the interests of amenity and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

When the polytunnels hereby approved are no longer required, then they shall within a period of three months following their use becoming redundant, be removed from the site and the site returned to its former condition.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance and character of the countryside.

1. Clean surface and roof water should be kept separate from foul drainage.
2. All foul drainage, including foul surface water run-off, should be disposed of so as to prevent pollution.
3. Separate clean surface/roof surface water and foul drainage systems. Reason: to prevent pollution of the water environment.

Informatives

Compost/manure/dung heaps should be sited, stored and disposed of in such a way as to avoid pollution of any watercourse or water source.

1. Any fertilisers, chemicals, hazardous substances should be stored so as to prevent pollution.
2. Any manure/compost/dung heaps should be sited, stored and disposed of so as not to cause pollution to water.
3. All foul drainage, including foul surface water run-off, must be disposed of in such a way as to prevent any discharge to a well, borehole or spring or any watercourse, including dry ditches with a connection to a watercourse. Reason – to prevent pollution of the water environment.
4. Any storage of fertilisers, chemicals, pesticides or other hazardous substances must be within properly constructed bunded areas of sufficient capacity to avoid contamination of any watercourse, surface water drains or groundwater in the event of spillage. Reason – to prevent pollution of the water environment.

5. Compost/manure/dung heaps should be sited in an area where it/they will not cause pollution of any watercourse or water source by the release of contaminated run-off.

List of Background Papers

The file containing all letters, consultations, and documents referred to in the report.