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REPORT TO:	DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 4
DATE OF MEETING:	17TH JUNE 2003	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	NEIL BETTERIDGE (5895)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	SITE VISITS	REF: NB/KW
WARDS AFFECTED:	STENSON, WILLINGTON AND FINDERN AND SEALES	TERMS OF REFERENCE: DC01

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### 1.0 Recommendations

1.1 See copies of the reports to the last Meeting.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To receive the reports of the Development Control Committee Site Visits in respect of the following:-

- (a) The erection of a 20 metre high mono telecommunications pole, three antennas, one dish and one equipment cabinet at field off Arleston Lane, Stenson Fields (9/2002/1350/FT) (Copy of the report to the last Meeting attached at Annexe 'A').
- (b) Application for approval of reserved matters pertaining to trunk road service area including 100 bed hotel, public house restaurant, filling station, food outlets and associated parking, access and landscaping on land to the north of the farm buildings at Hill Farm, Willington (9/2003/0261/D) (Copy of the report to the last Meeting attached at Annexe 'B').
- (c) Use of land for the storage of touring caravans at Seale Lodge Farm, Burton Road, Acresford (9/2003/0053/U) (Copy of the report to the last Meeting attached at Annexe 'C').

### 3.0 Detail

3.1 See copy of the reports to the last Meeting.

### 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None.

### 5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 None.

## 6.0 Community Implications

6.1 See copy of the reports to the last Meeting.

## 7.0 Background Papers

7.1 None.

20/05/2003

**Item** 1.2

**Reg. No.** 9 2002 1350 FT

**Applicant:**

Hutchinson 3G UK LTD  
Star House  
20 Grenfell Island  
Maidenhead  
SL6 1EH

**Agent:**

Stappard Howes  
Unit B1 The Viscount Centre  
Uni Of Warwick Science Park  
Millburn Hill Road  
Coventry  
CV4 7HS

**Proposal:** The erection of a 20 metre high mono telecommunications pole, three antennas, one dish and one equipment cabinet at Field Off Arleston Lane Stenson Fields Derby

**Ward:** Ticknall

**Valid Date:** 30/12/2002

**Site Description**

The site is part of a field adjacent to woodland at the edge of the Stenson Fields urban area.

**Proposal**

A 20-metre high monopole structure is proposed. Landscaping and fencing would form the boundary of the associated equipment compound.

**Applicant's Supporting Information**

A comprehensive statement is provided, covering issues of need for the mast, consideration of alternatives, landscape considerations, land availability, planning policy and health and safety. With regard to the latter issue a statement of conformity with public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) is attached. In particular the applicant makes the following points:

- a) Sites at Stenson Fields Farm, a previously permitted site to the west Stenson Road and electricity pylons are not available.
- b) The proposal accords with policy C7 of the Local Plan.
- c) The impact is mitigated by the high level of screening at the site.

The following comments have been received following discussions with the applicant:

- a) Sites at Moor Lane and Derby Rifle and Pistol Club will not satisfy the operational requirements of the applicant.
- b) The site as Stenson Fields Farm (Orange Mast) is still not available.

- c) A slimmer type of monopole is now proposed, to reduce the impact of the proposal. It is proposed to colour it green but the applicant would accept any colour considered appropriate.
- d) The compound would be bounded by a timber fence instead of a security fence, along with landscaping.
- e) The applicant would be happy to avoid the wildlife sensitive area around the watercourse during construction.
- f) There would be no impact on the woodland and associated wildlife.
- g) A photomontage is provided to illustrate that there would be no significant visual impact.

### Responses to Consultations

Councillor Pabla fully shares the concerns of residents.

Barrow on Trent Parish Council objects because the site is close to residential properties and believe that the equipment could be fixed to an electricity pylon.

Stenson Fields Parish Council objects for the following reasons:

- a) The site is incorrectly named as Sinfin. It should be Stenson Fields (Comment: The site is in Barrow on Trent parish).
- b) The site is on land intended for development by the Parish Council for recreation and nature conservation and the development would be inappropriate to this.
- c) The site is too close to housing and would be visible from Wragley Way.
- d) The Parish Council quotes the Stewart Report *"We are concerned at the indirect impact which current planning procedures are having on those who are, or have been, subjected to the often insensitive siting of base stations. Adverse impacts on the local environment may adversely impact on the public's well-being as much as any direct health effects."*

Derbyshire wildlife Trust has no objection in principle.

Derby City Council has no comment.

### Responses to Publicity

Save Our Sinfin Action Group objects as follows:

- a) The consultation process has been inadequate.
- b) The mast would be too close to homes, causing a detrimental visual intrusion.
- c) The mast would spoil the recreational activity of residents in this area.
- d) The proposal may cause a danger to health.

A petition of 111 signatories has been received objecting on the following grounds:

- a) Health risk. There is no conclusive evidence that there would be no such risk.
- b) Intrusion on the surroundings.
- c) No meaningful argument to support this installation.

25 individual letters have been received objecting as follows:

- a) The health risks are unknown.
- b) The mast could be harmful to health.

- c) Existing serious illness could be exacerbated causing constant fear for the affected household.
- d) A cautious approach is advised by the government.
- e) Some mortgage companies will not lend on properties close to masts.
- f) Property values would be adversely affected.
- g) The mast would be unsightly and harm the character of the area
- h) Walks and recreation the area would be unpleasant because of the mast.
- i) Publicity has been inadequate.
- j) The mast should be sited well away from the residential area.
- k) The mast would exacerbate adverse environmental conditions brought on by other developments on the area.
- l) There is no meaningful argument to support this installation.
- m) There would be adverse impact on the adjacent woodland and its wildlife.
- n) The site would attract fly-tipping.
- o) The proposal would prejudice proposals to use the land for enjoyment of the public.

### **Structure/Local Plan Policies**

The relevant policies are:

Joint Structure Plan: General Development Strategy Policy 4.

Local Plan: Environment Policy 1 and Community Facilities Policy 7.

### **Planning Considerations**

The main issues central to the determination of this application are:

- The principle of development.
- Alternative sites.
- Impact on the countryside.
- Wildlife.
- Health risks.

### **Planning Assessment**

PPG8 makes it clear that the telecommunications development is to be encouraged as being essential to a modern economy and contributing to sustainability objectives. It advises planning authorities to respond positively to proposals for such development. It is clear that it is sometimes necessary for masts to be erected in the countryside. As such the proposal is acceptable as a matter of principle.

The applicant has investigated several alternative sites, some at the request of officers. However none of the alternatives appear to be available to the applicant, or will not satisfy operational requirements, and reasonable evidence has been submitted in this regard. This is material to the overall process, as advised by PPG8, of striking the balance between operational and environmental considerations.

The application site benefits from screening by the existing woodland, particularly during the months when the trees are in leaf. However clear views of the mast would be available from

Arlleston Lane, albeit against the backcloth of the woodland. The mast would project above the canopies of the trees by about 4 metres. In this specific locality the applicant appears to have taken all reasonable measures to minimise the visual impact of the mast, so that its impact on the character of the countryside is not demonstrably harmful.

On the advice of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust the proposal would not have a harmful impact on wildlife interests.

The issue of health is addressed most emphatically in PPG8. In particular Paragraph 31 states “it is the Government’s firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. It remains central Government’s responsibility to decide what measures are necessary to protect public health.” The guidance goes on to say that if a base station meets ICNIRP guidelines then it will not be necessary for the local planning authority to further consider the health aspects and concerns for them. In this case the applicant has confirmed that the site will comply with Health and Safety legislation and in particular the ICNIRP guidelines. As such there is no evidence to support the contention that the development would have adverse health consequences.

A substantial number of the objections express fear regarding health effects. In recent years there have been several reported UK legal cases concerning the problematic issue of the extent to which public perceptions of risk of harm (as opposed to any actual risk) are themselves capable of being material considerations for determination of planning applications. However the available evidence appears to indicate no significant degree of risk and the advice in PPG8 is likely to be afforded the greatest weight on the issue of health risk.

None of the other matters raised through the publicity and consultation process amount to material considerations outweighing the assessment of the main issues set out above.

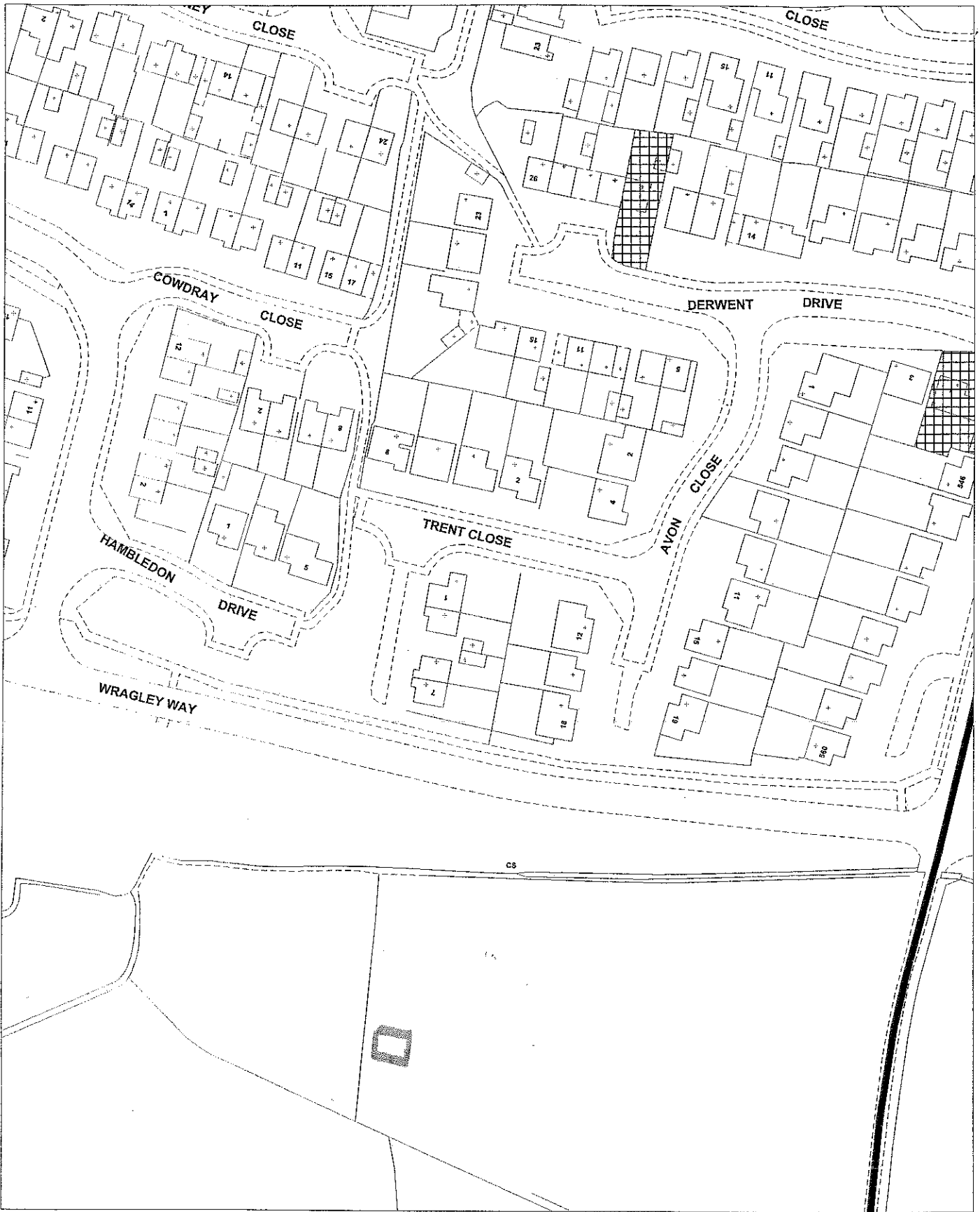
### **Recommendation**


**GRANT** permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
1. Reason: To conform with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.
2. Notwithstanding the originally submitted details, this permission shall relate to the amended drawing no.207588 - 101 Issue E received 2 April 2002.
2. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, the original submission being considered unacceptable.
3. Notwithstanding the submitted details no development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development.
3. Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area.
4. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die,

are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

4. Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area.



 <p>South Derbyshire District Council Civic Offices Civic Way Swadlincote DE11 0AH</p>		Date Plotted 4/6/2003	NORTH ↑
	Telecom pole at Stenson fields	Plot centred at 433831 330573	Scale 1:1250
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20/05/2003

**Item** 1.7

**Reg. No.** 9 2003 0261 D

**Applicant:**

Mr J Sahota, M Singh  
Rai, B Singh Rai, And B Kaur Sahota  
84 Blackwatch Road  
Radford  
Coventry

**Agent:**

JWA Architects  
Robert Tresham House  
Clipston  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 9RZ

**Proposal:** Application for approval of reserved matters pertaining to trunk road service area including 100 bed hotel, public house restaurant, filling station, food outlets and associated parking, access and landscaping Land To The North Of The Farm Buildings At Hill Farm Willington Derby

**Ward:** Willington

**Valid Date:** 03/03/2003

**Site Description**

The site comprises part of the area allocated for development in the current Local Plan as a roadside facilities site. The remaining land is in separate ownership and would be the subject of a separate application. The site lies within the south-east quadrant of the A38/A50 interchange. It is enclosed by hedges on all its boundaries. Access to the site would be from the B5008 Etwall Road. To the south of the site is Hill Farm a Grade II Listed Building that has, together with its outbuildings, been redeveloped for residential use

**Proposal**

There are 6 main elements to the proposal:

- a) A 100 bedroom hotel (Eaves height 5m approx, ridge height 10.8m)
- b) A pub, food outlet and drive through restaurant (Eaves height 4m, ridge height 11m also includes managers accommodation in the roof space of the pub)
- c) Car (176 spaces), coach (3 spaces) and lorry (6 spaces) parking all with provision for extension
- d) Car and lorry refuelling facilities (Canopy height 6.2m, eaves height of service building 3.4m, ridge height 5.5m)
- e) Picnic area
- f) Landscaping proposals - this comprises a mixture of mounding, shrub and tree planting with the emphasis on the screening of the south and east boundaries.

There is also provision for direct road access to the remaining land that is the subject of the Local Plan allocation. No details of the foul and surface water drainage details have been submitted although the form indicates that the foul water will be pumped to the mains drain and surface water would be disposed of to a sustainable drainage system. These details would have to be submitted prior to the development as would the materials of construction.

### **Applicants' supporting information**

Since submission, the application has been amended to include the provision of a landscape mound along the south boundary between the site and the dwellings on Hill Farm. The access to adjacent land has also been changed to ensure that the site is easily accessed, that was not the case when the application was originally proposed. The access arrangements to this site have also been amended to coincide with those approved in 1998. The applicant has confirmed that the requisite adjoining land to form the access is in the applicants' ownership.

### **Planning History**

The site was allocated as a Roadside Facility site in the early 1990's. Two subsequent applications for the development of the allocation were permitted in the mid 1990's.

These were permitted again in 2000 and the outline planning permission for both sites expires in June this year. The outline permission requires that buildings on the site have an eaves height of less than 4 metres unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal would be wholly unobtrusive, submission of details of the landscaping, provision for all vehicles to access the adjacent allocated land and details of the foul and surface water drainage.

There is a Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline planning permission that requires several issues to be addressed both by the applicant and the Local Planning Authority.

In the first instance, the Agreement requires that an application for the redevelopment of Hill Farm be submitted and approved before development is commenced on the roadside facility site. The approved scheme was to have been completed prior to the opening of any of the facilities on the application site. This part of the Agreement has been fulfilled.

Secondly, there is a requirement for the developer to provide fuel facilities, overnight accommodation, eating facilities and a picnic area and not to open those facilities unless car and lorry parking and toilets have been provided and the Council has given written consent for their opening. The car & lorry parking, fuel facilities, overnight accommodation and toilets are required to be available 24 hours a day throughout the year.

The emerging Local Plan no longer allocates the land for development as a roadside facility. This is the subject of an objection to the Plan. Members will be aware that the Inquiry into objections to the Local Plan is due to commence on 3 June 2003.

An application for approval of the access to the land was approved in 1998 but also forms part of this submission.

## Responses to Consultations

Willington Parish Council objects to the proposal all the facilities are duplicated nearby and the provision of a public house in a major road services area is considered wholly inappropriate. It is understood that the Parish Council will be maintaining its objection to the development.

The Highways Agency has no objection.

The County Highways Authority is concerned that the proposed access as shown on the submitted drawing differs from that approved as a previous reserved matter.

The Environment Agency has no objection subject to conditions limiting surface water runoff from the land and that these elements should be implemented at an early stage of the development. All surface water, except roof water should also be passed through an oil interceptor. The Environment Agency will be consulted again when surface water drainage details are submitted as will Severn Trent Water about foul water disposal.

The Environmental Health Manager has no objection but draws attention to relevant regulations for the control of vapours during delivery operations that are subject to control.

## Responses to Publicity

Four letters have been received objecting to the development including one from the owner of the adjacent allocated land. The grounds for objection are as follows and the first four objections relate to points made by the owners of the adjacent land albeit that others also make some of these objections:

- a) The 100-bed hotel is much too large, and consideration of the viability of this element should relate to the numerous consents for such facilities in the locality, none of which have been developed. (Atkins site, Y-Pass garage and the Every Arms). A smaller 2 storey, lower building is more appropriate on the site, and this size building is normally found on this type of development.
- b) The public house is not what was envisaged in the Local Plan Policy and is not normally found on a roadside services site. It is contrary to the Highways Agency advice if only from a road safety point of view. The building would also dominate the site. the requirement for food outlets would more than adequately be met by the two food outlets. Over provision of such facilities could affect the whole viability of the scheme.
- c) The Local Planning Authority should take the opportunity to ensure that the whole allocation is developed rather than just a part of it. If permitted the development would sterilise the rest of the allocated land. It would be more beneficial to develop the whole site that would allow the buildings to be moved close to the junction and offer better opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the development.
- d) The provision of the access to the adjacent land is not satisfactory and could involve a ransom strip being put in place for which the adjacent owner would have to pay. It would be better if there was a direct access to the land off the island.
- e) The appearance of the development is not in keeping with the character of Hill Farm which is a Grade II listed building. There is insufficient landscaping along the south boundary to screen the proposals from the Hill Farm site.
- f) Dwellings at Hill Farm would suffer a loss of privacy
- g) There would be an increase in the volume of traffic using Etwall Road. This would be extremely noisy, the road was not designed for this level of traffic. The traffic island would detract from the rural community aspect. Facilities such as the pub and filling station would

attract traffic at all times of the day whereas at present there are only a couple of peak traffic flows. The rest of the time the road is relatively quiet.

h) No provision has been made to attenuate noise from the development. A mound should be formed and noise fencing erected along the top of it. This could be in a neutral colour and the landscaping would quickly screen it. The landscaping in this area should be more densely planted. As proposed the screening impact would be minimal over a considerable number of years. More evergreen planting should be included in the scheme. The mounding and landscaping should be put in place before building works are commenced.

i) The outline specifies an eaves height of 4.0 metres but the applicants have incorporated accommodation in the roof. This gives a ridge height of 10.9 metres. This together with the illuminated signs on the pfs and other elements of the use will be intrusive in the countryside.

j) Noise from building operations should also be controlled.

In response to a reconsultation about the amended plans, one further letter of objection has been received. The points of objection are as follows:

The proposed bund on the south boundary, although a step in the right direction, still causes concern. The plants will take many years to establish. There is no indication of how high the bund would be. There are no evergreen trees in the scheme. The developer will be saving transport costs for material leaving the site and landfill tax, but there is no benefit to residents. The bund seems to be for the benefit of one occupier who is a part of the development company. Whilst the bund is welcomed, without a proper specification for the landscaping, there will be little protection of the setting of Hill Farm, noise or light pollution. The variety of planting should be addressed now. A lot could be done to meet the above points at relatively little cost.

### **Structure/Local Plan Policies**

The relevant policies are:

Joint Structure Plan: Transport Policy 19 Environment Policy 10

Local Plan: Transport Policy 10 Environment Policy 13

Emerging Local Plan: No relevant policies, ENV 19

### **Planning Considerations**

The main issues central to the determination of this application are:

- The Development Plan.
- The impact of the proposals on the listed building (Hill Farm) and the countryside.
- The suitability of the access.
- Noise and privacy as raised by objectors.
- The landscaping proposals

### **Planning Assessment**

The site has outline planning permission that was granted in accordance with the provisions of the current Local Plan. This application for some of the reserved matters indicates details of the development and is not a matter of principle upon which the Local Planning Authority can comment. Had the outline planning permission expired, then it is unlikely that it would have been renewed because of the change to the Development Plan.

The closest element of the proposals to the Hill Farm dwellings is the petrol filling station. This is some 190 metres from the nearest dwelling although there is a roadway at some 150 metres from the houses. The dwellings have a limited number of window opening facing the buildings. Between these dwellings and the petrol filling station is a proposed landscaped mound. The mound would not necessarily provide an instant screen but with the distance between the dwellings and structures on the site, the proposals would not detract from the character and setting of the group of listed buildings.

Clearly there is a change to the character of the area and part of the rural nature of the countryside hereabouts would be altered. The buildings have a functional appearance and in the main would be visible from the slip roads to the A50 and B5008. The reason the 4 metres eave height was attached to the outline permission was to ensure that the impact of the development on views from the east were minimised. The eaves height of the hotel would be some 5 metres with a ridge height of 10.8 metres. This element of the proposals is set back furthest from the east boundary of the site. The mounding and screening on the east side of the site would help to screen the hotel from the lower ground to the east. There would be distant views of the site from Findern and the road bridge over the A50 at Findern. However, the height of the eaves and ridge would not be prominent from this distance especially when this view also contains the Toyota Factory on the opposite side of the A38. The application has demonstrated that the maximum eaves height of 4.0 metres could be set aside.

The access to the site has been amended. This has been passed to the County Highways Authority for comment but the initial view is that the amended proposals would generally be acceptable. The formal response will be report at the meeting.

The objectors have made several objections to the proposal, soe of which are addressed above. The issue of loss of privacy is not accepted because of the distances, described above, and the fact that the very few windows look directly towards the buildings on the site and there would be significant landscaping on the boundary between the site and the dwellings.

Clearly there is going to be a change in the noise characteristic of the traffic passing the site and a new noise element from traffic turning into the site. This is a matter of principle and not one that would justify withholding approval of reserved matters. In any event the dwellings are some 100 metres, at the closest point from the traffic island and this would not justify refusal of permission on the grounds of traffic noise.

The general principles as set out in the landscaping proposals are broadly acceptable. However, there are elements such as the species of some trees and the spacings between them that are to be addressed with the applicants prior to the meeting. Any relevant outcome of these discussions will be reported.

None of the other matters raised through the publicity and consultation process amount to material considerations outweighing the assessment of the main issues set out above.

### **Recommendation**

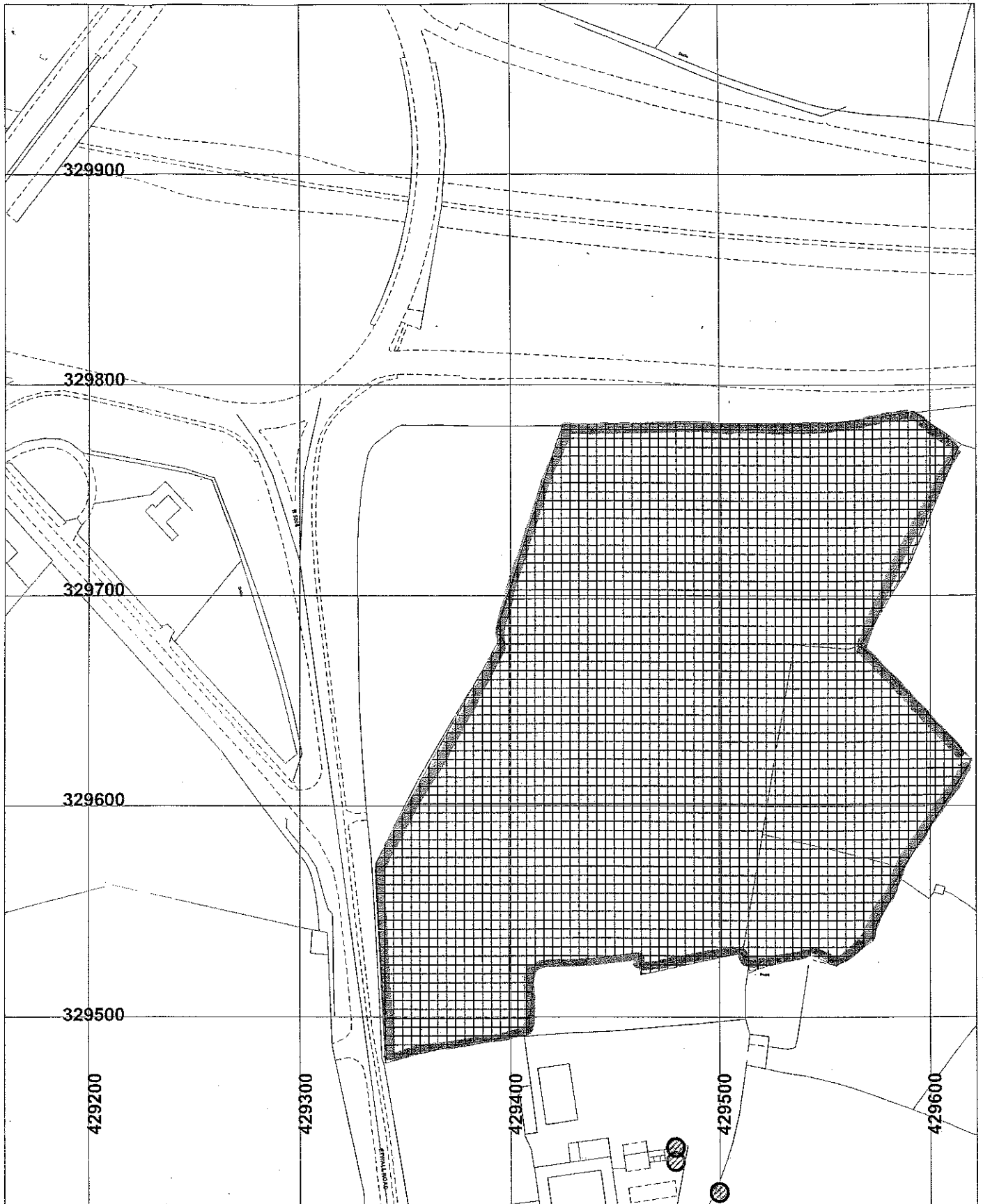
**GRANT** approval of reserved matters in respect of the details submitted under cover of this application subject to the following conditions:

1. Notwithstanding the originally submitted details, this permission shall relate to the amended drawing no. [final drawing nos. to be inserted]
1. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, the original submission being considered unacceptable.
2. The access to the adjacent land shown 11 on [final drawing nos. to be inserted] shall be constructed concurrent with the rest of the site roads. It shall be constructed to a minimum of base course level and shall finish contiguous with the boundary between the western boundary of the land.
2. Reason: In order to facilitate access to the adjacent land in the interests of the proper planning of the area.
3. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation. The mounding to the southern boundary shall be formed to its finished height within 6 months of the commencement of the development and planting on this part of the site shall be implemented in the first planting season following the formation of the mound.
3. Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area and to reduce the impact of the development on the character and setting of the Grade II Listed Building.
4. Reasonable planning requirements of the LHA.

Informatives:

Drainage details and materials of construction remain to be approved in detail. Development may not be commenced until these details have been discharged together with other matters that may require discharge.

You are reminded of the provisions of the Section 106 Agreement in respect of this land whereby all the facilities referred to in the agreement must be available for use on the site. Please see the relevant clauses in the Agreement.



South Derbyshire  
District Council  
Civic Offices  
Civic Way  
Swadlincote  
DE11 0AH

roadside services Willington

Date Plotted 4/6/2003

NORTH ↑

Plot centred at 429391 329695

Scale 1:2500

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20/05/2003

**Item** 2.2

**Reg. No.** 9 2003 0053 U

**Applicant:**  
Messrs D & P Edwards C/O Agent

**Agent:**  
Andrew Thomas  
Andrew Thomas Planning  
2 Wrekin Close  
Ashby-De-La-Zouch  
Leics  
LE65 1EX

**Proposal:** Use of land for the storage of touring caravans at Seale Lodge Farm Burton Road Acresford Swadlincote

**Ward:** Netherseal

**Valid Date:** 07/03/2003

**Site Description**

The site is located within open countryside north east of Netherseal village. The site adjoins the Applicants dwelling and agricultural buildings to the west and a single dwelling to the south. The site is an open field surrounded by hedges and separated from Acresford by an area of woodland.

An area of land to the south west of the current application site has consent for the storage of 23 caravans.

**Proposal**

The application is for the storage of touring caravans on an area of land measuring approximately three-quarters of a hectare. Woodland planting is proposed on the eastern side of the site. Access is shown using the existing driveway.

**Applicants' supporting information**

The application proposes an increase in the area to be used for caravan storage. This will result from the retention of the existing caravan storage area (both the approved area and that which is presently unauthorised), together with the use of an additional area for storage immediately behind the farmhouse.

The proposals would provide a much needed source of income to supplement the applicant's income derived from more traditional agricultural activities and the existing caravan storage business at Seale Lodge Farm.



Whilst the overall area devoted to caravan storage is to increase, the application envisages a significant reduction in the area identified in the previous (refused) application. In particular, you will note that the proposed storage area does not extend away from the farmhouse into the fields to the rear as far as was previously proposed. The proposals also provide for substantial areas of woodland planting around the storage area.

The Local Plan doesn't contain any policies of direct relevance to proposals for the storage of caravans, however some of the provisions of Recreation and Tourism Policy 10 (Touring Caravan and Camp Sites) may be considered appropriate guidance in this case. The policy seeks to ensure that proposals do not result in an unduly prominent intrusion into the countryside, they should not cause disturbance to local amenity by virtue of noise or traffic generation, proposals should be of an appropriate scale and integrated with its surroundings and there should be adequate access, servicing, screening and parking.

Paragraph 1.7 of PPG7 acknowledges that farmers are increasingly diversifying into other activities to supplement their incomes. In March 2001, Planning Minister Nick Raynsford indicated that PPG7 was to be updated to make it clear that local authorities should take a positive approach towards farm diversification proposals. PPG7 was duly amended and paragraph 3.4A was amended to acknowledge that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm businesses. Paragraph 3.4a goes on to advise local planning authorities that they should be supportive of diversification schemes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location.

The caravan parking areas will be screened from the A444 by a mixture of existing buildings and natural features. There is an existing mature hedge and a belt of tree planting along the western and north western boundaries of the caravan parking areas which will help to ensure that the proposals will not result in an unduly prominent intrusion into the countryside and be integrated into their surroundings. Additional woodland planting to the southern boundary of the site will help to screen the proposal from views in that direction. The visual impact of the proposal will, therefore, be minimised to an acceptable degree, consistent with its surroundings and the character of the area.

The caravan storage areas and access are positioned so that they are unlikely to cause any disturbance to local amenity by virtue of noise or traffic generation.

The applicants only intend to store touring caravans at the site and many of the caravans that are presently stored there belong to people who live in urban areas where there are often restrictions placed upon the storage of caravans (covenants or planning restrictions). Quite often, caravan storage takes place on small areas of wasteland or underused land. The redevelopment of such sites (in accordance with the aims of PPG3) places pressure on caravan owners to find alternative storage such as Seale Lodge Farm.

Whilst the use will generate additional traffic movements in the countryside, these will be limited and infrequent. The authority seeks to encourage employment uses in the countryside and it should be noted that the proposals will secure employment for the applicants and help to ensure that they do not have to travel to nearby urban areas on a regular basis for alternative employment. On balance therefore, whilst there will be some additional traffic associated with the proposal, nonetheless, I do not consider that it would undermine national or local planning policies which seek to secure sustainable forms of development.

The existing caravan storage use at Seale Lodge Farm is an integral part of the applicant's business and farm diversification intentions. Without such additional income the income derived from traditional agricultural activities presently undertaken would not be sufficient to support the business or the applicants' livelihood. The expansion of the caravan storage area is therefore considered to be of paramount importance to the continued viability of Seale Lodge Farm

The proposal appears to accord with the general thrust of policies relating to caravans in the development plan and national planning policy guidance. The proposals have been amended to overcome the previous reasons for refusal and they also appear to be consistent with the emphasis presently being given to farm diversification projects.

The applicants are facing severe hardship following the recent decline in the profitability of agriculture along with other farmers in the area. The project, if approved, would provide a source of additional income which would help to sustain my clients' existing farming activities.

### **Planning History**

Planning permission for the farmhouse and associated buildings was granted in 1992.

Planning permission for the storage of 23 caravans to the rear of the buildings was granted in 2001.

Planning permission for the storage of caravans on the same site as the current application site was refused in 2002 for reasons of unacceptable visual intrusion into the rural landscape and the fact that the development was considered to be contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

### **Responses to Consultations**

The County Highway Authority has no objections.

Netherseal Parish Council object to the planning application on the grounds that the size of the proposed development would create a visual intrusion into the countryside and on the skyline. If the application was granted the Parish Council would request that the following conditions should be put in place:

- A tree planting scheme, to form a suitable adequate screen, should be implemented immediately using quick growing species.
- Earth mounds should also be implemented immediately.
- Any lighting installed should be sympathetic to the surroundings and low level.

### **Responses to Publicity**

Twenty four letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:-

- The proposal is contrary to government policies as it is greenfield land.
- The site is in a prominent, hillside location and clearly visible from considerable distances away, the caravans reflect the sun.
- There is an adverse impact on the privacy of the occupiers of dwellings located close to the site.
- The development is an eyesore and is not well screened, it is especially visible in winter months.

- The development will result in additional traffic using the A444 and could result in accidents.
- No planning permission exists for the current levels of caravan storage on the site.
- Safety and security issues.
- Detrimental impact on wildlife.
- The planting that has been carried out does nothing to screen the site because the trees are only 1-2 feet tall.

Fourteen letters of support for the application have been received raising the following issues:

- Many people lack space to store caravans at their houses or have restrictive covenants in their deeds preventing caravan storage and therefore the service provided is necessary.
- Storage of caravans at dwellings advertises when the occupier is absent raising security problems.
- There is a shortage of such caravan storage facilities.
- The proposal is a good example of farm diversification.
- The development will not result in any noise issues or traffic problems.

### **Structure/Local Plan Policies**

The relevant policies are:

Joint Structure Plan: General Development Strategy Policy 4.

Local Plan: Environment Policy 1.

Draft Local Plan: Policy Env 7.

### **Planning Considerations**

The main issues central to the determination of this application are:

- Whether the proposal complies with development plan policy.
- The impact of the development on the countryside.

### **Planning Assessment**

The development plan contains no specific policy relating to caravan storage in the countryside. However more general environment policies require that any development in the countryside is either essential in its location or is unavoidable and that the character of the countryside is protected. In this case the applicants wish to store caravans at the site as a diversification to the farming business. However, this is not an essential operation in the countryside.


Planning permission was granted in 2001 for the storage of 23 caravans on a very limited site area located directly to the rear of the existing farm buildings. However since then the storage operations have grown and cover a much larger area of the field, planning permission was refused for this larger site in 2002. The current application is for the same site as the previously refused application although the actual land area proposed for the storage of caravans has been reduced and a wider bank of woodland planting is now proposed on the eastern area of the site. It is not considered that this amended scheme overcomes the previous reasons for refusal, which were on grounds of adverse visual intrusion in the countryside and the fact that the development would not be sustainable.

The site is in a prominent location on a hillside and is clearly visible from the A444 and from dwellings to the east of the site, particularly in winter when the trees have no leaves. Planting has been carried out to the west and north of the site although the trees are under a metre in height and do not mitigate against the visual intrusion of the caravans in the countryside. It is considered that the storage of caravans on this scale in this location has an adverse impact on the character of the rural landscape.

### Recommendations

- a. **REFUSE** permission for the following reasons:
  1. The proposed use of the site would result in the creation of an unacceptable visual intrusion into the rural landscape contrary to General Development Strategy Policy 3 and Environment Policy 1 of the Joint Structure Plan, Environment Policy 1 of the Local Plan and Policy ENV 3 of the Revised Deposit Draft of the Local Plan which seek to ensure that the character of the rural landscape and the countryside is protected from inappropriate development.
  2. The development runs contrary to the principles of sustainable development in that it encourages trips by private motor vehicles to deliver and collect the caravans from urban areas. The proposal is therefore contrary to General Development Strategy Policy 1 of the Joint Structure Plan which seeks to ensure that new development respects the principles of sustainable development by contributing to the provision of opportunities for (inter alia) protecting and improving the natural environment and minimising pollution.
- b. That the Committee authorise the Planning Services Manager and the Legal and Democratic Services Manager to take all necessary actions to secure the removal of the unauthorised caravans and reinstatement of the site.



 <p>South Derbyshire District Council Civic Offices Civic Way Swadlincote DE11 0AH</p>		Date Plotted 4/6/2003	NORTH ↑
	caravan storage overseasl	Plot centred at 429863 313534	Scale 1:2500
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