



Agricultural Building at SX 766 533 Moreleigh



Charity No 263985

Registered Address: 20 Highfield Drive, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 1JR
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PLANNING APPLICATION REF: 0545/24/FUL

Description: Agricultural Building

Address: Agricultural Building at SX 766 533 Moreleigh

27th March 2024

LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM THE SOUTH HAMS SOCIETY

The South Hams Society interest

For the last 60 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and oppose inappropriate development.

This is the third application for a barn at the same location this year. The previous application for this site 3295/23/FUL was withdrawn. The other application was to legalise an agricultural barn built in the wrong location to be used for equestrian purposes (0663/23/FUL *Agricultural Building as SX 766 533 Moreleigh*).

The Society wishes to object to this application because of the accumulative effects of barns in this area. Although there has been a marginal shift in location, the LPA has previously ignored developments built in the wrong location and it is not obvious the LPA would or could do anything were the same to occur at this location.

According to the applicant's previous Design & Access Statement the applicant '*owns approximately 7 1/2 acres immediately surrounding the proposed site comprising of three fields as well as a further approximately 44 acres in the local area.*'

The other 44 acres has now been identified as Higher Ritson Farm, 1.3 miles by road to the southeast.

That site already has a considerable sized barn which was the subject of an alteration with a planning application 22/0129/10/F.

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Design and Access statement (22/0129/10).

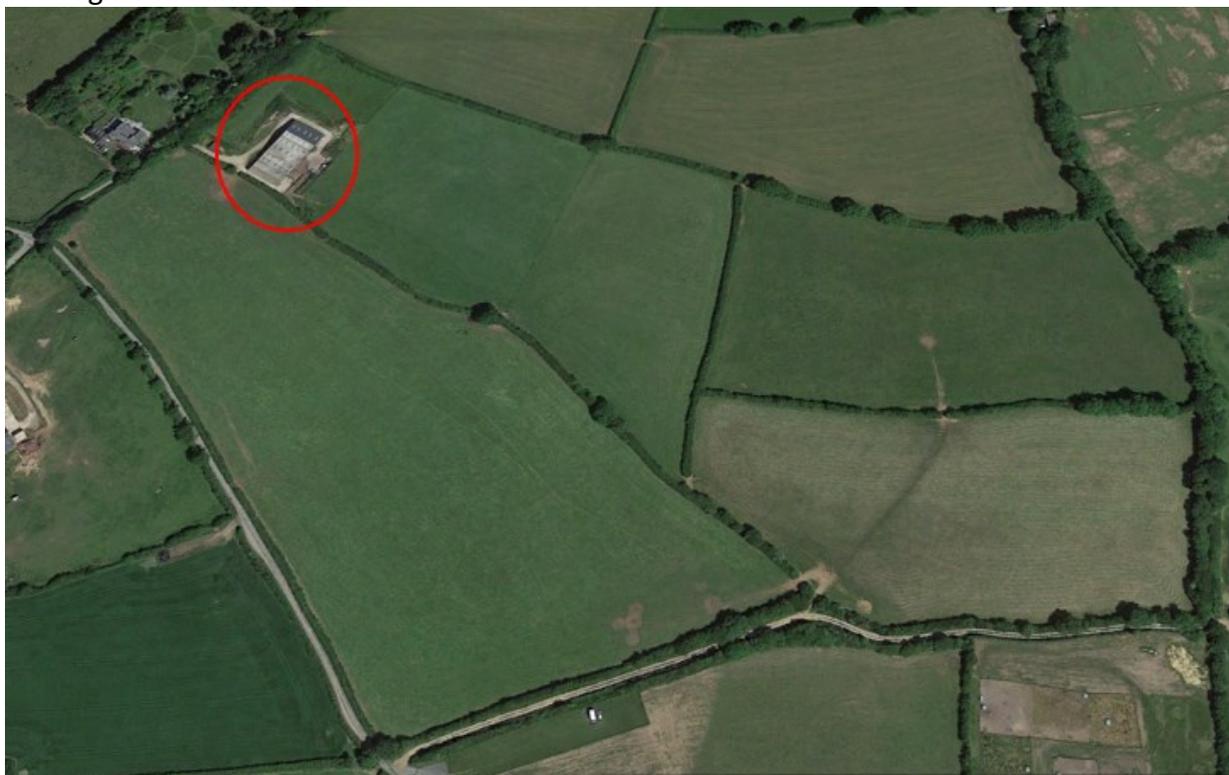
BACKGROUND

Maurice and Kathleen Edmonds purchased the land at Higher Ritson, Halwell, Totnes, TQ9 7JQ back in the early 1980s and from then on have established a small holding with both cattle and sheep. Initially they purchased a small block of land with a single building and have since that time built further buildings and purchased further acres so they now own some 43 acres of land based at Higher Ritson together with a further 7.5 acres at Boreston, Halwell which is close to their home at The Bakery, Moreleigh.

The 43 acres of land at Higher Ritson is home to an existing yard area which is quite small with three adjacent general purpose agricultural buildings. The first building has concrete rendered elevations and houses a lockable store and workshop area in the front bay and the remainder of the building is used for the winter housing of the suckler cows. The second building is a straw building and is used for the storage of heston bales of straw which are bought by the applicants direct from the fields at harvest time. The third building has a lean-to on the southern side, the main part of this building is used for hay storage and the lean-to area is used for young-stock housing. The proposal is to put a lean-to onto the northern side of this building to provide additional fodder storage space and much needed storage space for machinery, as all of the applicant's machinery is currently stored outside.

The same 7.5 acre holding the subject of this application has been used to justify the previous barn extension.

The Higher Ritson farm barn



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The holding has not required any building at the proposed location for 44 years, other than the one located at the north eastern hedgerow that we have highlighted on the front page of this letter.

The Society are of the opinion that there is no justification for yet another barn in a highly prominent location and that the LPA should review the buildings at both locations and independently justify the requirement for the proposed barn.

The Society would wish to see that all agricultural barns situated in remote locations in the countryside that are given planning approval have a planning condition attached that requires their removal when no longer required for agricultural use.

At this point the Society would refer the case officer to Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/W/22/3304261, Land at SX 690 402, Galmpton, Kingsbridge TQ7 3EY (attached).

As the Inspector noted:

4. Policy DEV15 of the Local Plan1 permits forms of development which support the rural economy, including that which meets the essential needs of agriculture or forestry interests. Similarly, Policy TTV26 enables development which responds to a proven agricultural, forestry and other occupational need that requires a countryside location. The test is therefore whether there is a proven agricultural need for the proposed dwelling.

The Inspector went on to say:

5. ...For example, it is not made clear why machinery needs to be kept on the site and exactly what it would be used for.

Regrettably the landscape has already been degraded by the erection of an agricultural storage building (0371/21/FUL) in the field immediately to the southwest.

Consent for this building was specifically conditioned:

3. The building hereby permitted shall be used only for agricultural purposes as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Reason: To ensure that the site is only used for agricultural purposes to protect the amenities of the rural area where there is a policy of restraint.

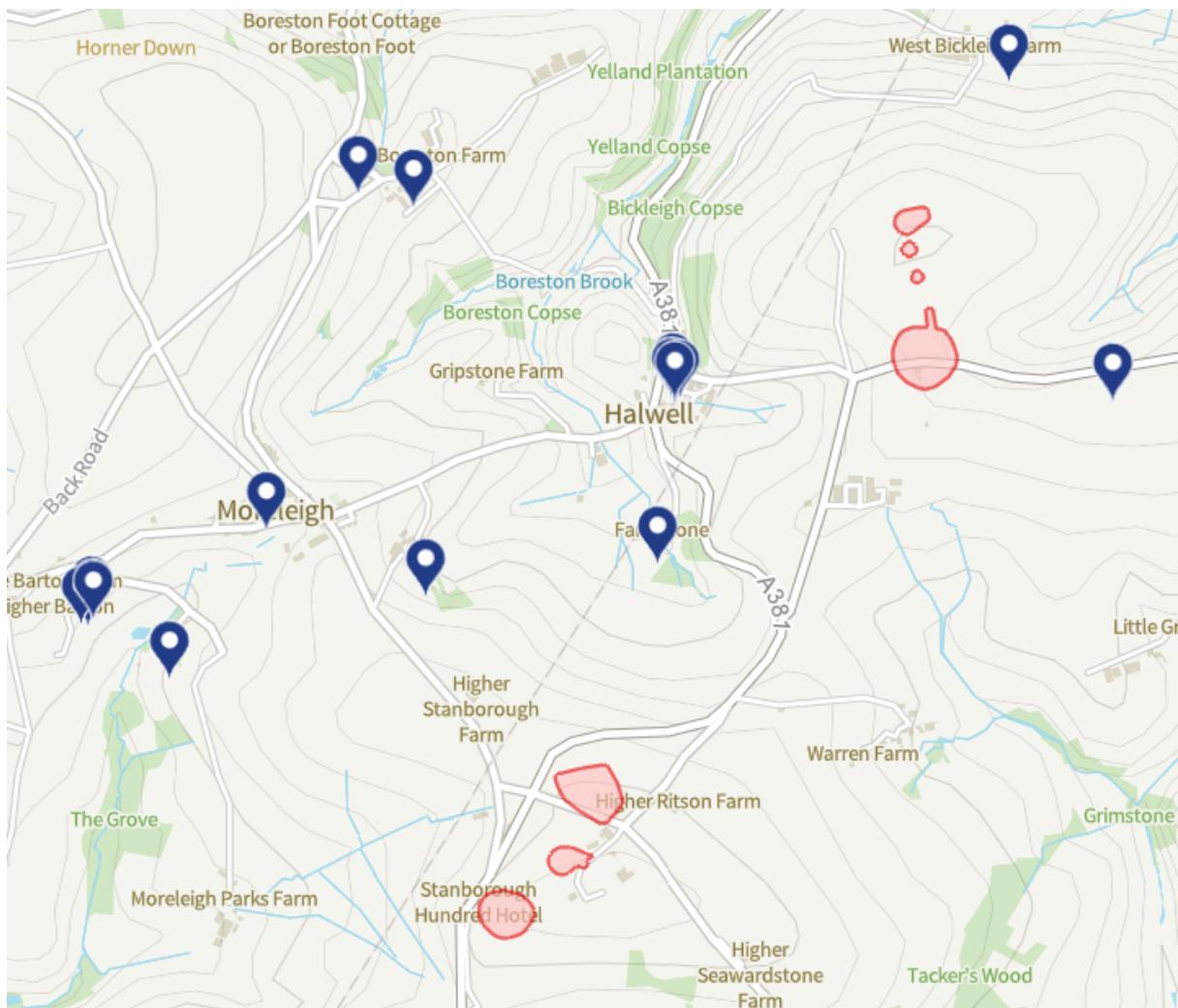
However a mere two years later a retrospective application (0663/23/FUL) was received to permit the building to be used for equestrian purposes in breach of condition 3 of planning permission 0371/21/FUL.

Indeed it is questionable as to whether that building was ever actually used for purely agricultural purposes – the keeping of horses is not considered an agricultural activity.

Surprisingly the LPA acquiesced to this request, allowing the building to remain and be used for a purpose for which consent is unlikely to have been originally given.

The landscape surrounding Halwell has been harmed by visually prominent development in recent years. All this development is depressingly obvious from the main routes of the A381 and A3122.

On the highest hills to the west are the Scheduled Monuments of Stanborough Camp (Iron Age hillfort and bowl barrow), the Ringwork and motte, the Round barrow cemetery known as Ritson Barrows, the Hillfort and two bowl barrows at Halwell Camp and the Four bowl barrows at Bickleigh Brake, forming part of a linear round barrow cemetery.



This agricultural barn would be yet another visually prominent building in this historic landscape setting.

Consequently the Society is of the view that unless a genuine agricultural need for this development in this location can be clearly demonstrated, the application should be refused.

For and on behalf of the South Hams Society.
Richard Howell,
Chairman