11/00184/FUL DCAPPLET SJ

Ref: DRB/C/w02-05-11/KMM
E-Mail: david@foxbennett.co.uk

4th May, 2011

Fb
FOX bennett

www.foxbennett.co.uk

Please reply to:
LEICESTER OFFICE

Mr Simon Wood
Head of Planning
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Argents Mead
HINCKLEY
Leicestershire
LE10 1BZ

- 5 MAY 2011

Dear Sir

MR J SPIBY, LOWER GRANGE FARM, MARKFIELD -
PLANNING APPLICATION No: 11/00184/FUL -
NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, RATBY LANE, MARKFIELD

I am writing as a Chartered Surveyor and Agricultural Valuer who has acted for Messrs H Spiby and Sons at Lower Grange Farm, Markfield, for many years.

Mr Philip Bates has submitted the above planning application and I have been asked by Mr Bates and Mr John Spiby to write to you in answer to the queries which have been raised.

(1) **The Objection Campaign:**
I am very surprised to read the enclosed press articles and leaflets which have been circulated around Markfield village. This appears to be an organized campaign which is designed to scare the residents of Markfield with many unfounded and inaccurate statements.

I was pleased to read the Leicester Mercury letter (Wednesday 27th April 2011) written by Bob Fisher of Littlethorpe which put forward a balanced opinion.

(2) **The Applicant:**
The Applicant is Mr John Spiby who is a Partner in H Spiby and Sons. You have asked Mr Spiby's age – It is 76 years. He lives at Lower Grange Farmhouse and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

/ Continued

Mr Simon Wood - Head of Planning
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

MR J SPIBY, LOWER GRANGE FARM, MARKFIELD -
PLANNING APPLICATION No: 11/00184/FUL -
NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, RATBY LANE, MARKFIELD

The Partners are John Spiby and Mary Rendell (nee Spiby). Ben Rendell (Mary's son) is 36 years of age and hopes to continue with the farm after John and Mary retire.

(3) **The Siting of the Building:**
The siting has been given considerable thought. The building is proposed to be close to the existing buildings off Ratby Lane which would themselves be refurbished.

I would be pleased to attend a site meeting to discuss the location of the building. It could be moved away from the roadside towards the motorway but in practical agricultural terms it is best located on the proposed site.

(4) **Environmental Issues:**
I refer to Simon Smith's e-mail dated 20th April 2011:

- **Silage Plastics:**
  The silage plastics adjacent to the buildings are untidy but are gathered up periodically and baled. These plastic sheets are collected annually for recycling.

  I entirely agree that there should be no burning of manure, bedding or plastics on the land. None of these are practiced on the farm at present.

- **Manure Storage:**
  There is no intention and it is not current practice to have manure heaps in fields for continued periods.

  The normal practice adopted on the farm now and for the foreseeable future is for the buildings (including the new buildings) to be cleaned out in May/June when the cattle have been turned out to graze.

  The manure is taken to the fields and placed in heaps until it is spread and ploughed in to fertilize the arable crops which are sown in early autumn.

/ Continued

Mr Simon Wood - Head of Planning
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

MR J SPIBY, LOWER GRANGE FARM, MARKFIELD -
PLANNING APPLICATION No: 11/00184/FUL -
NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, RATBY LANE, MARKFIELD

- **Building Management:**
  The building will house all the beef cattle on the farm from the autumn until they are turned out to grass in the early summer. In addition to the straw bedded cattle pens, the building will also provide space for the storage of some fodder and bedding straw.

  During the winter months, the cattle will continue to be bedded with straw on a daily basis in order to keep them clean and comfortable.

  After turnout and in May/June, the building will be cleaned and disinfected.

  The feeding of the cattle will indeed be undertaken on a daily basis, partly by mechanical means for the bulkier feeds and also by hand for the concentrate and cereal based feed.

- **Noise:**
  There should indeed be very little noise from mechanical feeding or the animals themselves. However, noise and any smell should be well contained within the building.

(5) **The Cattle Herd:**
The beef farming undertaken by Messrs Spiby comprises a single suckler herd. The calves are kept on their mothers and suckled naturally in the fields after calving.

In the autumn, the calves are weaned and the cows rested in the building until calving again in the spring.

After weaning, the calves are grown on for beef production, the males being fattened inside until May when they are ready for slaughter. The females are turned out to grow on at grass. They are then housed for fattening the following winter. The approximate winter housing numbers are:
4 Stock Bulls
80 Suckler Cows
70 1 to 2½ years old Heifers for beef production
40 fattening Males – Finished at 12 to 18 months
80 Calves

/ Continued

FOX BENNETT
Continuation Sheet No 3
4th May, 2011

Mr Simon Wood - Head of Planning
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

MR J SPIBY, LOWER GRANGE FARM, MARKFIELD –
PLANNING APPLICATION No: 11/00184/FUL -
NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, RATBY LANE, MARKFIELD

(6) **Other Assertions:**

Much of the campaigning thrust is directed against factory farming. Dairy Cows and wet slurry effluent systems are portrayed. These points are irrelevant with regard to the Spiby farming operation.

The points raised relating to gas, bacteria, toxic chemicals, pathogens and the alleged health risks are totally unrelated to the farming which will take place from the building at Ratby Lane.

The stock numbers are no greater than those currently on Lower Grange Farm and therefore there will be no increase of risk (if any). Indeed moving the farmstead away from the housing in London Road should avoid machinery movements to and from the fields on the farm as well as reducing the impact of any noise or smell on the greater population of Markfield.

There is also reference to intensive pig and poultry farms in the action paper dated 23rd April 2011. These intensive units bear no relation to this traditional style of farming. The intensive pig unit and poultry buildings referred to would create far more smell and traffic movements. The area of the new building matches the covered area plus the straw and silage areas at Lower Grange Farm. The untidy bales will partly be kept inside the building.

The deliveries to the Ratby Lane building will be similar in every way to those at Lower Grange Farm.

The new building will be an improvement in terms of stock welfare, ease of management and indeed appearance compared with the existing arrangements.

I hope this answers the points which have been raised but if you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

DAVID R BENNETT, FRICS FAAV
for and on behalf of Fox Bennett

Encs:

Dear Resident 23rd April 2011

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING RE PLANNING APPLICATION 11/00184/FUL FOR THE ERECTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL BUILDING ON LAND OPPOSITE OAK FARM, RATBY LANE, MARKFIELD

This communication is to provide you with a summary of the points discussed at the public meeting on Thursday 21st April regarding the above planning proposal. The meeting was attended by John Spiby, members of the local community and local councillors including: Matthew Lay, Sue Sprason, Chris Boothby, Ozzy O'Shea, David Sprason, Anne Cook and Barry White.

Please take time to read this so that you can make an informed decision if you wish to send in the recommended individual letters to the Chief planning officer as strongly recommended by the local parish, borough and county councillors. (Please note these letters would be additional to any you may have sent during the initial period allowed for comments/objections). The planning committee decision meeting will be on 24th May 2011 and, in view of the key recommendations to be included within your letters, please endeavour to submit these as soon as possible.

Summary of points raised

- Local residents raised the following concerns:
- Environmental – both odour and potential health issues.
- A lack of local consultation during the planning process with local residents including those close to the proposed site (the only 'neighbour consultations' went to Oak farm and a caravan – neither of which are occupied as residences).
- Size of the proposed new building – the application states this building is for both the cattle currently at London Road and those already on Ratby Lane. Mr Spiby stated at the meeting he only had 80 suckling cows in total. The plans submitted with the planning application shows the new building is all for livestock and we understand the proposed building is designed to hold about 180 cattle.
- Location of the proposed building – the building is very close to 3 areas of local residents: the retirement village, Ratby Lane and Thornton Lane. Residents in all 3 of these areas include many persons over 60 years old and there are also families with children outside of the retirement village. These are the age groups considered more at risk for any health issues.
- Residents who lived in these 3 areas, prior to the building of the newer houses in Thornton Lane faced a long battle with issues from the chicken farm and do not wish to have to go through the same again to get a resolution. The resolution on that occasion was to allow the building of houses in the open countryside.
- Increases in heavy goods vehicles accessing the site and, also any impact on the junction of Ratby Lane and Thornton Lane where there have been a series of accidents in recent years.
- The local residents live in an area that is already sensitive to smells from the existing pig farm.
- Matthew Lay asked Mr Spiby if he would be prepared to negotiate and move the proposed building back further away from both Thornton Lane and the Retirement village.

- The councillors also raised concerns re:
  - the scale of the building compared to the number of cows owned by Mr Spiby, citing that the plans show the building is all for cattle;
  - the treatment of effluence;
  - the eyesore that a building of this size would create on the proposed site;
  - the concerns re health.
- The councillors strongly recommended that individual letters are now sent to Simon Wood, the Head of Planning at HBBC, to include the following: the need for an Environment Impact Assessment on the proposed building; the need for a Visual Impact study and a request to see any amended plans prior to the planning committee meeting of 24th May. One councillor also advised we should remind the planners that they work for us.

Points to include in individual letters and where they should be addressed to.

The councillors have urged as many people as possible to send in individual letters of concern. **The more letters that are sent the better the chances that the proposal will be reconsidered in terms of location and size.** Letters should be addressed directly to:

Simon Wood
Head of Planning
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Argents Mead
HINCKLEY
LE10 1BZ

And quote: planning application 11/00184/FUL Erection of Agricultural building

Points to include:

- Need for an **Environment Impact Assessment** (those at the meeting may wish to add that we understand from Matthew Lay this had just been commissioned by Simon Wood)
- Need for a **Visual Impact Study**
- Insist on seeing the final proposals before they go to committee
- Plus the points that you feel are relevant to you including those in the meeting summary.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS AND FOR ANY SUPPORT YOU HAVE ALREADY GIVEN

From fellow local residents who attended the public meeting.

Leicester Mercury
OPINION

City's youth need jobs and homes

In the latest edition of our newspaper for young people, The Wave, inside today's Leicester Mercury, candidates in the race for the city's first directly-elected mayor set out their policies for Leicester's youth.

It is a well-worn cliche to say that the young are our future, but it is nevertheless true. The new mayor of Leicester will be in a position of unprecedented power with the opportunity to make a real difference to their lives.

So we are delighted to be able to highlight the thoughts of the candidates and particularly pleased that they have spoken to The Wave, which is increasingly serving as a valuable platform for young people in Leicester.

The candidates put forward a number of interesting ideas and readers will be able to make up their own minds about their respective merits.

We are entirely neutral and favour no particular candidate. However, on the general issue of creating the right environment for young people to flourish and realise their full potential, we think the following areas are a priority.

The new mayor must take a leading role in continuing to support and encourage the drive to raise standards in the city's schools and ensure

Home-grown food is the best

I HAVE been watching what I believe the entire government should be made to watch, and sooner than later – BBC 1's Countryfile on Sunday.

This referred to the huge difference made by fresh, local, affordable food that is being bought in at a hospital in the Midlands, replacing imported foreign foods, which the majority of patients did not like.

The dietitian said how much better the patients were since eating the locally-grown food which ultimately is making her job easier.

MPs should be made to watch it to get the message across to them to stop allowing the destruction of our countryside for all these unwanted houses. We want that countryside, to allow the farmers to grow food for us!

I am pleased to say that the last farm in my village which was destined for another 174 houses has been refused planning and I, like so many other people in this small island of ours, are fighting for stop this "land grabbing".

We are already held to ransom by the massive amount of imported goods and fuel, so it is long overdue that the government should take their blinkers off and get real.

G Allen, Rothley.

Only way to cut animal suffering

MERCURY

Doing what farmers do

I read with interest your article about a farmer's plan to erect a building to winter his cattle in ("Villagers fighting industrial unit plan", Mercury, April 19).

The article states that the animals will not be fed in the traditional method, but mechanically. Do people really think that a machine will arrive and force fodder down the animals' throats!

Mechanical feeding means that a trailer loaded with fodder will run alongside the feeding trough; the fodder will be distributed into the trough via mechanical means.

Now what about the smell? Ratby Lane, Markfield, is in the country. What do you get in the country? Farm animals and what comes with farm animals, poo. There's nothing wrong with that. We all have to do it; that's the way God made us.

The farmer states that he will spread the manure on the nearby fields. Fantastic! That's what you call organic farming.

Farmers who care for the welfare of their animals keep them inside during the winter to keep them warm and healthy.

Would those who are objecting to this proposal like to live outside in their bare feet all winter, in wet freezing conditions? I don't think so.

I do not agree with factory farming but this is purely a case of a farmer erecting a large building to house his livestock in the winter.

I would suggest that the objectors were not brought up in the country – if they were they would not be objecting.

The countryside is not all about birds singing, lambs running around and blossoming hedgerows. It's about farming to feed the nation. And if the farmer makes a shilling or two for his hard work, fair play.

***Bob Fisher,** Littlethorpe.*



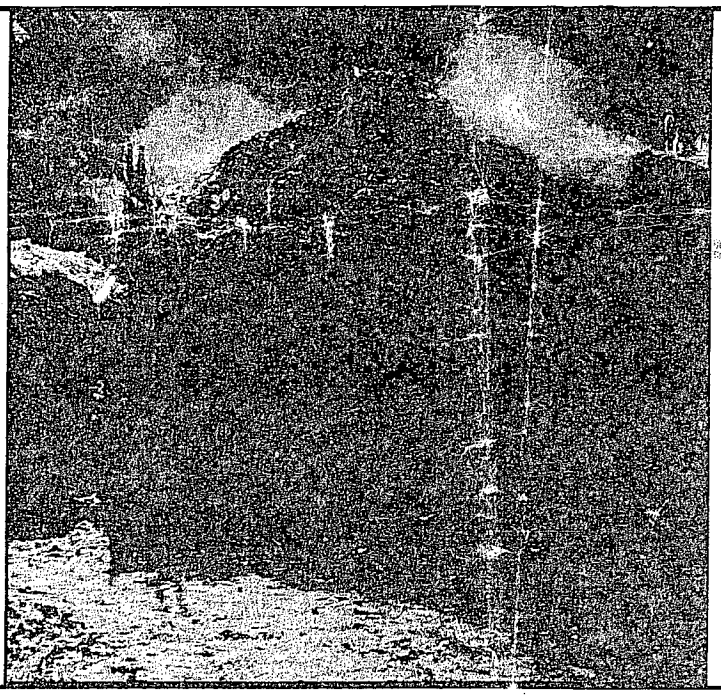
Photo sought

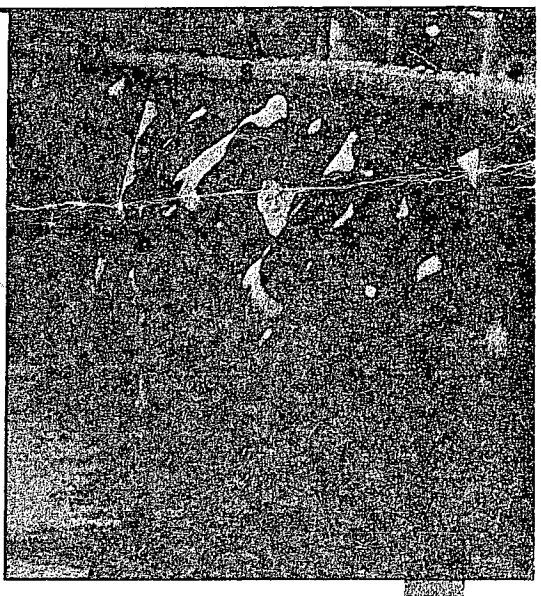
I'M trying to locate a photograph of the former National School in Long Street, Wigston Magna, from a time between 1935 and 1950.

I've checked the official sources but to no avail. If anyone has a photograph of the school building they can lend me (it will be returned) to accompany an article I'm writing, I'd be grateful.

An external view is preferred, although a picture of a classroom or the assembly hall would make a fine alternative. The site is now the location of Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

FACTORY FARM RATBY LANE MARKFIELD !





Pens holding 180 cows would be in the Factory Farm. This equates to 3600 humans, producing excrement!

Huge uncovered external manure heap

Gases released exposing local community, **'YOU'** to antibiotic resistant bacteria, pathogens eg E.coli, Salmonella and serious toxic chemicals such as Ammonia, Hydrogen sulphide and Carbon monoxide producing obnoxious odours.

Health Risk

Evidence has linked these dangerous gases to:-

Sore throats, headaches, shortness of breath, wheezing, diahorea seizure, comas and even death.



MEETING Thurs 21st 7.30 pm
Retirement Village Social Centre

ANGER: WORRIES OVER CATTLE FEEDER



PICTURE: CHRIS GORDON / LECG20110414G-488_C

CONCERN: Sara Aspinall, front, right, and Markfield Parish Council chairman Matthew Lay, back, right, with other Markfield residents at the proposed site of an industrial farm unit

Villagers fighting industrial unit plan

Villagers are fighting a farmers' plans for a massive mechanical cattle feeding building near their homes.

by **DAN MARTIN**

People living in Markfield are concerned the huge agricultural structure, which would hold about 200 cows and sheep, will produce huge amounts of manure that would attract flies and cause strong odours.

Farmer John Spiby has applied for planning permission for the barn, off Ratby Lane in the village, and is proposing to keep animal waste in an outdoor pile before spreading it on his fields.

Sara Aspinall, of nearby Thornton Lane, Markfield, is leading the campaign against the building, which would be 60m long, 30m and 9.4m high.

She said: "It's going to be a huge building, the size of a football pitch, that dwarfs the current ramshackle shed which hardly has any animals in it.

"The smell will be appalling and there is research that shows such large amounts of waste can actually be a hazard to human health, like e-coli."

The plan has also worried the 140 residents of the Markfield Court Retirement Village, which has its nearest bungalows 200m from the proposed site.

Doug Reeves, 83, said: "This is a very nice place to live at the moment and we don't want that to change.

"We are quite concerned about it all."

Mr Spiby's agent, Philip Bates, said the building would concentrate the farming activity that currently goes on in four or five buildings at Lower Grange Farm in Markfield.

"It will be used for the wintering of suckling cows and their calves, as well as for the wintering of fat cattle," he said. "There will also be some sheep."

Some campaigners have raised concerns about the welfare of the animals in the building, fearing it would be a "factory farm" – an intensive type of agriculture where animals are kept in large buildings and fed mechanically rather than in a traditional manner.

However, Mr Bates said it was not a factory farm, and stressed the cattle would be kept in good conditions.

He said: "The manure will be stored out towards the M1 motorway, 300 yards from the building and well out of the way.

"It will be spread on the fields.

"It will not have a major impact on anyone who lives nearby."

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's planning committee will decide next month whether to approve the scheme.

A public meeting to discuss the plan will be held at the retirement village's social centre at 7.30pm on Thursday.

Bus suspect hunted by police

POLICE have released a CCTV image of a man they want to question after a woman bus passenger was indecently assaulted.

The victim, who is 17, has told police a man came to sit opposite her and then spoke briefly to her before touching her.

The incident happened on the 126 Arriva bus at St Margaret's Bus Station, in Leicester, at 12.55pm on Friday, March 25.

Police have now appealed for information.

Pc Jane Everson said: "This was a very distressing incident for the victim and we are keen to trace the person responsible.

"We would urge the public to have a look at the image and contact us if they recognise the man.

"We would also like to speak to any passengers in the bus at the time, in particular a woman who was sitting at the back of the bus who asked the victim if she was all right."

Anyone with information can contact Pc Everson on 0116 222 2222. Alternatively, messages can be left in confidence on Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.



WANTED: The suspect

Nature reserve revamp creates habitat

A £20,000 revamp of a country park has finished.

Sence Valley Forest Park, near Ibstock, has had gravel and wooden structures added to its river to create better habitats for spawning fish.

A rock weir was removed and extra bends added in to slow the flow of the river in order to encourage fish to breed there.

The work was funded by the Environment Agency and supported by the Forestry Commission, Lafarge Aggregates and Sence Valley Volunteers Trust.

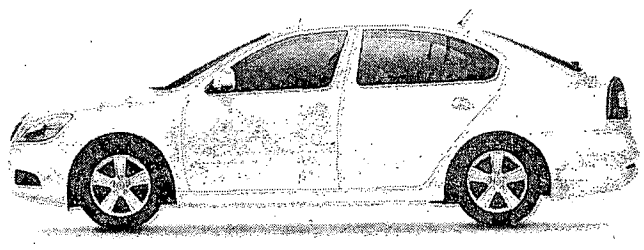
Residents and visitors are being invited to a free talk about the work by Chris Farmer, of the Environment Agency's fisheries and biodiversity team.

It will take place tonight at the David Wilson Clubhouse, Ibstock Football Ground, Ashby Road, Ibstock, at 7.30pm.

SIMPLY CLEVER

ŠKODA

25% OFF
ŠKODA OCTAVIA*



AND OTHER OFFERS AVAILABLE THIS EASTER WEEKEND AT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER.

skoda.co.uk

*Offer only applicable to Škoda Octavia SE 1.6 MPI 102PS at participating retailers. Offer may be varied or withdrawn at anytime, is subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Model shown varies from UK specification. Discount only applies to RRP of vehicle. Discount does not apply to optional specification.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Octavia range: Urban 27.2 (10.4) - 60.1 (4.7), Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) - 83.1 (3.4), Combined 36.2 (7.8) - 74.3 (3.8). CO_2 emissions for the Octavia range 182 - 99g/km.