

**SITE VISIT****C SE2003/0754/F - AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING SCHEME FOR NEW UNDERGROUND GARAGE/RUMPUS ROOM WITH NATURAL SWIMMING POOLS AND SAUNA AT LAWLESS HILL COTTAGE, SELLACK, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 6QP****For: Mr K Meehan per Malcolm Harrison & Associates,  
Newcastle Farmhouse, Orcop Hill, Herefordshire,  
HR2 8SF****Date Received: 14th March 2003    Ward: Llangarron    Grid Ref: 5673 2760**

Local Member:    Councillor Mrs J A Hyde

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 This application was deferred by the Committee at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003 in order to inspect the site.
- 1.2 Further information has been received from the applicant's agent, which is summarised below:
  - (1) The original timber sauna building was 4 metres square but front to back went into the stone wall that concealed a staircase and a chimney. This made the actual building 5.5 metres deep as drawn. We allowed a 750mm wall thickness in the absence of engineers' calculations for stone structure and this cranked back behind the building to make the wall 1500mm thick. The wall projected 1000mm on the right to allow for the roof over sail. This wall rose 200mm higher than the planned roofline.
  - (2) This whole wall is no longer required in the proposed scheme. The approved building footprint is approximately 5.5 x 4 therefore 22 square metres. The new building is a circle 5.5 metres diameter. This is a footprint of 23.75 square metres. The new building is lighter and further back and eliminates a massive stone structure.
  - (3) It could be argued that this development including the proposed round building comes within the guidelines of PPG7 recommending approval for exceptional buildings in the countryside.
- 1.3 The original report is included as an appendix to this report. The above representations clarify the relative sizes of the approved and proposed buildings. It is not considered that the advice quoted from PPG7 is relevant as that refers to new houses whereas this case relates to extensions/outbuildings to an existing house. Nevertheless in view of the similarity in size of the approved and proposed building and that there would be no significant increase in harm to the visual amenities of this part of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is recommended that permission should be granted.

### SITE VISIT

#### RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission) )

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 B01 (Samples of external materials )

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

- 3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general) )

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general) )

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 5 F18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal)

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided.

#### INFORMATIVE

- 1. The developer’s attention is drawn to the advice of the Environment Agency included in the letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003 attached to this permission

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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#### Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.

## APPENDIX

**12 SE2003/0754/F - AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING SCHEME FOR NEW UNDERGROUND GARAGE/RUMPUS ROOM WITH NATURAL SWIMMING POOLS AND SAUNA AT LAWLESS HILL COTTAGE, SELLACK, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 6QP**

**For: Mr K Meehan per Malcolm Harrison & Associates,  
Newcastle Farmhouse, Orcop Hill, Herefordshire,  
HR2 8SF**

**Date Received:**  
**14th March 2003**

**Ward:**  
**Wilton**

**Grid Ref:**  
**5673 2760**

Local Member: Councillor G Davis

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

1.1 Planning permission was granted in June 2002 for a garage and rumpus room with natural swimming pool and sauna at this residential property which overlooks the River Wye at Sellack. The application site rises steeply from the flood plain with the detached house adjoining the southern boundary and hence at the highest point. The access drive zig-zags up the incline which has been stabilised by massive stone retaining walls and structures. The garage/rumpus room, pools and sauna form part of the western end of these structures.

1.2 The current proposal is for amendments to the approved scheme. The main change would be to the sauna building which would now be circular (5.5m in diameter) rather than square and built off a retaining wall which touched the western boundary of the site (overall dimensions scale as 4m x 4.65m on the approved drawing). The sauna would be set further into the site (by 0.8m) and about 2.5m further back. The flat roof would be at the same level on the site but with a small flue casing. This building would be glazed within an oak frame.

1.3 The other changes are the inclusion of cedar or oak shutters to the garage windows and cedar boarding facing part of the western retaining wall.

**2. Policies**

**2.1 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan**

Policy CTC1	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC2	Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value
Policy H20	Housing in Rural Areas
Policy H16A	Housing in Rural Areas

**2.2 South Herefordshire District Local Plan**

Policy C5	Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy C8	Development within Areas of Great Landscape Value
Policy SH23	Extensions to Dwellings
Policy GD1	General Development Criteria

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**3. Planning History**

- |     |               |  |                      |
|-----|---------------|--|----------------------|
| 3.1 | SE2001/3372/F | Underground garage/rumpus room with natural swimming pools over and sauna.             | - Permitted 24.06.02 |
|     | SH810481PF    | Amendments to approved fenestration and rebuild annexe.                                | - Approved 22.05.81  |
|     | SS980180PF    | Extension to rear.   | - Approved 01.07.98  |
|     | SS980558PF    | Extension to form porch and balcony.   | - Approved 14.10.98  |
|     | SE1999/2237/F | Retain stone retaining wall along drive, retain bank and form terrace.                 | - Approved 04.10.99  |
|     | SE2000/1140/F | Conservatory extension to 1st floor  | - Approved 06.07.00  |
|     | SE2000/1858/F | 160mm deep pond.   | - Approved 1.11.00   |
|     | SE2000/0403/F | Cladding to cottage, extension lean-to, alterations to balcony.                        | - Approved 10.05.00  |
|     | SE2001/0108/F | Extension to conservatory (hot tub room/sauna), underground garage amend conservatory. | - Approved 12.03.01  |

**4. Consultation Summary**

- 4.1 Sellack Parish Council have not been very happy with this development. There have been many complaints from nearby residents about the scale of this project.
- 4.2 Head of Engineering and Transportation, response from Divisional Surveyor (South) has no objection to the grant of permission.
- 4.3 The Environment Agency has no objections in principle but recommends that a condition be imposed regarding foul drainage.
- 4.4 Public Rights of Way Manager advises that the proposed development would not appear to affect public footpath SK11.

**5. Representations**

- 5.1 The applicant's agent makes the following submissions:

- "1. The inclusion of Cedar or Oak shutters to the tall windows facing onto the highway and the adjoining land to make the building less visible in the landscape when not in use.
2. The alteration of the proposed masonry wall construction on the boundary that would have backed a square sauna building in favour of a lightweight circular glazed building constructed further back on the site and off the boundary.

The building will be constructed with curved glass in order to minimise glass reflection when seen from a distance. In setting the building further back on the site and reducing the height slightly we anticipate that once trees are established it will only be visible as a structure from distances in excess of 70 metres from the site at which distance it will have blended with the surroundings. Since the building is only glass if it is not shuttered it will in any case be practically invisible.

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The footprint of this building is actually smaller in area than the approved building and will have no diagonal perspective unlike the square building that would have appeared 7 metres wide. This building will be 5.5 metres across from any view.

3. We have made use of the underground space at the rear of the building for storage and as a plant room serving the ponds above.
  4. We have settled on a planting scheme for the roof. Though the planting scheme does not form part of this application we have included the pond surface level in this amendment application."
- 5.2 One letter has been received from Ross on Wye and District Civic Society. the following concerns are raised:
- a) design and materials of sauna building are alien to this environment
  - b) visibility of works carried out is apparent both from the road and longer views
  - c) urge that permission not be given unless Council satisfied that the new structure is not visible from these view points.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## 6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The massive engineering and building operations on this site have significantly altered the character of this hillside side. The loss of tree cover, only in part a direct consequence of building works, has made them more visible than otherwise would have been the case but the garage/rumpus room and the retaining walls on the lower slopes in particular are too close to the road to screen. Nevertheless the latter do help to hide the buildings and structures further up and further back on the site. A number of trees on the adjoining land have recently been cut down and this has exposed more of the western part of the works to view.
- 6.2 The proposed building would be larger in area (pace the agent's submission) but the approved building would only appear smaller if viewed at right angles; oblique views would be much the same. By re-positioning the building away from the boundaries it would be less visible than the approved building. Nevertheless there would be glimpses of the building from both the road and from wider, more distant views. It is considered however that the current proposal would not significantly increase the visual harm arising from this development.
- 6.3 Similarly the shutters would make little difference and when closed would draw less attention to the garage than large expanses of glass.
- 6.4 The site needs to be planted substantially to screen or soften the buildings and stone walls. It is understood that a scheme is being prepared for discussion involving the Council's Landscape Architect. Nevertheless it will take several years before the planting has any appreciable effect on the appearance of this hillside site.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

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**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

**2 B01 (Samples of external materials )**

**Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.**

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**Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.**

**4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general) )**

**Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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