

16 DCSE2007/0534/O - STORAGE UNIT USE CLASS B8, AREA 1,408 SQ.M. AT BP NORTHBOUND, ROSS SPUR, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE.**For: RL (UK) Ltd per Blencowe Associates, Old Parish Barn, Sandford St. Martin, Oxfordshire, OX7 7AG.**

Date Received: 20th February, 2007 **Wards: Ross-on-Wye** **Grid Ref: 60945, 25742**
Expiry Date: 17th April, 2007 **East & Old Gore**

Local Members: Councillors P.G.H. Cutter, Mrs A.E. Gray and Miss T.M.R. McLean

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site of about ¼ ha. is situated immediately to the north of Ross Labels car park (formerly a petrol filling station) and to the east of Ross Labels store. The northern boundary is a small stream along which there is a line of trees. The site is at a similar level to the Ross Labels store, significantly lower than the made up ground that is now the car park. To the east and north of the site is farmland and undeveloped land.
- 1.2 The proposal, which has been amended since its original submission, is for a simple rectangular building (about 49 m x 33 m), with eaves about 6 m above ground level and a shallow, hipped roof about 7.6 m high at the ridge. The building would be primarily of brick construction with the upper part and roof profiled steel cladding. The colour scheme would match Ross Labels (black or near black with a mid-grey roof). The building would be used for storage Class B8 purposes (wholesale warehousing and storage). Access would be both via the car park access off the A449(T) trunk road and the service road to the north of Ross Labels store which leads off Netherton Road. Parking would be provided for 6 cars with 2 lorry loading bays. (This amends the original submission following representations from the Traffic Manager).
- 1.3 This is a new proposal following refusal of permission (SE2006/3633/F) for 3 retail warehouses, plus a restaurant on this site and the car park to the north. The latter scheme also included an office block to the east but this was withdrawn from that application (SE2007/0181/F) which is also being reported to this Committee meeting. The layout of the office block sharing car parking, access and circulation is included on the layout plan for the storage unit illustrating the relationship between these two proposals.

2. Policies**2.1 Planning Policy Statements**

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy S1 - Sustainable Development
Policy S4 - Employment
Policy E3 - Confirmed Local Plan Employment Land Allocations
Policy E8 - Design Standards for Employment Sites

Policy LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR3	-	Movement
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy T6	-	Walking
Policy T7	-	Cycling
Policy T8	-	Road Hierarchy
Policy T11	-	Parking Provision

3. Planning History

3.1	SE2006/2631/F	Erection of offices (B1), retail warehousing and replacement roadside restaurant (A3/A5).	-	Withdrawn 09.11.06
	SE2006/3633/F	Erection of retail warehousing and a replacement roadside restaurant A3/A5.	-	Refused 24.1.07

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Highways Agency does not propose to give a direction restricting the grant of planning permission. The trip generation has been checked and they can confirm that the total 3 generated trips (3 two way trips in AM peak and 3 two way trips in the PM peak) are acceptable. They do not require trip distribution information due to the low traffic generation of the proposals, when considered in isolation. The impact of the development on the A449/A49 roundabout has not been assessed due to the low traffic generation of the development. The developer has identified walking and cycling routes and the existing No. 36 bus service which routes pass the site. However, due to the nature of self storage it is likely that most visitors would need to access the site by private vehicle. The Agency has assessed that overall the storage unit development will have no significant impact on the A449/A49; therefore, the Highways Agency wishes to offer no objection to the proposal.
- 4.2 Welsh Water does not object to the proposal but request that conditions be imposed regarding drainage.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 The Traffic Manager advises:

- Car parking numbers as stated on the application form (6 spaces) and lorry spaces (1 space) match the requirements of the new Design Guide. I am concerned at the lack of space to the rear of the six parking spaces for manoeuvring - this requires 6.0m minimum. I am further concerned that the single lorry space may be insufficient, given that the standard is for 1 space "**minimum**". Furthermore, the size and layout of the proposed loading / unloading area is inadequate for a standard 15m articulated HGV. This area of the site requires redesigning, and should be supported by an appropriate swept path assessment.
- Cycle parking will be required in accordance with the Design Guide standards, which will entail at least 3 cycle spaces.

- The accident data confirms that vulnerable road users are at risk at the roundabout, with 2 accidents involving cyclists and one involving a pedestrian. There are no identified measures to improve the roundabout to assist vulnerable users.
- One of the bus services noted, (no. 36) which serves the site directly is being withdrawn due to lack of patronage.
- The site could be adequately served by service no.32, which is hourly. This would require the provision of stops at the pull-in from the A449. Contributions to the running of this service may be required to ensure that any additional time/buses required to access the site are accounted for, to be delivered by S106.
- The "established walking and cycling route" via Brampton Road is of a poor standard, with rough steps, no footway on Brampton Road and a long section of unsurfaced footpath. unlit and overgrown, and is not overlooked from the road plus other disincentives to users. The site access road and side road junctions are subject to frequent fast moving traffic, including very frequent HGV movements. This route requires considerable upgrading if it is to be considered appropriate as a walking/cycling route for general access to and from the site, and proposals are required from the developer accordingly.
- Recommend refusal on grounds of unsustainability.

4.4 Conservation Manager advises that the site comprises land to the east of Ross Labels, including a car parking area associated with Ross Labels and the site of a former petrol station. The ground tapers and drops in level towards the north-east. There is an existing hedgerow along part of the A449 frontage. A stream flanked by some trees, including willows, runs along the northern site boundary. There is open countryside to the north of the site, which rises up to Brampton Abbots. The site falls within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

He has no objection in principle to the proposed storage unit building. The storage unit building is sited adjacent to the existing Ross Labels building at the rear of the site, and its roof level is lower than the Ross Labels building so he does not consider that it would be unduly intrusive. However, should the storage unit building be acceptable in principle, then there should be a requirement for the existing trees along the stream corridor to be reinforced significantly, with additional native species trees, to screen views of the building from the higher ground to the north-east of the site.

4.5 Head of Environmental Health has no objection to the proposed development.

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicant's agents have submitted a Design and Access Statement and a Transport Assessment with a Travel Plan. The Statement includes a discussion of the following:
- (i) the site and surroundings and indicates current problems in keeping the site secure and tidy
 - (ii) the impact of the proposals on this sensitive landscape (Wye Valley AONB) and concludes that the development will be in keeping with this locality's general commercial character and result in improved visual appearance of this important gateway site to Ross on Wye

- (iii) views from different directions are considered and in view of the smaller footprint than the previously proposed retail warehousing, minimal service yard and position on lower part of site immediately adjacent to Ross Labels, it is concluded that it would have significantly less impact than the retail warehousing, to which the Council's Landscape officer had no objections
- (iv) this is a speculative development as no interest expressed from any employment users
- (v) the level of traffic appears insignificant and the site is accessible via public footpaths (within 2 km of Ross on Wye) with an established walking and cycling route and a bus service (no. 36) directly serves Ross Labels.

5.2 Ross Rural Parish Council supports this application.

5.3 Ross Town Council considers that the proposals for this development should be considered together and not in isolation. The Committee still has concerns about the access and egress and reiterates earlier comments. Recommend refusal.

5.4 Brampton Abbots Parish Council's observations have yet to be received.

5.5 Two letters have been received, one objecting to the proposal, the other not opposed in principle but raising concerns. The matters raised are as follows:

- (i) this is a 'back door' approach following refusal of the retail park
- (ii) this very large storage unit could easily be sited on brownfield development currently taking place along Alton Road
- (iii) anticipate that an application for an out of town retail park would be submitted later if permission granted for this unit, arguing that there should be no objection on grounds of appearance or encroachment along the side of the road
- (iv) the proposed design and materials would be far more visually acceptable than the retail warehouses but concerns about access for delivery vehicles directly off the dual carriageway and preferable for such vehicles to arrive and depart via the rear of the site and Overross roundabout
- (v) everything possible should be done to screen the site especially along the northern boundary

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

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The main issues are the principle of development for B8 purposes, the impact on the landscape and Wye Valley AONB and traffic considerations. On the first issue the site is part of an area allocation in Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 (UDP) for employment purposes including B1, B2 and B8 (Policy E3). This proposal is for B8 purposes and would fully accord with this allocation. The site has been promoted by the Council for several decades being included in both the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and its predecessor the Ross on Wye Local Plan.

- 6.2 It would be a substantial building but its visual impact would be limited by being constructed on low lying ground next to the stream. There is a steep bank to the south, so that the roof would be approximately at the same level as the adjoining car park. To the north the farmland also rises but less steeply. The storage unit would be visible from this direction but being at a similar ground level to the Ross Labels building and with a similar height to the main part of the store (not the higher central section) it would be less intrusive in the landscape. The dark materials also help in this regard. Consequently taking into account the allocation which encourages industrial/commercial development, it is considered that the harm to the natural beauty and character of the landscape and AONB is not so severe as to justify refusal of planning permission.
- 6.3 Turning to the third issue, a detailed assessment has been undertaken by consultants and fully considered by the Highways Agency, who have confirmed that traffic generation would have no significant impact on the trunk road and roundabout. Although there is a link directly from the A449(T) this would be for access only and all traffic leaving the site would be directed via Netherton Road. The Agency points out that most journeys would be by car. The pedestrian/cycle route is not ideal and the limited bus service suits shoppers not workers at Ross Labels. Nevertheless this was appreciated when the land was allocated in UDP and to a degree would be mitigated by the Travel Plan, which can be required by planning condition. As the proposal conforms with the UDP allocation it would not be adequate grounds to refuse permission because of the limited public transport services and pedestrian/cycle route.
- 6.4 The potential for a later change to a retail store has been raised in the representation. This would require planning permission and would be assessed against policies current at that time should an application be submitted. This possibility would not be adequate grounds to refuse permission for development that accords with the very recently adopted UDP.

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 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))**
Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.
- 3 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))**
Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.
- 4 G01 (Details of boundary treatments)**
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.
- 5 F49 (Finished floor levels (area at risk from flooding))**
Reason: To protect the development from flooding.

6 F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

7 H13 (Access, turning area and parking)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway.

8 H30 (Travel plans)

Reason: In order to ensure that the development is carried out in combination with a scheme aimed at promoting the use of a range of sustainable transport initiatives.

Informative(s):

1 N19 - Avoidance of doubt

2 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission.

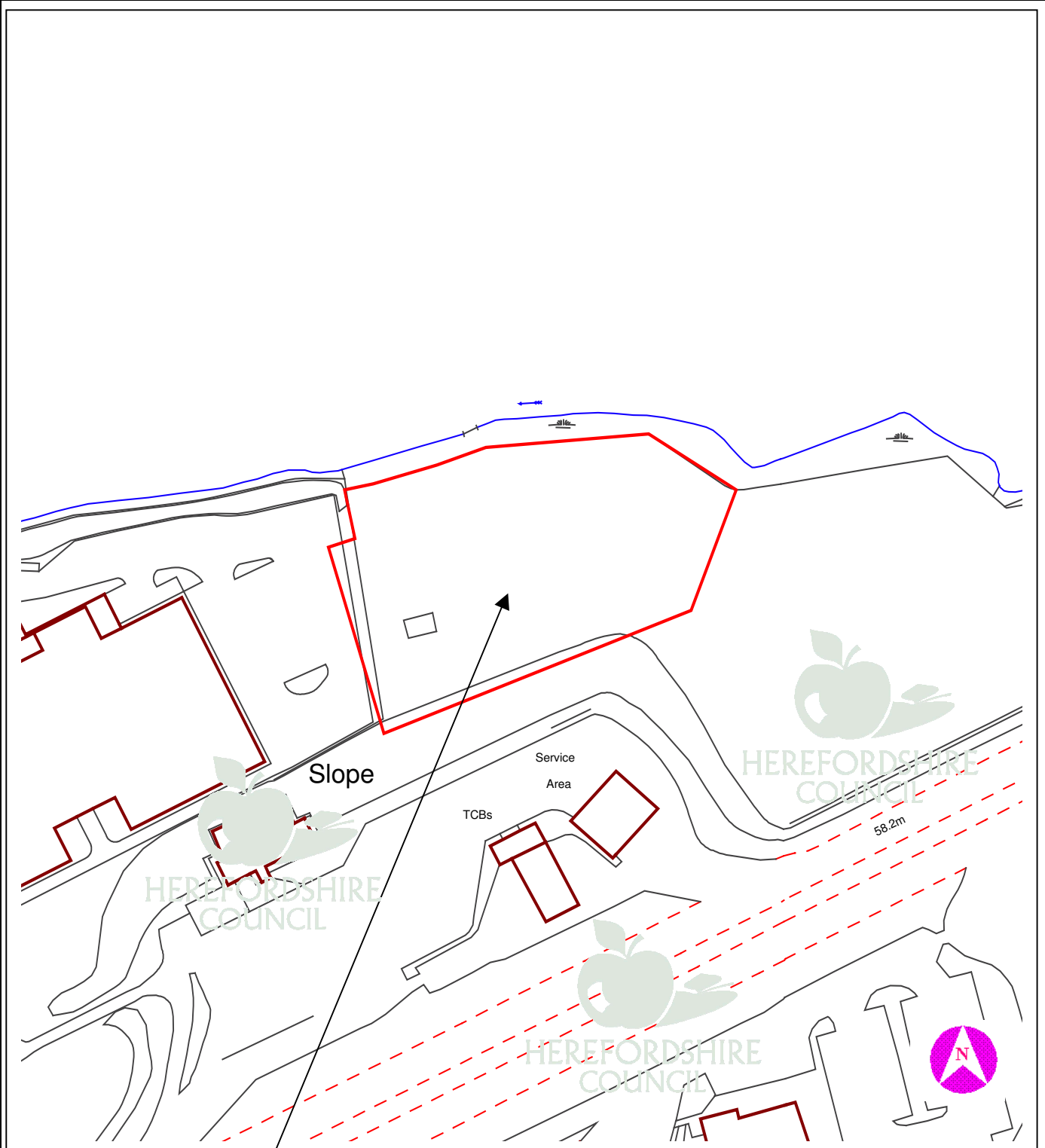
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2007/0534/O

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : BP Northbound, Ross Spur, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

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