

**14 DCSE2006/3612/F - 3 DWELLING UNITS FOR RENT,
MARTINS CLOSE, WOOLHOPE, HEREFORDSHIRE,
HR1 4QS.**

**For: Festival Housing Group per JBD Architects,
Mortimer House, Holmer Road, Hereford, HR4 9TA.**

Date Received: 15th November, 2006 Ward: Old Gore Grid Ref: 61117, 35789

Expiry Date: 10th January, 2007

Local Member: Councillor T.M.R. McLean

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site is a grassed area between Martins Close and St George's Church, a Grade II* Listed building. An iron railing fence bounds the site on its south side, a rubble stone wall runs along the boundary with the church and wooden panel fencing and hedges form the boundaries with Martins Close.
- 1.2 The site is located in the Woolhope Conservation Area and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.3 This application proposes a row of 3 dwellings that comprise 2, 2-bedroomed dwellings and 1, 3-bedroomed dwelling that will be available for rent.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Statements

PPS.1	-	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS.3	-	Housing
PPS.7	-	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG.15	-	Planning and the Historic Environment

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy S.1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S.2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S.3	-	Housing
Policy S.7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR.1	-	Design
Policy DR.3	-	Movement
Policy H.6	-	Housing in Smaller Settlements
Policy H.9	-	Affordable Housing
Policy H.10	-	Rural Exception Housing
Policy H.16	-	Car Parking
Policy LA.1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy HBA.4	-	Setting of Listed Buildings
Policy HBA.6	-	New Development within Conservation Areas

3. Planning History

3.1 None.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 The Traffic Manager – No in principle objection.

4.3 The Conservation Manager -This is a successful example of adapting traditional forms to C21 requirements and its carefully considered design will stand in marked contrast to the pedestrian speculative housing to the south.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement:

- The dwellings will comply with the Housing Corporation Design Standards, Life Time Homes and Eco Homes Standards as well Building Regulations and Secure by Design;
- The dwellings will be designed to a higher standard level of insulation to minimise energy costs and are orientated due south to maximise solar design during winter months;
- Extensive shading will protect dwellings from excessive heat during the summer months;
- The dwellings will be constructed using a local timber supplier and the cladding will utilise locally sourced oak cladding as well as brick at lower levels;
- The dwellings have been positioned to minimise obstruction and overlooking to neighbours;
- Whilst being contemporary in appearance the dwellings reflect local characteristics and materials;
- The site is close to the village centre and is adjacent to the church;
- The site is relatively flat and it is not envisaged there will be any change in levels requiring steps or ramps; and
- The surfacing of the car park and approaches to the dwellings will be wheelchair accessible.

5.2 Woolhope Parish Council “unanimously oppose the proposed plans as currently presented for the following reasons:

1. Access - insufficient width for access in view of the existing lane to church and lack of visibility to motorists leaving the proposed development;
2. Quantity of proposed dwellings on size of plot will cause overlooking to neighbouring properties;
3. Application within conservation area and area of great landscape value and design and style of proposed dwellings are not in keeping with neighbouring

properties especially in view of the close proximity to the church which is a Listed building; and

4. Proposed dwellings do not meet the needs of parishioners because they may not come under a 106 Agreement.”

5.3 7 letters of objection have been received:

- This is backland development that will have an adverse affect on neighbours;
- The design and appearance of the dwellings will have an adverse impact on the character of the area;
- There is no satisfactory access;
- Over development of the site;
- The Woolhope sewerage plant is overloaded;
- This proposal is contrary to Woolhope Planning for the Future 2006;
- The development will not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Woolhope conservation area;
- The proposed materials are in appropriate for the area; and
- The proposal will have an adverse affect on the setting of St George1s Church a Listed building.

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 site is located in the smaller settlement of Woolhope. Housing development in smaller settlements is allowed but controlled by policy H6. The policy sets a criterion for consideration that allows development; house sizes, infill frontage, and affordable housing on infill sites with frontages larger than 30metres and sites over 350 square metres where there is a proven local housing need.
- 6.2 In terms of need, the Council's Strategic Housing Service undertook a housing needs study in Woolhope as part of the on-going surveys across the County. Residents were consulted as part of the Woolhope Parish Plan process early in 2006. The results of the survey shows there is an affordable housing need for 8 dwellings. This application for 3 rented dwellings will fulfil part of that need. Detailed advice on affordable housing is given in policies H9 and H10. It will be necessary for a Section 106 agreement to be completed and the proposed Heads of Terms are attached as an appendix.
- 6.3 The site is also within the Woolhope Conservation Area. Within conservation areas it is a statutory requirement for development either preserve or enhance the characteristics of the area. In this matter the Conservation Manager comments the site is relatively secluded and the scheme will be most visible from the churchyard to the east. However, there is an appropriate degree of visual separation between the east elevation and St George's Church, so this proximity is not problematic. The design of the dwellings is a consistent expression of the schemes environmental aspirations and elements such as massing, orientation, fenestration pattern and solar shading will be clearly understood. In a similar vein, ancillary elements such as the garden sheds and bin stores are carefully integrated into the whole composition. The scheme uses materials from predominantly local sources, but adopts a crisp, modern aesthetic which is a logical development of their traditional use. Accordingly, it is not considered the proposal will cause harm to the historic environment.

- 6.4 The submitted plan shows that the rear wall of the proposed dwellings to the gable flank wall of the neighbour to be a distance of 12metres. This is considered to be an acceptable minimum distance given that there are no living room windows in the gable elevation of the neighbouring dwellings so as to compromise outlook and to avoid the development being visually intimidating.
- 6.5 Access to the site is off an unsurfaced track, which also provided access to the church car park and Martin's Close. The Traffic Manager advises the means of access is substandard and its junction onto the C1297 is restricted. However, given the existing usage of the access the proposal will not have significant disruption to the users of the highway.

RECOMMENDATION

That: The Legal Practice Manager be authorised to complete a planning obligation agreement under Section 106 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure:

- a) **The dwellings shall be retained available for rent in perpetuity for local people.**

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.

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.

APPENDIX

DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS

Proposed Planning Obligation Agreement

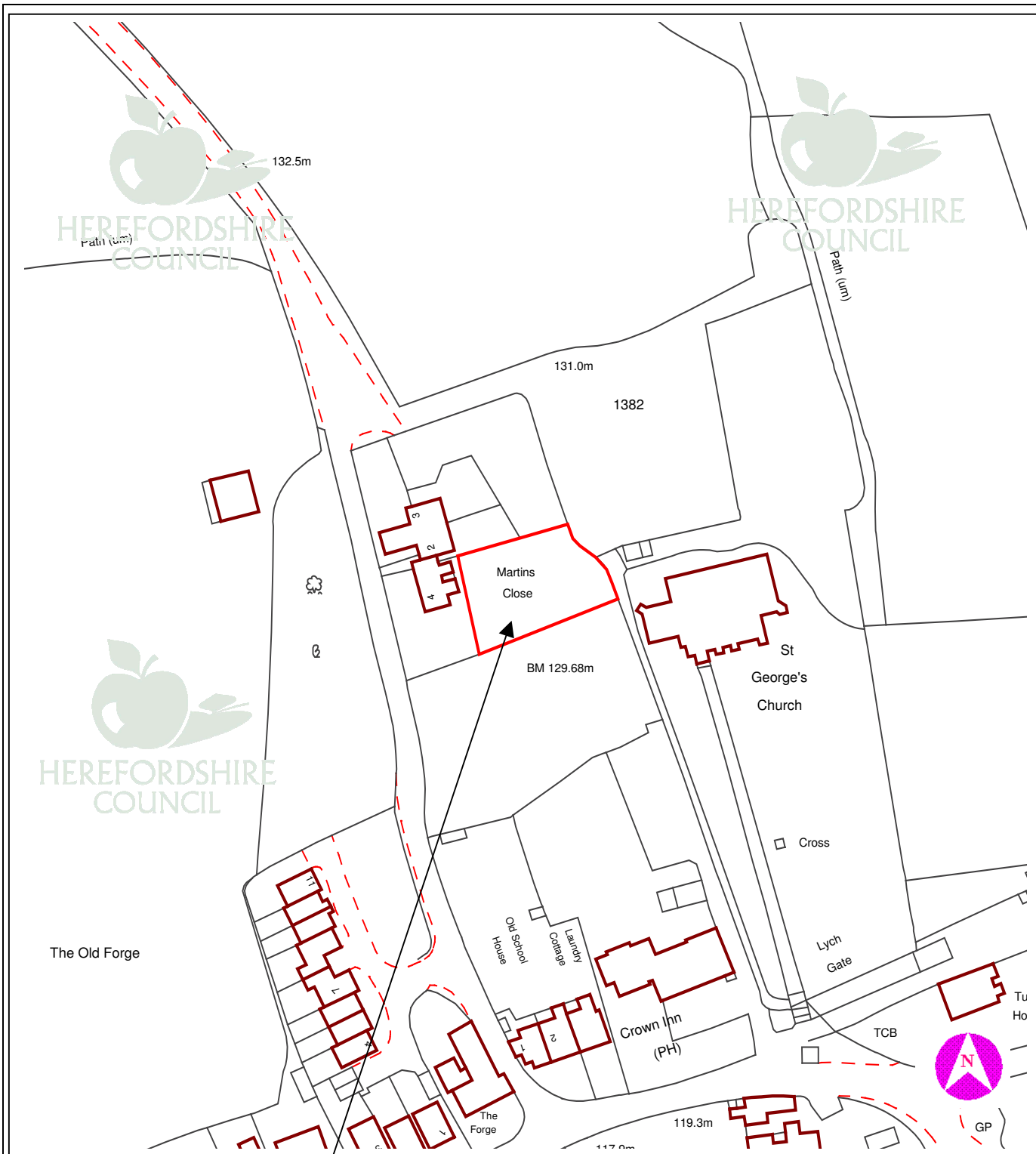
Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

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3 dwellings for rent comprising of 2, 2-bedroomed dwellings and 1, 3-bedroomed dwelling at
Martins Close, Woolhope

1. The approved houses shall be affordable housing units which meet the criteria set out in Section 5.5 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 and related policy H9 or any statutory replacement of those criteria and that policy. None of them shall be occupied unless and until the Herefordshire Council has given its written agreement to the means of securing the status of these units as affordable housing.
2. The developer shall pay to the Council, on or before the completion of the Agreement, the reasonable legal costs incurred by Herefordshire Council in connection with preparation and completion of the Agreement.
3. The applicant shall complete the Agreement by 20 September 2007 otherwise the application will be registered as deemed refused.

DW Thomas
Senior Planning Officer



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Martins Close, Woolhope, Herefordshire, HR1 4QS

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