

16 DCSE2007/1158/F - DEMOLITION OF OFFICE & PART RETAIL & ERECTION OF 12 NO. 1 & 2 BED FLATS, CONVERSION OF FIRST FLOOR ABOVE RETAIL TO 2 FLATS. CRAIG THORPE LTD, HILL STREET, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7AD.

For: Craig Thorpe Ltd per Trower Davies, 20 Lancaster Centre Meteor Business Park, Cheltenham Road, East Staverton, GL2 9QL.

Date Received: 18th April, 2007 Ward: Ross-on-Wye East Grid Ref: 60007, 24159

Expiry Date: 18th July, 2007

Local Member: Councillors A.E. Gray P.G.H. Cutter

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site to which this application relates is roughly 'L' shaped, linking Crofts Lane to the north and Hill Street to the east. It abuts Croft Court retail/housing development and, to the west, the rear of Broad Street shops, with an open area to the south. The western limb of the site is currently a retail shop. The area of the application site is about 0.06ha.
- 1.2 It is proposed to redevelop the southern limb of the site, leaving the section of the retail shop which fronts Crofts Lane. The new development would fill most of the remaining area, with the exceptions of an area fronting Hill Street (a landscaped forecourt) and an inner courtyard which abuts Croft Court. The three-storey block of flats would wrap around the inner courtyard, with the second floor partly within the roof slopes of the eastern section. A main design feature would be inter-locking gables roof of varying height. Most of the windows would be on elevations facing into the inner courtyard or towards Hill Street. External materials are stated to be brick and render with tiles/slate roof.
- 1.3 A total of 12 flats would be erected (10 1-bed, 2 2-bed) and in addition the first floor accommodation above the shop would be converted into a further 2 1-bed flats. The shop would have a new shopfront, as previously approved (SE2006/2024/F). No off-street car parking is proposed.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Statement

PPS.3 - Housing

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy S.3 - Housing

Policy H.1 - Hereford and the Market Towns: Settlement Boundaries and
Established Residential Areas

Policy H.13 - Sustainable Residential Design

Policy H.14	-	Re-using Previously Developed Land and Buildings
Policy H.15	-	Density
Policy H.16	-	Car Parking
Policy HBA.6	-	New Development within Conservation Areas
Policy HBA.7	-	Demolition of Unlisted Buildings within Conservation Areas

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCSE2006/2024/F Shopfront - Approved 16.08.06
- DCSE2006/3175/F Demolition of office and part retail and erection of 12 1 and 2 bedroom flats; conversion of first floor to 2 residential units - Withdrawn 19.12.06

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Welsh Water recommend conditions be imposed to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to their assets.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager advises that Hill Street, an unclassified road which accesses the location of the proposed development is sub-standard, being narrow in width. It is considered that any intensification of its use by motor vehicles may lead to conflict. However, the development is indicated as being car free, with no provision for car parking.

The site is considered as being in a sustainable location (town centre), and in line with Government Policy Guidelines to encourage the reduction in car use, is acceptable. It is recommended that secure covered cycle parking be provided in order to promote an alternative mode of transport.

- 4.3 Conservation Manager:

“Given the alternatives proposed, this scheme probably represents the best option in terms of its impact on the character of the conservatin area and does not feature prominently in views from public vantage points. The scale and massing are generally appropriate although there are flaws and inconsistencies in the detailing: there is no apparent rationale for the southern-most ground floor window on the Hill Street elevation to have stone dressings and the remainder sills and soldier courses, or for the dormers to be treated differently from the courtyard elevations. Furthermore, such features as diagonally-braced 'balconies' and tie-bars between the bargeboards were typical architectural features 20 years ago. Under Policy HBA.6 the proposals have no more than a neutral impact on the character of the Ross Conservation Area. No objections subject to revisions to the detailing outlined above.”

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicant's agent points out that the previous application was withdrawn following objections on design grounds and from Welsh Water. The revised application is a

constructive response following discussions with officers. In addition a Design and Access Statement has been submitted which states, in summary:

1. Discussions with the Drainage Authority indicated that any increase of foul sewerage could be off-set by a reduction in the storm water flows from the existing hard surface site. A small section of the development proposal includes soft landscaped areas, which will allow free draining of the soil, reducing the volume of storm water entering the combined public sewer. Welsh Water have now withdrawn their objection.
 2. Advice on marketability and the type of development from local agents indicates that the large retail area would be difficult to find a new occupier, although some retained retail element would be desirable given the site's location within the Town Centre.
 3. Residential redevelopment proposals are considered appropriate for the area, given its sustainable location within the town but should be restricted to small scale units comprising one and two bedroom apartments. Given this location and in line with similar developments, it is not considered that on-site car parking is required.
 4. The form of development should not overpower the surrounding area nor impact adversely on the amenity enjoyed by others. For this reason, the development should look inwards, and should be limited to a maximum of three storeys, so as not to conflict with the building heights of adjoining properties.
 5. An unobtrusive design style that provides distinctiveness and a sense of place should be adopted. A scheme reflecting the adjoining development (Croft Court) is to be adopted. The buildings look inwards to a central courtyard, providing a private amenity area and central access for residents and visitors.
 6. Good quality materials should be considered as high priority and the use of sustainable materials and building techniques employed.
 7. It is proposed to retain the ground floor section of this building for retail, with access from Crofts Lane. Redevelopment of the space above ground floor level would offer an opportunity to re-use part of the existing building rather than total demolition and new-build. It is proposed to maintain access from the rear of the retail unit into the new courtyard to allow limited access in case of fire.
- 5.2 The Town Council considers "that this is an overdevelopment of the site which would increase the traffic flow in an already congested area with access on a very narrow street. There is insufficient off-street parking in an area where there is little other car parking provision. There is also concerns over the access for emergency vehicles. Recommend refusal."

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 Policy H.14 encourages the re-use of previously developed land provided the proposal 'respects the character and appearance of its location, protects existing and proposed residential amenity'. Higher densities are required by PPS.3 in town centre locations

and is not as such an indication of overdevelopment. The key issue is whether the new building fits acceptably, in terms of design and massing, into its location and respects residential amenities. The development site is at a higher level than Crofts Court which is only two-storeyed. Nevertheless the difference in height, viewed from Hill Street, is not so great that the proposed development would be out of scale. The design is generally acceptable with the exception of the detailing on the Hill Street elevation (primarily fenestration and dormers) and courtyard balconies. The applicant has agreed to amend these details. On this basis the proposed development would not harm the character of this part of Ross on Wye Conservation Area. Although almost abutting Croft Court the outer (west and south) elevations do not have any openings and there would be adequate lighting of roof windows. The east and west facing elevations of the proposed development would have small windows as additional lighting to living rooms and kitchens or light bathrooms and where necessary could be obscurely glazed. Internally the windows in the courtyard have been designed to ensure as much privacy as practicable for future residents. One concern is that the 3-storey southern elevation would be very close to the boundary with an open area. This appears not to be actively used and is overgrown. A high wall extends along the boundary but nevertheless a storey and a half of the proposed development would protrude above it. Overlooking from the upper floors of the proposed development could be avoided by the use of obscurely glazed windows but the current proposal would constrain future development of the adjoining land. This is not considered however to be sufficient grounds to refuse planning permission.

- 6.2 As noted above, no off-street car parking is proposed. However, the site is within easy walking distance of bus stops in Cantilupe Road and the full range of facilities within the town centre. In other development nearby (including flats and houses in Henry Street) no car parking has been provided and the Traffic Manager considers that this is acceptable in this location also.

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to submission of revised drawings showing acceptable detailing, the officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following conditions and any additional conditions considered necessary by officers:

- 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. F48 (Details of slab levels)**

Reason: In order to define the permission and ensure that the development is of a scale and height appropriate to the site.

- 4. E19 (Obscure glazing to windows)**

Reason: In order to protect the residential amenity of adjacent properties.

5. F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

6. G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

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

7. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

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

8. G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.

9. H29 (Secure cycle parking provision)

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

Informative(s):

1. N19 - Avoidance of doubt

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

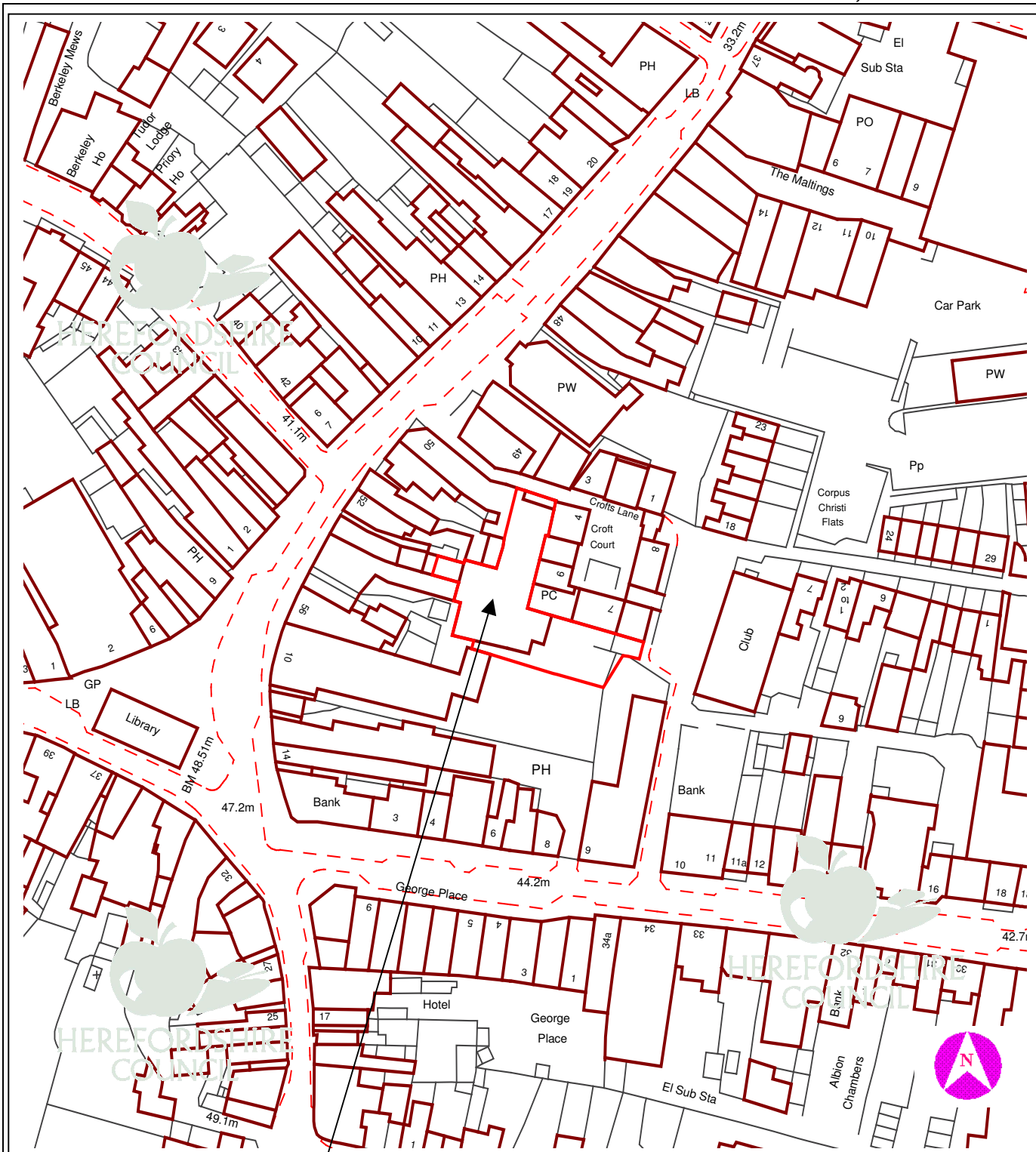
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2007/1158/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Craig Thorpe Ltd, Hill Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7AD

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