

6A DCCE2007/0642/F - NEW SPORTS HALL & ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SCIENCE BLOCK. LAND ADJACENT TO THE SCIENCE BLOCK, THE HEREFORD CATHEDRAL SCHOOL, THE OLD DEANERY, THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE, HEREFORD HR1 2NG

For: The Governors of the Hereford Cathedral School, GAJ UK Ltd, The Old Anglo House, Mitton Street, Stourport-On-Severn, Worcestershire, DY13 9AQ

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Date Received: 28th February, 2007 Ward: Central

Grid Ref: 51143, 39825

Expiry Date: 25th April, 2007

Local Member: Councillor MAF Hubbard

Introduction

This application was deferred at the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting on 6th June, 2007 to enable members to conduct a site visit. The report has been updated and more specifically comments from English Heritage and Hereford City Council in respect of the revised proposals have been incorporated.

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 These applications seek permission for the erection of a new sports block, together with alterations to the existing science block, at the Hereford Cathedral School. The application site is to the rear of East Street between the existing science block and a house, which is a school building, fronting the road. The site is currently used as a school wildlife area, and for the siting of a mobile classroom. An element of a lawn area, used for informal 'play' when weather permits, will also be lost through this proposal. In addition to the new sports hall, alterations to the existing science block

and adjacent buildings, including a new entrance feature, are also proposed to facilitate the formation of the schools current and projected accommodation requirements.

- 1.2 The site is located within the Central Conservation Area and is within an Area of Archaeological Importance. A number of Listed Buildings are found in close proximity to the site, 1 Castle Street and the Town Hall, both of which are Grade II*, are of particular significance. The application site is to the north of the main Cathedral School complex, with the Town Hall found to the north of the site. Harley Court, to the west of the site, is also of historic significance with 4 & 5 being Grade II* Listed, and 1 & 2 Grade II Listed. The site is within the very heart of historic Herford and is therefore particularly sensitive from both historical and architectural perspectives. It forms part of a townscape of particularly high quality.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance:

PPS1	-	Delivering sustainable development
PPG9	-	Biodiversity and geological conservation
PPG13	-	Transport
PPG15	-	Planning and the historic environment

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

S1	-	Sustainable development
S2	-	Development requirements
S7	-	Natural and historic heritage
S8	-	Recreation, sport and tourism
S11	-	Community facilities and services
DR1	-	Design
NC1	-	Biodiversity and development
NC5	-	European and nationally protected species
NC7	-	Compensation for loss of biodiversity
NC8	-	Habitat creation, restoration and enhancement
HBA1	-	Alterations and extensions to listed buildings
HBA4	-	Setting of listed buildings
HBA6	-	New development within conservation areas
ARCH1	-	Archaeological assessments and field evaluations
ARCH2	-	Foundation design and mitigation for urban sites
ARCH7	-	Hereford AAI
RST1	-	Criteria for recreation, sport and tourism development
CF5	-	New community facilities

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Various alterations and improvement works to the school, but none are directly relevant to this application proposal.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 English Heritage: (Comments on revised plans): We note that the remaining elevation of the science block will retain its original treatment and thus our previous reservations are satisfied. We are happy for archaeology to be dealt with by your own archaeological colleagues.

4.2 Sport England: No objection.

Internal Council Advice

4.3 Traffic Manager: No objection subject to recessing the fire door openings.

4.4 Conservation Manager: No objection subject to conditions relating to materials, design details, ecology and archaeology.

5. Representations

5.1 Hereford City Council: (Comments on original proposal): Objection on the grounds that the scheme is too overbearing for the surrounding buildings, out of keeping with the historic Conservation Area, and detrimental to the existing street scene.

5.2 Hereford City Council: (Comments on the revised plans): The City Council has no objections to this bold new building in the city centre.

5.3 Local Residents: No comments received.

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

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 Hereford Cathedral School currently lacks its own full sized indoor sports facilities or assembly space. The intention of this application is to provide a new facility to accommodate a comprehensive range of indoor sports, as well as an assembly space. Appropriate changing facilities and ancillary accommodation is also provided. The application site also involves revisions to the existing science block, to provide enhanced science laboratories and preparation areas.

6.2 National and local planning policy offers support in principle to the provision of enhanced community facilities, including for education and sports. The acceptability or otherwise of this application therefore rests in the details of the scheme.

6.3 The application site is located in a sensitive position within a Conservation Area, an Area of Archaeological Importance, and is in close proximity to a number of outstanding Listed Buildings. The site is particularly restricted in size but is one of the few open spaces available to the school. Into this area it is proposed to develop a full sized sports hall, suitably adaptable for use as an assembly/drama venue.

6.4 As originally submitted, the proposal included features such as Brie Soleil louvers and a parapet as an attempt to break up the mass of the building and introduce features of visual interest. It was also proposed to re-work the front of the existing science block as part of the redevelopment of the area. Following the initial consultations, however, it was clear that a more 'honest' approach was appropriate in this instance. The proposal has therefore been revised to a more simple uncluttered form.

- 6.5 The scheme as now proposed is set back from the roadside and sits immediately to the rear of 77 East Street. The complete retention of this building is a further revision to this scheme, which originally intended this building to be integrated into the sports hall. Glass towers are proposed on either side of this building. These are functional but perhaps more importantly they act as a contemporary visual link between the historic street frontage and the new block to the rear. The science block is revised and integrated into the side of the sports building with a striking new entrance feature, but the main façade of the building is now unaltered. The retention of this façade is welcomed on the grounds that this building is a good example of the architectural style of its period. In combination, the retention of the historic street scene, the sensitive integration of the science block, and the development of the new sports hall, gives a bold and challenging character and appearance but it is one that is well constructed and visually linked. The evolution of the site is clear and the history of the various elements respected.
- 6.6 The sports hall is based upon the Sport England recommendations for such facilities and this significantly limits the potential for the building to be adapted to address the sensitivity of the site. The building has been adapted, however, with design queues such as glass bricks to introduce visual interest into the building and give a modestly contemporary character. The alterations that can be carried out to a building such as this are limited and, as noted above, additional features were proposed to add interest. Ultimately, however, a simpler approach is considered preferable. It is considered that through the use of appropriate materials, which will need to be very carefully considered, the new building will appear acceptable in this location and the design is of an appropriately high architectural standard for this sensitive site.
- 6.7 In the context of the nearby Listed Buildings and the wider Conservation Area impact, this is clearly a significant scheme which will be relatively prominent from vantage points in East Street. A key issue in determining this application is whether the proposed development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is a duty imposed on the local planning authority by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and advice contained in PPG15. PPG 15 states that whilst the character and appearance of Conservation Areas should always be given full weight in planning decisions the objective with preservation can be achieved either by development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character and appearance or by development which leaves the character and appearance unharmed. In this case it is considered that the siting and design, the relationship of this development to the neighbouring buildings will ensure that the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings is preserved. Similarly, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved through this development by virtue of the comprehensive and sensitive approach secured for this development. The street scene will, of course, be dramatically altered as a result of this proposal but it is considered that the quality of the visual amenities of the locality, although changed, will be preserved. This represents an acceptable compromise given the design constraints attached to the functional requirements of the building.
- 6.8 Turning to the wider conservation issues, comprehensive landscaping, ecology and archaeological reports were submitted with the application. On the basis of the details submitted, the Council's Ecologist and Archaeologist are satisfied that this development is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.
- 6.9 Some informal 'play' space is lost as a result of this scheme. However Sport England have raised no objection and, when the sport and recreational benefits of the scheme

are considered, this proposal represents a significant enhancement to the schools facilities.

6.10 In a case such as this it is considered of note that English Heritage took a significant interest in this scheme. Their initial comments were appropriately reserved but following discussions and revisions they are now satisfied that the proposal is acceptable, subject to appropriate conditioning. This is a challenging scheme in both concept and construction but it is considered that the final scheme is successful and effectively addresses the sensitive issues associated with this site.

6.11 Due to the presence of the Grade II* Listed Buildings the local planning authority can only make a resolution to approve the application. The application will need to be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to be authorised to refer the application to the Secretary of State and approve the applications with such conditions as officers consider appropriate.

Suggested 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. **D01 (Site investigation – archaeology).**

Reason: To ensure the archaeological interest of the site is recorded.

4. **D04 (Submission for foundation design).**

Reason: The development affects a site on which archaeologically significant remains survive. A design solution is sought to minimise archaeological disturbance through a sympathetic foundation design.

5. **Prior to the commencement of development, the first fire escape exit onto East Street shall be revised and recessed in accordance with details to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Development shall then be completed in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety.

6. **The proposals set out in the Mitigation and Compensation section of the ecologist's report shall be followed as detailed. Results of protected species surveys shall be submitted to, and approved by, Herefordshire Council prior to the commencement of development, including appropriate mitigation and**

enhancement measures. Development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation.

- 7 Details of construction, siting and erection of nest boxes for nesting birds shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, Herefordshire Council in accordance with the proposed recommendations to provide nearby alternative nest sites. This will include a scheme of work to ensure that the birds are not disturbed during nesting from March to September. Development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation.

- 8 A habitat enhancement scheme based upon the recommendation of the Mitigation and Compensation section of the ecologist's report shall be specified in a method statement for submission to, and approval by, Herefordshire Council prior to the commencement of development. Development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation.

9. F16 (Restriction of hours during construction).

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

10. F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting).

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

11. 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.

12. G04 (Landscaping scheme (general)).

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

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

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

Informatives:

1. N01 – Access for all
2. N03 – Adjoining property rights.
3. N06 – Listed Building Consent.
4. ND2 – Area of Archaeological Importance.

- 5. N11A – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Birds.
- 6. N11B – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation (Nat. Habitats and C) Regs 1994 – Bats.
- 7. All ecological mitigation work should be overseen by a relevantly qualified and experienced ecological clerk of works (or consultant engaged in that capacity).
- 8. N15 – Reasons for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.
- 9. N19 – Avoidance of doubt.

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- 1. C01 (Time limit for commencement (Listed Building Consent).
Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2. C02 (Approval of details).
Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this location of special architectural or historical interest.
- 3. C11 (Specification of guttering and down pipes).
Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this location of special architectural or historical interest.
- 4. C17 (Samples of roofing materials).
Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this location of special architectural or historical interest.

Informatives:

- 1. Access for all.
- 2. NC1 – Alterations to submitted/approved plans.
- 3. N15 – Removal for the grant of PP/LBC/CAC.
- 4. N19 – Avoidance of doubt.

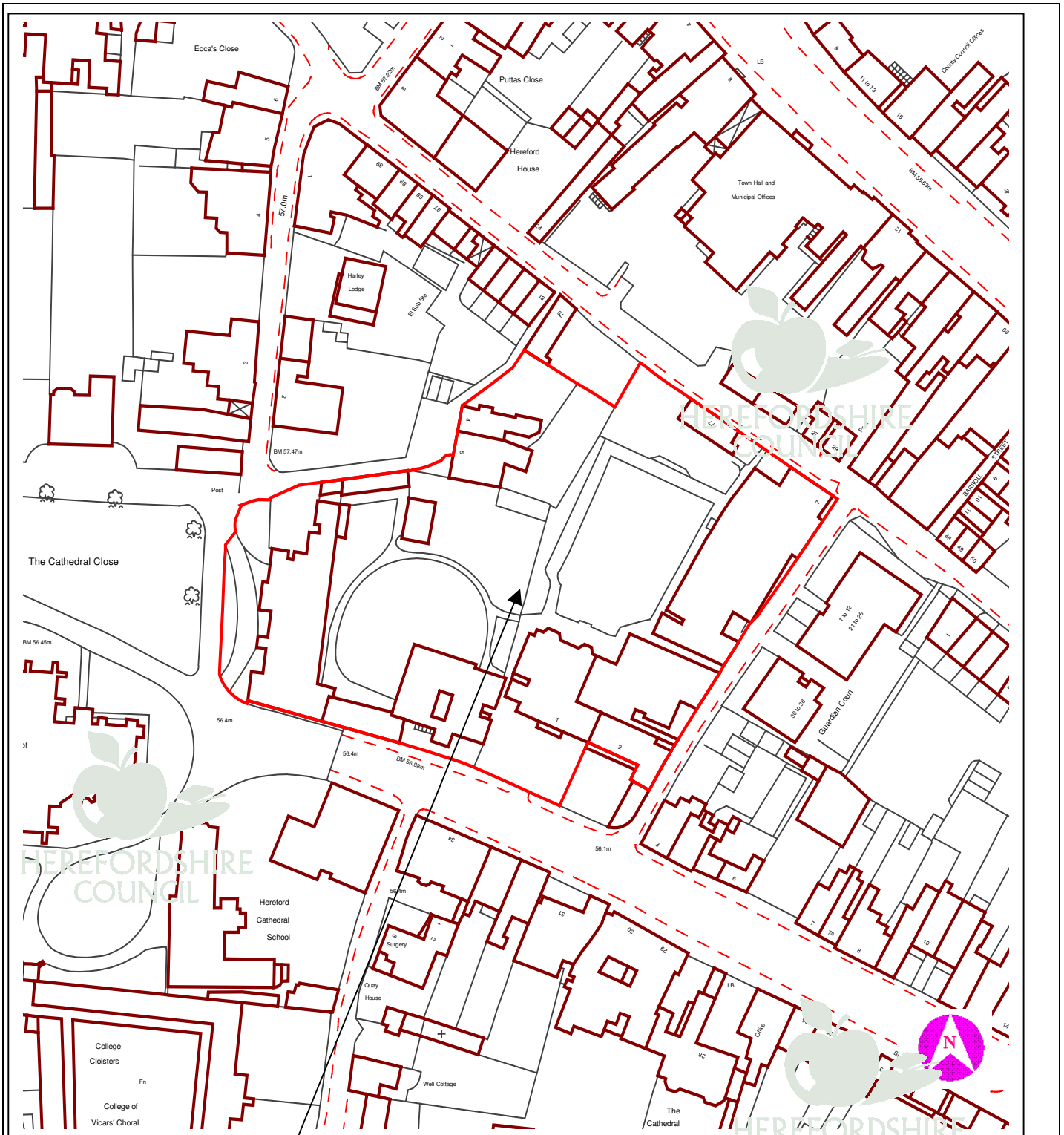
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Land adjacent to the science block, The Hereford Cathedral School, The Old Deanery, The Cathedral Close, Hereford HR1 2NG

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