

**15A DCSE2007/1938/F - DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT AMBULANCE STATION AND ERECTION OF 6 NO. TWO BED FLATS, ST JOHN AMBULANCE, EDDE CROSS STREET, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7BZ**

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**For: St John Ambulance per Jamieson Associates,  
30 Eign Gate, Hereford, HR4 OAB**

**Date Received: 18th June 2007    Ward: Ross-on-Wye West    Grid Ref: 59842, 24329  
Expiry Date: 13th August 2007**

Local Members: Councillor CM Bartrum and Councillor G Lucas

## **1. Site Description and Proposal**

1.1 The St. John Ambulance Station comprises a two-storey building with forecourt and land to the rear on the east side of Edde Cross Street, approximately mid-way between New Street and Kyrle Street. Adjoining the site are residential properties, as also on the opposite side of Edde Cross Street, with the exception of the adjoining property to the south which until recently has been used as a restaurant with residential accommodation above. The latter property is listed, Grade II.

1.2 It is proposed to erect a three-storey block of 6 flats. This would be in two sections, both rectangular in footprint but not identical and with the southern block set back at the front by about 0.5m. Linking the two sections would be a glazed entrance hall and staircase and projecting to the rear of this would be a lift. The building would be of modern design with a flat roof behind a low parapet wall. It would be rendered, with 2 sets of windows in the front elevation on each section extending above the low plinth to parapet level. To the outer side of each set of windows would be a continuous boarded panel. Small additional windows would be formed in the rendered wall between the windows of the northern block but not in the narrower southern block. In relation to the adjoining properties the two sections would have a similar building line; be about the same height as the three-storey building to the north and taller than the modern two-storey dwelling to the north.

## **2. Policies**

### **2.1 Planning Policy Statement**

PPS.3	-	Housing
PPG.15	-	Planning and the Historic Environment

## 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.16	-	Car Parking
Policy HBA.4	-	Setting of Listed Buildings
Policy HBA.6	-	New Development within Conservation Areas
Policy HBA.7	-	Demolition of Unlisted Buildings within Conservation Areas
Policy T.11	-	Parking Provision

## 3. Planning History

3.1 There have not been any recent planning applications relating to this site.

## 4. Consultation Summary

### Statutory Consultations

4.1 Welsh Water request that conditions regarding drainage be imposed if the Council is minded to grant planning permission.

### Internal Council Advice

4.2 Traffic Manager advises that he would normally expect 6 off-street car parking spaces to be provided. However there is an opportunity for 3 or 4 parking spaces to be provided along the street frontage once the current parking restrictions are lifted. On this basis he would not object to the grant of planning permission subject to the developer meeting the costs of these highway works.

4.3 Conservation Manager advises that 'the southern end of Edde Cross Street is characterised by continuous frontages of substantial three storey buildings, interspersed with a few smaller buildings, although as a recessed, freestanding building, the ambulance station interrupts this pattern. The proposed scheme adopts a similar footprint but reinstates the building line, and its massing, which notionally divides into two similar size blocks, is more in line with the scale of the neighbouring buildings. This is the main concession to context as the building is otherwise of a determinedly modern architectural idiom. Nevertheless the elevations are carefully composed to break down their scale and their treatment reflects the prevailing local material, render, whilst complementing it with natural timber cladding and high specification windows.'

With regard to archaeological interests the site is within the historic urban core of Ross-on-Wye. I have no objection to the proposal which I view as not especially damaging archaeologically. However, I would anticipate some impact on below ground archaeological deposits and advise attachment of standard archaeological investigation condition.

## 5. Representations

5.1 The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement, which, in summary, states:

1. The existing building is a purpose built ambulance station, constructed in red facing brick, two storeys in height under a plain tiled pitched roof.
2. The building is of no architectural or historic interest and in terms of its internal finishes it is very basic. As it was purposely built as an ambulance station, it does not readily lend itself to alternative uses without considerable structural alteration. It is therefore not worthy of retention.
3. The existing ambulance station is now surplus to requirements and St. John Ambulance, as a registered charity, are obliged to maximise the development potential and hence the value of the site, prior to its disposal. It is intended therefore to demolish the building and to erect six two bedroomed flats.
4. As the adjoining buildings to the north and south have differing building lines on the street frontage, the proposed building has been treated as two separate units, divided by the central stair and lift enclosure, with each section relating directly to the building line nearest to it. This also breaks down the scale of the frontage and creates an illusion of two individual buildings matching the scale of their adjoining neighbours.
5. In each of the two sections, there are two double bedrooms fronting onto the street with kitchen/dining/living areas to the rear, overlooking what will be a communal garden area. Floor plans at each of the three floor levels are identical with the three flats to the north of the central access corridor having a gross internal floor area of 58 square metres each while those to the south are 56 square metres each.
6. The rear wall of the proposed building, with the exception of the lift shaft, follows almost exactly the rear footprint of the existing ambulance station and consequently, any windows in adjoining properties are not compromised in any way. The overall height of the proposed building is approximately 100mm higher than the ridge height of the existing ambulance station.
7. Each unit is framed in white smooth sand cement render with vertical panels of horizontal western red cedar cladding. Full height glazing will be in aluminium frames powder coat finished in a dark grey colour.
8. Side walls and rear walls will be in white through colour smooth sand cement render and the lift shaft will be in through colour lilac smooth sand cement render. The building as a whole will sit on a plinth of dark blue engineering bricks.
9. Entrance gates to the rear garden area, located on the north and south extremes of the building, will be formed in western red cedar to match the vertical panels on the west elevation.
10. All flats will be capable of being accessed by disabled residents or visitors, either directly at ground floor or via the lift to upper levels. Similarly a level access will be available from the street and the building to the whole of the rear garden areas.
11. It is proposed to install a communal rainwater harvesting system on site which will collect all surface water from the roof area, recycling this water as required for wc's, washing machines and garden tap. By so doing no surface water will be discharged into the main sewer.
12. Though thoroughly modern in design, will be an enhancement to the Conservation Area by respecting the scale and massing of the adjoining buildings and using traditional sustainable materials which will happily blend with the surrounding environment. The principal elevations to the street have been layered and modelled to relate to their adjoining neighbours and the proposed building has been deliberately kept as stand alone to avoid any physically awkward junctions with the existing adjoining neighbours.

In addition, a letter from the applicant's drainage engineer outlining the proposed drainage scheme and the written response of Welsh Water has been submitted.

5.2 Town Council points out that 'there is no provision for off-street parking on a site that had adequate space to provide such a facility. There are also concerns about the adverse impact on an already overloaded public sewerage system. Object to a flat roof replacing a pitched roof. The development is not in keeping with neighbouring properties. Recommend refusal.'

5.3 Six letters have been received objecting to the proposal, in summary, for the following reasons:

- the building would be a rather large mass in this context and not fit in with the street - although matching the height of adjoining property to the right it does not have a pitched roof and 3 storeys culminating in a flat roof would make a disproportionate visual impact
- also concerns about proposed materials as both cedar cladding and white painted render may deteriorate rapidly and large expanses of glass would be aesthetically inappropriate
- it would not enhance the Conservation Area; western red cedar and grey aluminium are not traditional materials. Reminiscent of a 1960's office block.
- block light to downstairs kitchen and first floor sitting room windows - only 1.34m from northern wall of adjoining property (52 Edde Cross Street) and also block light to living room, kitchen and bathroom of 47 Edde Cross Street
- create more noise, nuisance and traffic, adding to that caused by changes to area in particular the one-way system
- revised plans are confusing, so original objections regarding loss of light still stand
- the plans are inaccurate in depicting 52 Edde Cross Street
- no thought given to parking.

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 There are three main issues: (i) the effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the adjacent listed building, (ii) the effect on the amenities of neighbours and (iii) whether off-street car parking should be provided.

6.2 The ambulance station is a modern structure and is not of architectural note. It is set back from the frontage and in this respect conflicts with the character of this section of Edde Cross Street. In principle therefore there is no objection to demolition of this building. The proposed building is of modern design. The designer's intention is not to fill the gap in the frontage with a building which would imitate either the Georgian building to the south or the less attractive terraced houses to the north. The disjunction in design and massing would be eased in part by the gaps (1.2m) on either side of the proposed building and the context has been taken into account to some extent by staggering the two sections of the building. White painted render is typical of this part of the street. Nevertheless the building would stand out as distinctly different. The Conservation Manager considers the building to be well designed and that it would not be out of scale with its immediate neighbours. For these reasons the proposal should enhance the street scene and therefore not harm the character and appearance of Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

- 6.3 The rear wall of the building is intended to be on the same line as the existing ambulance station. However the rear section of the latter is a single-storey extension with a lean-to roof. As a consequence although the ambulance station projects in front of windows in the ground and first floor flank wall of 52 Edde Cross Street adequate light reaches both windows. As originally submitted the proposed building would have significantly reduced lighting to both the kitchen and sitting room of the adjoining property. To reduce this problem the applicant has submitted amended drawings showing this section of the block of flats reduced in depth by 1m so that it would not project across more than a small section of those windows. I consider that this would ensure that lighting and outlook from those windows was at least comparable with the current situation.
- 6.4 The other concern raised in the representations is a lift shaft and rear entrance which projects about 5.7m beyond the rear wall of the northern half of this block of flats. The adjoining house to the north has windows in the flank wall which would face towards that structure. The lift shaft however would be positioned about 8.9m from the boundary with the adjoining house and 11.2m from the windows. I consider this would be sufficient to ensure that the lift shaft would not be overbearing and to ensure adequate lighting to the house. Privacy could be protected by obscure glazing.
- 6.5 No off-street parking is proposed. This could only be achieved by forming an entrance either side of the building or an archway beneath it. The former is undesirable because vehicles would pass close to windows in the adjoining properties and the latter would be incompatible with the proposed design. Neither option would be desirable visually and would leave limited space for a private garden and cause some noise and disturbance to neighbours. The road in front of the ambulance station is marked with double yellow lines, which would not be necessary once the flats were built. This could provide parking for three or four cars. Whilst this would be below the desirable level of provision (1 space per flat) and would not be limited to the cars of occupants of the new flats, the site is close to the town centre and a lower standard of provision can be acceptable in a conservation area. In these circumstances I do not consider that the lack of parking is sufficient grounds to refuse permission. The necessary highway works can be ensured by planning condition.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**In respect of DCSE2007/1938/F**

**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. 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) (to landing windows)

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

5. 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.

6. H22 (Opening windows adjacent to the highway)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

7. H27 (Parking for site operatives)

Reason: To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interests of highway safety.

8. No development shall take place until the current parking restrictions have been removed and the kerb has been reinstated along the road frontage to the site.

Reason: In the interests of the safe and free flow of traffic on the highway.

9. D01 (Site investigation – archaeology)

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

10. W01 (Foul/surface water drainage)

Reason: To protect the integrity of the public sewerage system.

11. W02 (No surface water to connect to public system)

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no detriment to the environment.

12. W03 (No drainage run-off to public system)

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overload of the public sewerage system and pollution of the environment.

Informative(s):

1. HN01 (Mud on highway)

2. HN04 (Private apparatus within highway)

3. HN05 (Works within the highway)

4. HN10 (No drainage to discharge to highway)

5. HN21 (Extraordinary maintenance)

- 6. HN22 (Works adjoining highway)
- 7. N19 - Avoidance of doubt
- 8. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.

In respect of DCSE2007/1940/C

**That Conservation Area Consent be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 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. C14 (Signing of contract before demolition)  
Reason: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17(3) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**Informative(s):**

- 1. N19 - Avoidance of doubt
- 2. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Conservation Area Consent

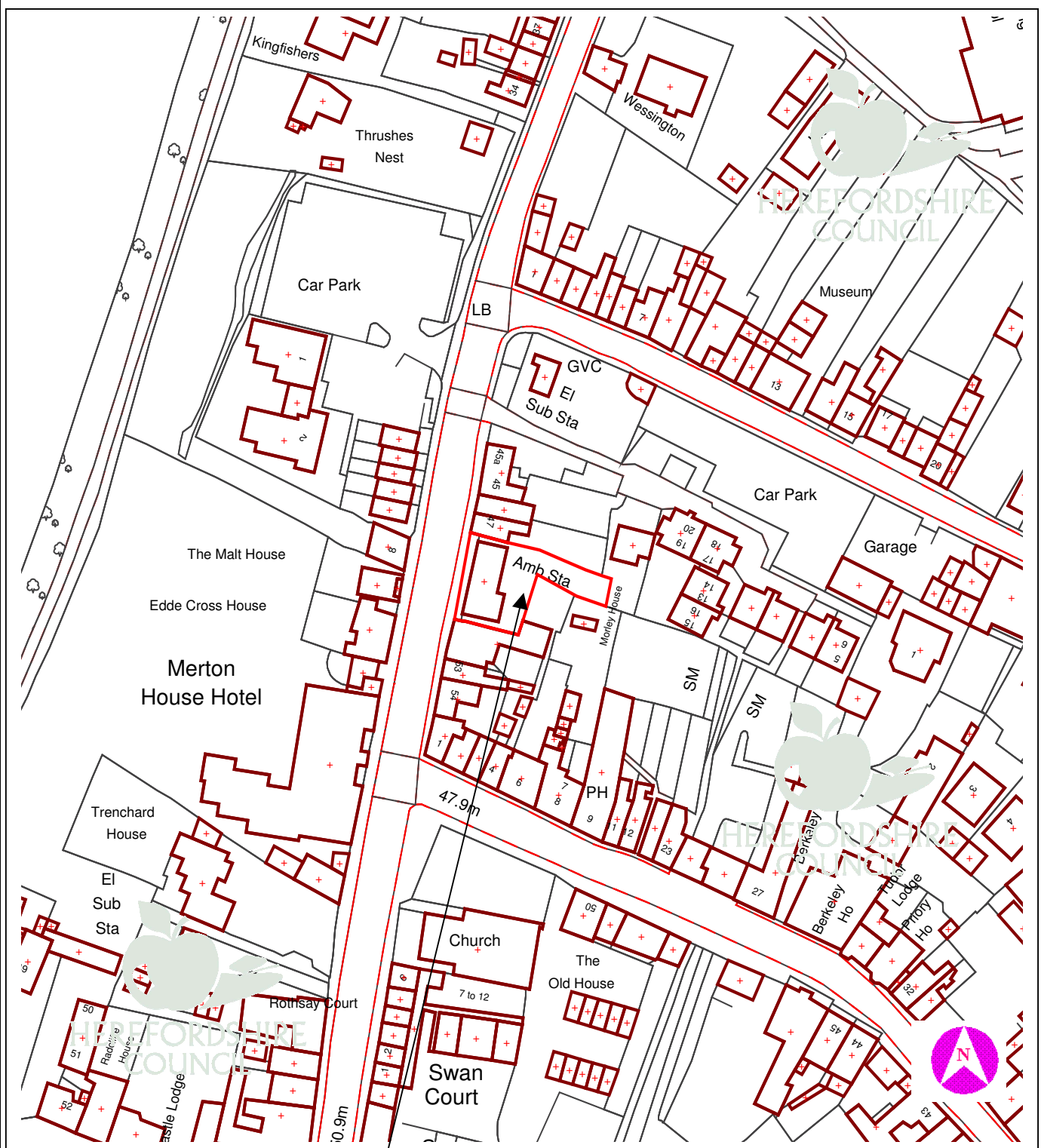
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCSE2007/1938/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** St John Ambulance, Edde Cross Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7BZ

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