

5 DCSW2008/0282/F - ERECTION OF 4 NO. SINGLE STOREY HOTEL ACCOMMODATION SUITES, PILGRIM HOTEL, MUCH BIRCH, HEREFORD, HR2 8HJ.**For: Pilgrim Hotel per RRA Architects Ltd, Packers House, 25 West Street, Hereford, HR4 0BX.****Date Received: 5 February 2008****Ward: Pontrilas****Grid Ref: 49989, 30813****Expiry Date: 1 April 2008**

Local Member: Councillor RH Smith

Introduction

This proposal was deferred at the meetings on 2 and 30 April 2008.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 This site is located on the southern side of A49 Trunk Road adjacent to the northern limits of Much Birch. The Pilgrim Hotel is set within extensive grounds, extending up to 1.6 hectares, the major part of which is to the rear of the building. The original building is of stone construction with a slate roof. This has been extended primarily on either end in brick with tile roofs to provide additional accommodation and space for functions. To the front is a large car parking area. The access arrangements operate as a one-way system. The site is entered from the A49 but exited onto Tump Lane.
- 1.2 The site adjoins open fields on its south-west and north-west sides but with the south-east boundary formed with recently built housing.
- 1.3 This detailed application relates to an area next to the hotel itself and adjacent to the south-east boundary. It is proposed to construct a single storey building to provide four accommodation suites. The proposal has been revised since the original submission. The building now proposed would be some 14m by 9m with an eaves height of 2.1m and a ridge height of 4.3m. (The original proposed structure would have been 20m by 9m, with an eaves height of 2.5m and ridge height of 4.7m). In addition the corridor link to the main hotel building has been deleted. In its place a path is proposed. The external materials would be brick and tile to match those on the existing building. The existing mature trees are to be retained.
- 1.4 On 28 March, 2008 a Tree Preservation Order was made in respect of the two beech and the cedar trees in the vicinity of the site.

2. Policies**2.1 National Planning Policy**

- PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Good Practice Guidance for Planning on Tourism

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy DR3	-	Movement
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy T11	-	Parking Provision
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change
Policy LA3	-	Setting of Settlements
Policy LA5	-	Protection of Trees
Policy LA6	-	Landscaping Schemes
Policy RST1	-	Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
Policy RST12	-	Visitor Accommodation
Policy CF2	-	Foul Drainage

3. Planning History

Most recent only

3.1	DCSW2005/3946/F	Single storey restaurant extension	-	Approved 26.01.06
	DCSW2006/1753/F	Conversion of roof space to manager's flat	-	Approved 24.07.06
	DCSW2007/0344/F	Erection of 8 single storey hotel accommodation suites	-	Withdrawn 05.02.08

4. Consultation SummaryStatutory Consultations

- 4.1 Highways Agency has no objection. They comment that there will be some further vehicle movements but this should not significantly affect the safety or free-flow of vehicles on the A49 in this location and that the Tump Lane junction satisfies the required visibility standard.
- 4.2 Welsh Water requests that if permission is granted conditions be imposed. These would ensure that foul and surface water is drained separately and that no surface water drainage connects to the public system.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 The Traffic Manager has no objection subject to conditions.
- 4.4 The Head of Environmental Health has no objection.
- 4.5 Conservation Manager - Landscape Officer comments:

“There have been a number of responses, which can be summarised as follows:

In principle the proposal to site the building in this location is a significant improvement on the previously refused scheme. In appearing as an extension the building will relate closely to the main building and impinges much less on the parkland character of the hotel grounds.

The scheme as originally submitted was considered unacceptable due to its impact on the mature beech trees. It was as a consequence of this concern that the TPO was made.

With regard to the current proposal as now revised, so long as the work is carried out in accordance with the submitted details and in particular the Tree Method Statement, then the tree issues have been addressed."

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant's agent has submitted a Design and Access Statement, which can be summarised as follows:-

- The intention is to sympathetically extend the hotel
- The proposal is for "lodge" style self contained units for tourists
- Access would be from the current car park
- There would be level access to the units
- The building is low minimising the impact of the built form
- The design is sympathetic to, and the existing views of, the landscape
- The principle views are away from the adjacent dwellings

5.2 The agent has provided further details:

The agent advises that the foul drainage will be to the existing septic tank, the surface water drainage will be indicated on the plan, the existing vegetation to the south east boundary will be retained but be pruned, the existing vehicular access arrangements will be retained and the car parking will be in the existing car park.

5.3 Much Birch Parish Council's response on the revised scheme is awaited. (They supported the original proposal).

5.4 Letters of representation to the original proposal were received from 2 Old Rectory Gardens, Walnut House, 3 Old Rectory Gardens and Councillor R Smith (on behalf of the owner of The Laurels).

The main points raised are: -

- Do not feel any further extension is justified.
- Boundary hedge must be retained but it is no barrier to noise and excessive lighting.
- Do not want vehicle access adjacent to boundary because of nuisance.
- Extra traffic will result and will put further pressure on Tump Lane.
- Concern about pollution from exterior lighting.
- Doubts as to as to how services (sewage, waste disposal, heating fuel) are to be provided.
- Concern over future use of suites.
- Will extension harmonise with hotel.
- Social activity at hotel needs to be managed sensibly.
- The proposed water and sewage connections onto the current system for Walnut House, Karinya and The Laurels will cause further problems including disruption and inconvenience and the soak away system may also cause problems.
- The building will be overbearing and there will be overlooking.
- Concern as to impact on mature trees.

With regard to the consultation on the revised scheme, a further letter has been received from 3 Old Rectory Gardens which re-states the original response, summarised above.

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 Pilgrim Hotel has been established at this location for many years and previously permission has been granted for extensions both for additional accommodation and extended facilities. This proposal follows from a previous application in 2007 which proposed eight accommodation suites along the south-east boundary separate from the hotel. That application was withdrawn following concern as to the impact on the parkland landscape. There were negotiations on alternative locations of which the current proposal was one.
- 6.2 The proposal is described as accommodation suites but is for four additional bedrooms which would be operationally linked to the hotel. Each would contain a bedroom and bathroom together with an external patio. This differs from the 2007 application when the accommodation suites were larger and each contained a kitchen and living space.
- 6.3 Firstly it is necessary to consider whether the principle of the development accords with planning policy. There is encouragement for the provision of visitor accommodation in Policy RST12. This provides that within an identified settlement visitor accommodation can be permitted but outside of these accommodation will only be permitted where it involves the re-use of a building. Much Birch is an identified smaller settlement and although on its edge the Pilgrim Hotel could be considered to be outside the settlement. However this proposal involves the further development of an established hotel business and it would seem unreasonable to require that any further expansion can only be through the re-use of a building, not that there are any in this case. I consider therefore that in principle the provision of new build accommodation is acceptable.
- 6.4 There are a number of detailed issues to consider. Firstly is the acceptability of the location of the building. The open ground to the rear of the Pilgrim is extensive and comprises a lawn interspersed with some specimen trees. Although the access drive cuts across this space it does not unduly impinge on its character. There are panoramic views from the hotel and I consider it important that these and the parkland quality of the site remain uninterrupted. This proposal places a new building adjacent to the existing building and, apart from a siting to the front side of the building, I consider this to be the most suitable if there is to be any extension. In this position the intrusion onto to parkland and views will be minimised.
- 6.5 As originally submitted, the building would have been significantly beneath the canopies of two of the mature trees. As a result of the concern as to the threat to the trees a Tree Preservation Order was made. It is possible to erect new buildings in such positions but the impact on the trees must be carefully considered. The applicant has reassessed the proposal and the revised plan is for a smaller building. In addition a Method Statement for the work in relation to the trees has been submitted. I consider that as now proposed there should not be an unacceptable impact on the trees.

- 6.6 In addition to the above there are other material issues. With regard to the design the proposal is for a functional structure of single storey with a pitched roof and to be in materials to match those existing. I consider that the proposal in terms of its scale and design is appropriate.
- 6.7 Adjacent to the hotel boundary on this south-east side are existing houses. These have their access from Tump Lane. The proposed building would be some 5.5m from the common boundary. The boundary line is formed by a mix of hedging (deciduous and conifer) and fencing and there are changes in levels across the two areas. In terms of its height the proposed building, as revised, at its closest point to the boundary would have a height of 2.1m (eaves). The highest part of the building is the ridge which is 4.3m but this would be some 10m from the boundary. I do not consider that the building would cause overshadowing or loss of light to the adjoining dwellings to an unacceptable degree. With regard to any overlooking the side of the building that would face the boundary would contain the entrance door and bathroom window for each of the four rooms which would be beneath the oversailing roof. Subject to the retention of the existing vegetation along the boundary I do not consider that there would be overlooking or noise and disturbance for the adjoining dwellings to an unacceptable degree. The rooms would have patio doors to allow access onto an external patio with this to be on the side furthest away from the boundary. I do not consider that any noise generated from the use of these should adversely affect the amenity of the adjoining dwellings.
- 6.8 The proposal does not involve the provision of vehicle access directly to the accommodation. The agent has confirmed that the car parking requirement would be met by the existing car park to the front of the hotel and that there is no intention to vary the current traffic system. Whilst there will be an increase in traffic this should not cause a problem with the capacity of either Tump Lane or its junction with the A49.
- 6.9 The representations raises issues with regard to service provision, notably sewage and surface water disposal. Clarification has been provided on these matters by the agent although this is not particularly detailed. On both these issues it is important to ensure that adequate provision is made on the site (unless foul sewage is to be linked to the main sewer) without any detriment to the adjoining dwellings.
- 6.10 There is a support through policy for the further development of visitor accommodation, and there is also a duty to ensure that features in the landscape are also retained. In this case the proposal as now amended will ensure that the mature trees are retained and protected during the work. As such the proposal complies with policy.

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. B03 (Amended Plans)

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the amended plans and to comply with the requirements of Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

3. **C01 (Samples of external materials)**

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings so as to ensure that the development complies with the requirements of Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

4. **F30 (Use as holiday accommodation)**

Reason: Having regard to Policy H7 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan the local planning authority are not prepared to allow the introduction of separate units of residential accommodation in this rural location.

5. **Prior to the commencement of development an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To ensure the proper care and maintenance of the trees and to conform with Policy LA5 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

6. **G02 (Retention of trees and hedgerows)**

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area and to ensure that the development conforms with Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

7. **I16 (Restriction of hours during construction)**

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policy DR13 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

8. **I18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal)**

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided and to comply with Policy DR4 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

9. **L01 (Foul/surface water drainage)**

Reason: To protect the integrity of the public sewerage system and to comply with Policy CF2 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

10. **L02 (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 so as to comply with Policy CF2 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

11. **L03 (No drainage run-off to public system)**

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overload of the public sewerage system and pollution of the environment so as to comply with Policy CF2 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

Informative(s):

1. N19 – Avoidance of doubt – Approved Plans
2. N15 – Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

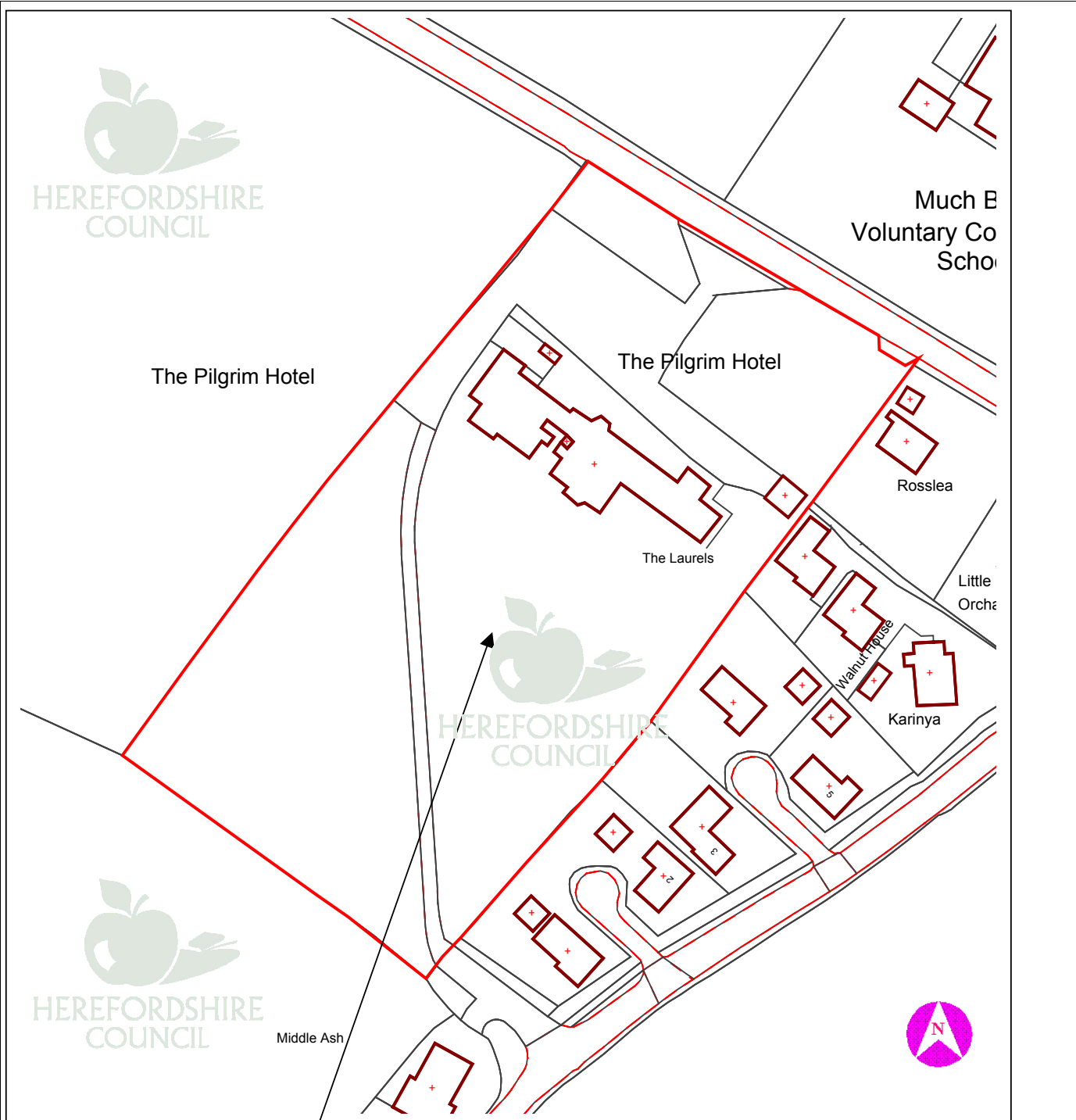
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSW2008/0282/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 8HJ

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