

**DCSE2008/1827/CD - NEW SCHOOL HALL IN SCHOOL  
 GROUNDS, ST JOSEPHS R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE  
 AVENUE, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE,  
 HR9 5AW**

**For: School Governors per Property Services  
 Manager, Herefordshire Council Property Services,  
 Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford,  
 HR1 2BB**

**Date Received: 18th July 2008    Ward: Ross-on-Wye East    Grid Ref: 59868, 23469**

**Expiry Date: 12th September 2008**

Local Member:    Councillor Mrs A E Gray  
                           Councillor P Cutter

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 St Joseph's Primary School occupies a 0.8 hectare site to the south of Ross-on-Wye town centre, within the town's Conservation Area and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is situated to the east of the Walford Road, with access gained off The Avenue to the north of the site, between two residential properties, Copsehurst and Applewood. The site is land locked by residential development. Immediately to the west of the school building lies the former St Joseph's Convent, which has been converted to residential accommodation and a new building erected to the north. The surrounding area is typically suburban in character, to the north and west of the site the areas are generally characterised by large, detached Victorian and Edwardian villas with mature soft landscaping, although some more modern infill development has taken place. The development in Eastfield Road, to the west of the site, comprises mixed residential development, with properties occupying long plots.
- 1.2 The flat roofed, school building is in the northern part of the long, narrow site, with a tarmaced playground, car parking and grassed play areas to the south. Within the site levels slope gradually down from north to south and from west to east. The school occupies higher ground than the properties in Eastfield Road. A tall stone wall defines the boundary of the school and Badgers Rest, the wall then reduces in height between the school and Hornbeam, number 9 Eastfield Road.
- 1.3 It is proposed to provide a new school hall, which would incorporate toilets, storage areas, boiler room, kitchen, and disabled toilet and shower. The building would be sited to the south of the main school building, at a lower level than the school and play ground and would be some 29 metres in length, 11.8 metres in width and 8.2 metres in height to the roof ridge. The elevations would be predominantly brick with some glazing and a slate roof.

**2. Policies**

**2.1 Department of Environment**

- |       |   |                                       |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------|
| PPS 1 | - | Delivering Sustainable Development    |
| PPG15 | - | Planning and the Historic Environment |

- PPG 17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk

**2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**

Part 1

- Policy S2 - Development Requirements
- Policy S8 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
- Policy S11 - Community Facilities and Services

Part 2

- Policy DR1 - Design
- Policy DR2 - Land Use and Activity
- Policy DR3 - Movement
- Policy DR4 - Environment
- Policy LA1 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy HBA6 - New Development within Conservation Areas
- Policy RST1 - Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
- Policy RST2 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**3. Planning History**

- |     |                |   |   |                    |
|-----|----------------|---|---|--------------------|
| 3.1 | SH94/0854/PF   | Extension to form new office accommodation  | - | Granted 29.08.94   |
|     | SH95/1345/PF   | Extension to form larger classroom, with cloaks and toilet                              | - | Granted 31.01.96   |
|     | SH99/2705/PF   | Extension to rear of school to create a new classroom area                              | - | Granted 19.08.99   |
|     | SE2000/0609/F  | New playground and access steps   | - | Granted 26.05.00   |
|     | SE2002/2705/F  | Extension to provide classroom, cloaks and store. Re-provision of displaced car parking |   | Granted 19.08.02   |
|     | SE2005/1190/F  | Brick and slate construction to provide replacement hall, toilets and playground        |   | Withdrawn 02.06.05 |
|     | SE20078/1154/F | New School Hall   |   | Withdrawn 19.06.08 |

**4. Consultation Summary**

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Sport England - no comments to make.
- 4.2 Welsh Water raise no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding foul and surface water discharges and land drainage run-off.

Internal Council advice

- 4.3 The Traffic Manager raises no objections.
- 4.4 Conservation Manager has no objection subject to standard conditions on glazing systems details, brick and roofing material samples.
- 4.5 Children and Young People's Directorate has no objections to this application as it rectifies issues identified in their Suitability Assessment.
- 4.6 The Head of Environmental Health - satisfied that it should not result in undue disturbance to local residents. If noise associated with the activities within the hall should, however, prove to cause nuisance, the Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides powers requiring those responsible to abate the nuisance.

**5. Representations**

- 5.1 The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement and additional information in support of the application. These state, in summary:
- school site is served by a bus route along Walford Road
  - design takes account of Part M of the Building Regulations, to ensure disabled access
  - it is designed to accord with the recommendations of Sport England for use, as a Badminton Court at times, necessitating an internal height of 6.1 metres
  - to lessen impact it has been sited at a lower level than the school.
  - materials will harmonise with the surrounding area and development
  - Polychromatic brickwork and cladding panels have been proposed to break up the visual mass of the building
  - landscaping will harmonise with existing.
  - a primary school hall should be 145 square metres, according to Building Bulletin 99. The existing hall is 105 square metres and is inadequate. The proposed hall is 180 square metres (only 35 square metres above the minimum) which is the minimum recommended by Sport England
  - a multi-purpose hall unit size is a badminton court. Secondary schools usually have a 4 court hall, so would be much bigger than proposed.
  - hall can serve the local community from sports to local societies to involve the local community with the school
  - envisaged that the hall would be used for out-of-school activities to generate additional funds for the school. The policy on letting would be decided by the school's Head Teacher and Governors.
  - main purpose of the hall is to enhance the children's education by school hours activities and facilitate the holding of school concerts.
  - Location, detached from the school, would not have such an impact as an extension to the school due to the higher land levels occupied by the school.
- 5.2 Ross-on-Wye Town Council - No objections.
- 5.3 Seven objections have been received from Lesley and David Whitehead of Badgers Rest, Doris Rogers of Waynelete, Eastfield Road, Barbara Handcock of Wentworth, Eastfield Road, Jon and Jill Stern of Hornbeams, 9, Eastfield Road, Geoff Howell of Highbank, 15 Eastfield Road, Therese and David Warwick of Chevenhall, Walford Road and G Crisp of Applewood, The Avenue. The main issues raised are:

- Catholic authorities sold off school hall, if they do not fund the new, proposed hall I object, as funding should not come from the Council.
- the school was on the list of proposed closures/amalgamations and there are predicted falling rolls for schools.
- height and size of the building is out of proportion with all the existing school buildings and other development in the area and would affect amenity and Conservation Area.
- position of the building would affect our privacy (Badgers Rest & Hornbeam), amenity (Badgers Rest, Hornbeam & Chevenhall) and may overshadow (Hornbeam)
- due to height of building and levels the perceived height of the building would be amplified
- proposed use, out of school hours up to 22.00 hours seven days per week, would be harmful to residential amenity and would illuminate the whole area
- this location is unsuitable for a public sports facility being a quiet residential area with at least two residential nursing homes and in a Conservation Area and would lead to significant amounts of noise and vehicular movements
- a hall of an appropriate size for around 100 primary school children should be built, the proposal is excessive in size in relation to its need
- a hall should be provided on the existing playground, nearer to the school to reduce the long walk that is proposed
- we (Hornbeam) experience minor flooding and standing water after heavy rain and when the water table is high. The proposal would exacerbate this.
- there is limited car parking and existing parking and access are alongside some residents' gardens.
- no objection to the school having a new hall, but object to this proposal due to position, size, extended use and hours
- new school hall may be sold off again, like the old one was, by the Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy, as they have left the area and have no involvement with the school now
- proposal would leave an area free and ripe to be developed as infill.
- building could be used 365 days a year from 9am to 10pm, which would be unacceptable. Existing noise from cars etc is only on school days, for school hours and in term time only. This is acceptable in a residential area.

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 main considerations in the determination of this application are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the impact upon highway safety and the amenity of area.
- 6.2 In principle, the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policies and Government advice, as set out in PPG 17, encourage the provision of new and extended sporting and community facilities. Policy S8 of the Unitary Development Plan states that the provision of appropriate new sport facilities will be supported, but should take into account environmental impacts. In respect of this proposal this would include impact upon the Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and residential amenity within the locality. Amongst other criteria Policy S8 states that priority will be given to facilities which reduce land take and duplication of provision by ensuring shared use by different user groups and are in locations that can cater for a wide

range of users. Policy RST1 sets out the more detailed criteria for the consideration of sport, recreation and tourism developments. Specifically it requires proposals to be appropriate to the needs of the community, having regard to the nature of the use, mode of operation, scale and design, not harmful to the amenity of nearby residents, to be respectful of the environmental character of the area, where possible be accessible by a choice of modes of transport and be designed to be accessible to all.

- 6.3 St Joseph's Primary School currently does not have an adequately sized school hall. Within the school there is a hall, but at 105 square metres it falls some 40 square metres short of the required size. Previously the school used a hall connected to the former convent, but this has been demolished. Currently the pupils have to be transported to other facilities to meet the physical educational requirements of the National Curriculum. The size of the proposed hall would meet and exceed by 35 square metres the size requirements for primary school curriculum needs. A sports hall of 180 square metres, the minimum recommended by Sport England, would enable the building to be used for other activities such as badminton (not competition standard). In addition the inclusion of a beverage area and toilets would enable the hall to be used for other community uses outside of school hours.
- 6.4 Both primary legislation and planning policies state that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Due to the siting of the proposed hall and the existing development to all of the site boundaries, any views of the proposal from outside of the site would be partially obscured by existing development and landscaping. The proposed building would be large in scale at some 8.4 metres, whereas the existing school building is 3.5 metres. However, due to the 2 metre difference in land levels between the position of the school and that of the proposed hall, the height difference would be 2.9 metres. The proposed use of the building, as a hall, dictates to a large degree the size of the footprint and the height of the building. Whilst the size could possibly be reduced by 35 square metres, to the size required for primary schools, the benefits of reducing the size would be outweighed by the resulting inability to use the building for a range of users as encouraged by planning policies. By reason of its siting, it is considered that although the building would be large the scheme would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 6.5 Policy RST2 stipulates the requirements for sporting developments in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It states that proposals should respect the inherent distinctiveness of the local landscape, be small in scale and constructed from appropriate materials and make a positive contribution to the enjoyment of the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty washes over the town of Ross-on-Wye and its built up areas. Taking into account the siting of the proposal, in a suburban context, and the existing character and appearance of the vicinity, it is considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.6 The proposal would replace the existing hall, so in terms of transportation issues for its use in connection with the school, the impact would be neutral. However it is intended to use the proposed hall facilities for community use, which may generate additional traffic outside of school hours. The site is within walking distance of the town centre and is accessible by bus. To accommodate additional modes of transport to the site the requirement for the storage of cycles is considered appropriate. A condition could satisfactorily control this. Therefore it is considered that this sustainable location is acceptable in highway terms.

- 6.7 The site lies within a primarily residential area. In considering the impact of the proposal upon residential amenity there are two issues, firstly the physical impact of the building and secondly the impact of its use and particularly the out of school use proposed. The proposed building would be tall, this is a functional requirement of its intended use. At its nearest point the building would be some 16.5 metres from the nearest boundary of a residential property to the east and some 7.5 metres to the west. However, to the east Hornbeam is set back some 48 metres from this boundary and Badgers Rest 10 metres and set at an angle and to the west Lawfords House (residential care home) and Chevenhall are set back in their plots. The Coach House at Chevenhall is closer to the boundary with the school, but is obscured by mature trees and hedgerows. The building would be seen from some of the objectors properties, however in its context a building of the siting, size and design proposed would not in itself be harmful to their outlook and would not be overbearing. The introduction of soft landscaping to the eastern boundary could reduce views of the building and provide additional privacy from the existing school grounds to Hornbeam. Although the land levels are higher within the application site in relation to the properties to the east, by reason of the distance separation, the orientation of the proposal and dwellings and the high level windows in the eastern elevation and blank western elevation it is considered that the proposal would not unacceptably impinge upon privacy. The steps referred to by one objector (Badgers Rest) from the school down to the play ground are existing and do not afford views of all of their garden due to the existing tall, stone boundary wall. In terms of the physical impact of the building on residential amenity it is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.8 The use of the building for the educational needs of the school is considered acceptable and the objectors do not oppose this. However there is great concern raised about the use outside of school hours, at the weekend and all year round by other users. Planning policies encourage shared use of facilities for the benefit of the community as a whole and to reduce land intake and duplication of facilities. Balanced against this is the amenity of local residents and the impact the extended use would have on the enjoyment of their properties in this essentially residential area. The main potential impacts upon amenity would arise from noise, additional parking and lighting.
- 6.9 The hall would provide indoor facilities for sport and recreation, which would not be noisy activities. Such a use is generally acceptable in residential areas and whilst there may be some limited noise when users arrive and leave the site it would be difficult to refuse planning permission on this basis alone. If noise nuisance did arise Environmental Health legislation could control this.
- 6.10 As set out in paragraph 6.6 the site is close the town centre and could be accessed by public transport, cycling and walking. There is limited parking in the site. On the basis of the size of facilities proposed and its proximity to the community it would serve, the Traffic Manager has no objections.
- 6.11 With regards lighting, this may be required from the access into the site to the hall. As the hall would provide for indoor sporting activity there should be no need for floodlighting. Any outdoor lighting, to indicate the entrance door etc, could be controlled so that it did not cause harm to amenity.
- 6.12 In conclusion, the proposed scheme would not cause demonstrable harm, either through its built form or use, to the Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, highway safety or residential amenity.

**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. **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**

3. **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.**

4. **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.**

5. **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.**

6. **G10 (Landscaping scheme )**

**Reason: In order to maintain the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy LA6 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

7. **G11 (Landscaping scheme - implementation )**

**Reason: In order to maintain the visual amenities of the area and to comply with Policy LA6 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

8. **H29 (Secure covered 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 and to conform with the requirements of Policy DR3 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**

**9. I33 (External lighting)**

**Reason: To safeguard the character and amenities of the area and to comply with Policy DR14 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

**Informative(s):**

- 1. W01 - Welsh Water Connection to PSS**
- 2. N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans**
- 3. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission**

Decision: .....

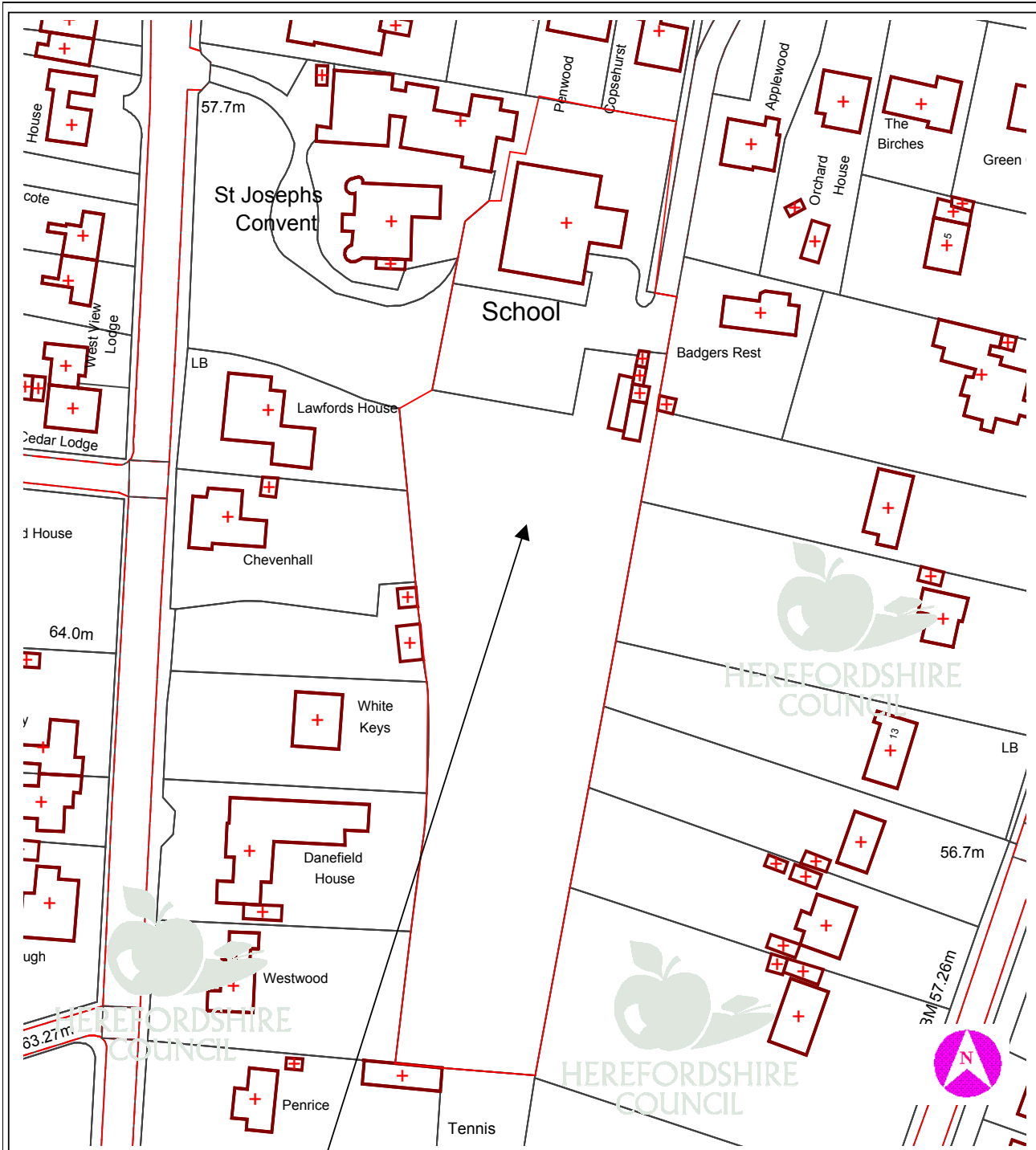
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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.





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**APPLICATION NO:** DCSE2008/1827/CD

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** St Josephs R.C. Primary School, The Avenue, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5AW

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