

7 DCCW2008/2035/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM B1 OFFICES TO POLICE OFFICES (RETROSPECTIVE) AT BRITISH TELECOM BUILDING, BARTON ROAD, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR4 0JT

For: West Mercia Police per Mr. C. Watkinson, West Mercia Police, Estate Services, Hindlip Hall, PO Box 55, Worcester, WR3 8SP

Date Received: 6 August 2008 Ward: St. Nicholas Grid Ref: 50267, 39769

Expiry Date: 1 October 2008

Local Members: Councillors DJ Benjamin and JD Woodward

Members will recall that this planning application was deferred pending completion of the Travel Plan and to investigate the possibility of a Section 106 contribution.

The Travel Plan has now been completed and the Council's Traffic Manager has confirmed that the document is acceptable. Regarding the Section 106 contribution, the size of the offices that warrant the submission of the application are below the threshold laid down in the SPD Planning Obligations.

The previous report is produced below and has been amended to reflect the completed Travel Plan.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The British Telecom building is located on the northern side of Barton Road immediately adjacent to the west side of Great Western Way and opposite the junction of Broomy Hill road.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought to change the use of part of the premises from 'B1' office to a police office. The use is already in operation, therefore the planning application is retrospective.
- 1.3 The planning application has been submitted following investigation and discussions with West Mercia Constabulary.
- 1.4 The applicants have 47 car parking spaces on site together with an equivalent to three car parking spaces for motor cycles. 40 bicycle spaces are available and an informal agreement with Sainsbury's provides an additional 10 car parking spaces. BT still use the building as a telephone exchange with only 1700 sq.m. used by the Police (approximately 37%).
- 1.5 The offices are not open to the general public and there is no manned reception or front counter. Apart from back office staff a small uniformed team comprising one sergeant, two constables and CSOs operate from the building. A total of 102 people work at the building.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy DR3	-	Movement
Policy E7	-	Other Employment Proposals Within and Around Hereford and the Market Towns
Policy E8	-	Design Standards for Employment Sites
Policy TCR10	-	Office Development
Policy TCR11	-	Loss of Existing Offices
Policy T6	-	Walking
Policy T7	-	Cycling
Policy T11	-	Parking Provision

3. Planning History

- 3.1 HC950368PF Remove five existing metal windows and provide softwood timber liners/louvres for fresh air cooling units. Approved 14/11/95.
- 3.2 HC960179PF Erection of CCTV pylons. Approved 25/07/96.
- 3.3 SC980508PF Installation of 1.8m diameter microwave radio dish on roof. Approved 23/10/98.
- 3.4 CW2000/1550/F Erect three directional pole mounted antennas. Approved 03/10/00.
- 3.5 CW2001/1086/F To erect three directional pole mounted antennas. Approved 06/06/01.
- 3.6 CW2003/1152/F Installation of a white 1.2m diameter, flat roof mounted satellite dish antenna. Approved 12/06/03.
- 3.7 DCCW2007/3126/F Erection of new boundary fence to replace existing. Approved 03/12/07.
- 3.8 DCCW2007/3929/F Proposed cycle shelter. Approved 28/01/08.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: Confirms no objections.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager: The change of use will not affect the character or appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area, therefore no objection.

4.4 Public Rights of Way Manager: No objections.

5. Representations

5.1 Hereford City Council: No objection.

5.2 Fourteen letters of objection have been received, the main points raised are:-

1. Since July 2006 the residents of Broomy Hill and Breinton Road have been troubled by all day parking.
2. Driveways are often obstructed or blocked by cars.
3. This is a residential area, roads are narrow, visibility restricted and no pavements on one side of Broomy Hill. The constant parking prevents gutters being swept and drains are frequently blocked.
4. There are often empty spaces at the Police building and the large area of grass could be used for parking.
5. Now is the time for a formal parking policy to be made for the area as a Residents Parking Only.
6. Damage to roadside walls has occurred due to indiscriminate parking.
7. Canteen and social areas on site are open to all Police personnel not just those based at these offices.
8. Health and safety issues due to the number of staff on site.
9. Fatal accidents have occurred in the area due to parking problems.
10. Houses along Breinton Road have no parking and need roadside parking which is prevented.

5.3 The applicants have confirmed the following information:

1. The initial use of the premises by back office staff did not require planning permission which was confirmed by the Local Planning Authority and the use has only marginally increased.
2. For the avoidance of doubt there is no manned reception, access is via a secure door with controlled access. There are no facilities for public access and the premises are not used as an operational Police station.
3. The lease of the premises provides us with 47 car parking spaces, motor cycle space equivalent to 3 car parking spaces, 40 cycle spaces.
4. There has been no breach of the terms of the lease nor Health and Safety matters.
5. The canteen is the same as provided previously by BT and is still used by BT and West Mercia Constabulary when on-site.

6. There are no 'social area'.
7. We recognise that parking in the area is a problem and have made arrangements with Sainsbury's for an additional 10 spaces on an informal basis. In addition we are working with the Council in developing a sustainable Travel Plan. Part of this project has been the installation of a sheltered cycle rack.
8. Prior to our use we have been advised that approximately 200 worked on-site for BT. In the year before we moved in approximately 120 worked on site. At present 115 people including BT work on site.

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 This planning application has arisen following the increased use of the premises by the applicants. The original use of the premises was considered to be compatible with the authorised use of the premises.
- 6.2 It is evident from the objections received that the only cause of concern is the use of roads adjacent to the site for the parking of vehicles. The applicants have authorised space for 47 cars and have negotiated a further 10 spaces in the adjoining Sainsbury's car park. In addition the Travel Plan now completed seeks to change the mode of travel to and from the offices. This plan has been developed in full consultation with the Council's Green Transport Planners and incorporates car sharing, use of public transport, walking and cycling together with measures to ensure facilities are available at the office. This includes cycle parking now available on site for 40 cycles. However despite these additions objectors are still concerned over the indiscriminate parking occurring in both Breinton Road and Broomy Hill. This 'free parking' so close to the premises and the city centre is obviously used not only by workers at the building but other workers in the city. In addition a residents parking area would further negate the parking problems in the area. It should also be noted that the Traffic Manager raises no objection.
- 6.3 Accordingly, it is considered that the use of the premises is acceptable, particularly bearing in mind that a general office use can be operated from the site without planning permission.
- 6.4 In addition the Council's Traffic Manager will be requested to actively pursue a residential parking plan for the area.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted:

Informatives:

1. **N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans.**
2. **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.**

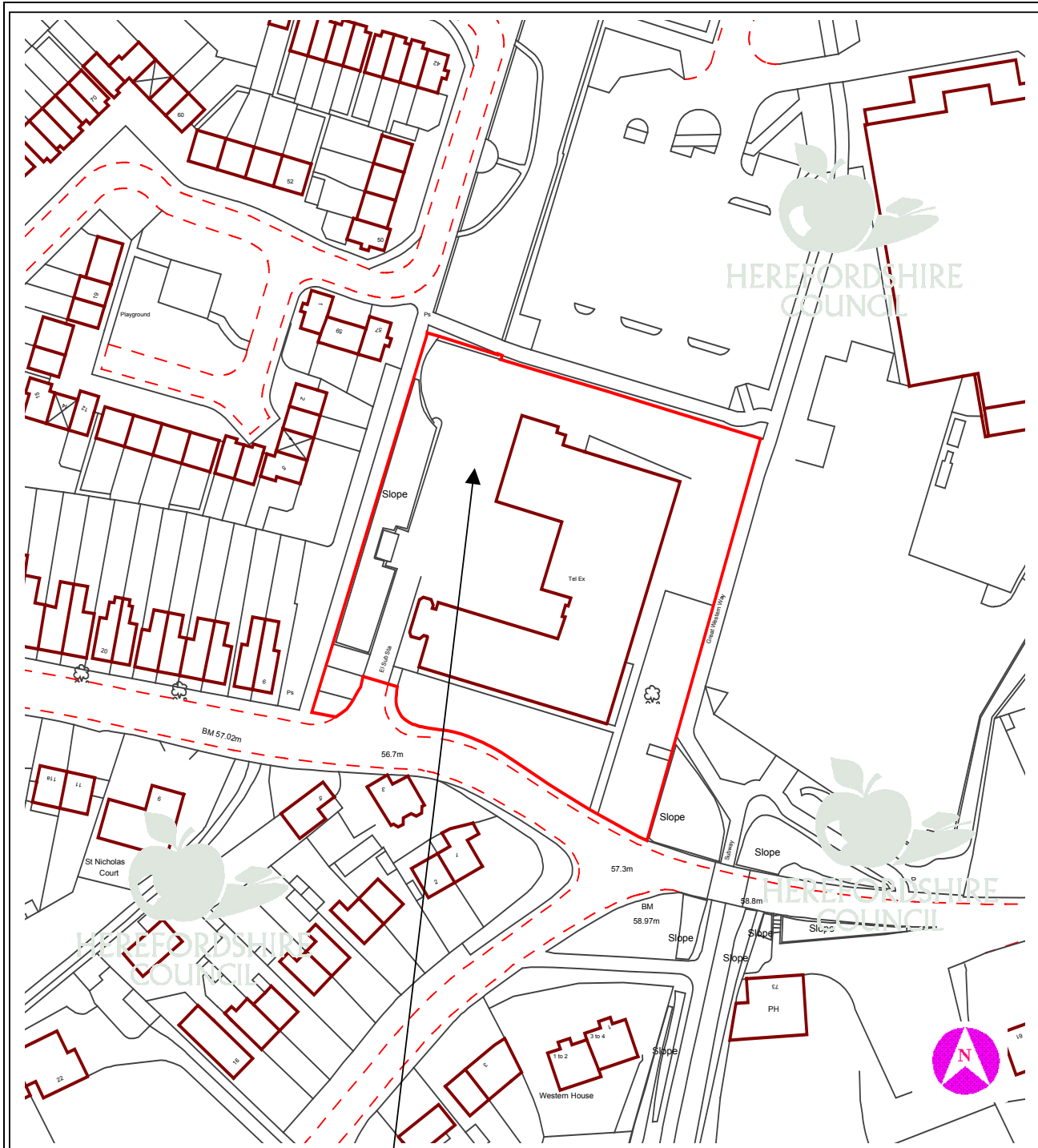
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCCW2008/2035/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : British Telecom Building, Barton Road, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 0JT

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