

7 DCSW2008/2972/F - AMENDMENTS TO PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW ASSEMBLY HALL, CLASSROOMS & ANCILLARY BUILDING (REF DCSW2003/3461/F) INCLUDING MINOR ALTERATIONS TO CHURCH FARM. STEINER ACADEMY HEREFORD, MUCH DEWCHURCH, HEREFORD, HR2 8DL.

For: Steiner Academy Hereford per John Renshaw Architects, 86 Constitution Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6RP.

Date Received: 11 December 2008

Ward: Valletts

Grid Ref: 48133, 31090

Expiry Date: 5 February 2009

Local Member: Councillor MJ Fishley

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Much Dewchurch is located some 7 miles south of Hereford and lies astride the Class II road that connects Wormelow and Allensmore. The site is located on the southern side of the village and comprises the existing Waldorf School. The school site covers a substantial area of land which encompasses the school buildings, pastureland to the south, the existing outdoor play areas to the south of St. David's Church and an area of pastureland to the east. In total the area is some 4.5 hectares.
- 1.2 This application principally relates to three areas of the school complex. The major elements relate to the two-storey classroom block and new assembly hall, which was the subject of the extant planning permission granted in January 2004 (SW2003/3461/F). These two linked buildings extend out in a south-easterly direction from the eastern end of the existing two-storey stone building (referred to as the Barn). A detached single storey woodwork/eurythmy building together with solar panels on the south facing roof of the Old Barn was also approved pursuant to SW2003/3461/F.
- 1.3 The revised proposal, which has latterly been informed by a public meeting arranged by the applicant and attended by interested parties including the Parish Council and the Much Dewchurch Society can be summarised as follows:-
- (i) access gallery to provide first floor access to classrooms within both the Barn and the classroom extension
 - (ii) creation of a basement level biomass boiler/plant room with associated flue
 - (iii) change to the design of covered walkways and storage provision associated with the hall
 - (iv) changes to fenestration and provision of timber louvres on the hall
 - (v) revisions to the design of the approved music room
 - (vi) erection of porch extension to Church Farm
 - (vii) alterations to fenestration on the Barn and Old School buildings
 - (viii) relocation of woodwork room to adapted buildings to the north of Church Farm.

- 1.4 The revised proposals, although informed by the outcome of the public meeting, are still the subject of formal consultation and any further comments will be reported verbally to Members.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Statements

PPS1	-	Delivering Sustainable Developments
PPS7	-	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG15	-	Planning and the Historic Environment

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy S11	-	Community Facilities and Services
Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy HBA1	-	Alterations and extensions to listed buildings
Policy HBA4	-	Setting of listed buildings
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character
Policy LA3	-	Setting of Settlements
Policy CF5	-	New Community Facilities

3. Planning History

3.1	SH871704PF	Change of use of barns into a two-storey classroom block and construction of playground, parking and turning area	-	Approved	10.02.88
	SH940094PF	Erection of new complex to provide theatre and hall space, art/craft facilities and alterations to link block	-	Refused	20.04.94
	SH940095PF	Erection of a timber framed kindergarten building	-	Refused Appeal dismissed	20.04.94 15.12.94
	SH950413PF	Extend temporary permission for two portakabins and a timber storage shed	-	Approved	21.06.95
	SH950448PF	Kindergarten block, workshops and hall complex, altered and extended toilet block and hard play area	-	Refused Appeal dismissed	20.09.95 04.10.96
	SH970543PF	Retention of two portakabins and storage shed	-	Approved	03.09.97

SW2000/2970/F	Change of use to educational premises with extension and alteration and erection of garage workshop (Church Farm)	-	Approved 18.04.01
DCSW2003/3461/F	New assembly hall, new classroom block and ancillary buildings. Removal of temporary buildings and sheds	-	Approved 09.01.04
DCSW2005/3136/F	Change of use from agricultural use to overspill car parking in part of field on temporary basis	-	Deemed Withdrawn 23.03.07
DCSW2006/3430/O	Site for new school buildings and new access to extend school facilities	-	Refused 24.01.07 Appeal dismissed 11.03.08
DCSW2007/1091/O	Site for new school buildings and new access to extend school facilities	-	Refused 20.06.07 Appeal dismissed 11.03.08
DCSW2008/1702/F	Siting and erection of prefabricated classrooms, w.c. and kitchen facilities to provide temporary accommodation during rehabilitation and extension of existing school premises	-	Approved 17.09.08
DCSW2008/2378/F	Erection of field hut for temporary planning permission (retrospective) for a period of 5 years	-	Approved 05.11.08

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 English Heritage raise no objections, stating that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager queries how the extension will affect pupil numbers.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager raises no objection commenting that the proposed amendments to the 2003 application do not appear to involve significant alterations to the permitted scheme.

5. Representations

- 5.1 In the revised Design and Access Statement following the changes made, the following main points are raised:

- location and design of flues amended
- ventilation cowls omitted
- canopies/awnings adjacent to Church Farm omitted; chimney stack retained
- Boiler Room: flue will need to rise 2 metres above ridge of Hall. Flue will now be contained within chimney stack, clad in matching weatherboarding. Anticipated there will be 12 deliveries per annum by a 4 axle rigid HGV (10m long by 2.5m wide). Also two back-up deliveries for fuel oil and lpg for cookery and science laboratory. Boiler, flue, flue exissions, fuel storage and plant room will comply with regulations
- Hall: use of internal blinds not as effective, does not prevent overheating in summer
- ventilator cowls omitted and replaced with larger areas of openable windows. This avoids need for extra duct and vents associated with mechanical ventilation systems in Hall
- Church Farm: design for porch amended to simpler lean-to roof
- awnings have been omitted
- chimney will be retained and repaired, as suggested by Parish Council and Much Dewchurch Society
- change of use/adaptation of garage/workshop north of Church Farm to woodwork room. Woodwork still to be taught still on site. No requirement to use power tools. Proposed finishes to external walls and roof will match the existing and approved buildings with rendered finish and timber cladding, together with a natural slate roof.

5.2 Much Dewchurch Parish Council make the following observations in respect of the originally submitted scheme:

“The Steiner Academy have submitted these plans without any consultation nor discussions with village residents nor the Much Dewchurch Parish Council and due to the fact that the documents are date stamped December 8th 2008, the enclosed letter to the Parish Council is dated December 11th and was not received until December 17th, it only had nine working days to deal with the reply owing to two weekends and the Christmas and New Year breaks.

The Parish Council appreciates many of the proposed changes have arisen to comply with rulings and legislation. However, the proposed changes to the Gothic windows in the original School Building and the proposed chimney and roofing would not be in keeping with surrounding buildings in the village. The proposed changes and alterations intended for the Church Farm House have also raised concerns and objections from residents.

The Parish Council regard the proposed exterior changes to the buildings would alter the appearance and character in this part of Much Dewchurch where there are listed buildings and the proposals would contravene Planning Appeals Inspectors' decisions of now allowing developments which would change the appearance and character of the village.”

5.3 Seven letters of representation have been received from the following:

Mr CM Brown, Stone House, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DL

Mrs B Brown, Much Dewchurch Society, c/o The Old Vicarage, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DH

Mrs A Dale, Home Farm, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DH

RJ & S Sheppard, Hybab View, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DH

Mr AW Twiston-Davies, The Mynde, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DN
 P L Grubb, Almond House, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DL
 Mr CG Powell, The Old Vicarage, Much Dewchurch, HR2 8DH

The following main points are raised:

- boiler flue too visually intrusive, particularly given proximity to boundary with Grade I Church
- flue suggests industrial site
- enlarged storage sites throws up appropriateness of location of site
- flat roofs instead of sloping roofs, detrimental effect on appearance of new Hall and site
- better to have slate or natural covering on sloping roofs than stainless steel
- ventilation cowls too prominent
- timber shutters to windows in Eurythmy/Music Block increases impact of buildings and out of character with location. Could reduce size of windows viz kindergarten or use internal blinds
- Church Farm is included in Royal Commission for Historic Monuments on strength of historic features. English Heritage confirmed that building still of 'considerable local interest'
- porch for Church Farm in access of area lost by platform lift, bears no relation to main entrance therefore out of character
- awnings proposed wholly out of character and would increase footprint of building
- demolition of chimney (on Church Farm) not rationalised by applicants. Loss would detract from historic fabric of the thirteenth century farm house
- what is proposed to barns
- any changes to Gothic windows in Old School detrimental to character of site
- scheme fails to respect sensitivity of location in historic heart of village
- Church Farm should retain character and appearance of a farm house, which in turn forms an integral part of the grouping of historic buildings in centre of village
- includes part of church parking area, established by title
- have conditions previously imposed on earlier planning permission been complied with?
- has English Heritage approved the plans?
- are the applicants observing all the requirements placed on them by the Inspector?

- 5.4 At the time of writing formal comments are awaited on the revised proposals and will be reported verbally.

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 It is considered that the main issue associated with this application relates to the impact of the alterations upon the character and appearance of this historic complex of buildings and the wider setting of the village, the listed former farmhouse and Church and surrounding countryside.
- 6.2 The applicants have made alterations to the originally submitted scheme, which have been submitted following a public meeting held on the site between interested parties. These alterations include the relocation of the woodwork room to a proposed new building on the site of an existing garage/workshop building, immediately to the north

of Church Farm. These are currently the subject of formal consultation amongst the other changes proposed, which is reflected in the recommendation below.

- 6.3 The school site can be broken down into different components, namely Church Farm together with the proposed woodwork building, the Barn, the Old School building, the two storey classroom block and Hall, and lastly the Eurythmy/Music block. For ease of reference, the appraisal considers the various alterations to these components in turn.
- 6.4 Church Farm, as a result of the revisions submitted, would retain its chimney on the southern end of the building. The proposed awnings around the building have been omitted from the scheme. The only new addition is the porch on the east elevation of the building, which has been simplified following comments made on the original proposal. It will now have the appearance of a rendered lean-to extension instead of the originally submitted gable fronted building. It is considered that this revised addition together with two rooflights in the west elevation are acceptable new elements that will preserve the character and integrity of the listed Church Farm.
- 6.5 The plans submitted for the Woodwork Room immediately to the north of Church Farm provide for a timber boarded building on the east and part west elevations and a rendered finish elsewhere and on the north elevation. The hipped roof will be covered in natural slates and lit by three rooflights in each of the three roof slopes. The building is 7.1 metres wide on the southern gable elevation and 10 metres long on the east elevation. The west elevation is 6.7 metres. It is considered that the new slate roofed building is well sited given the screening afforded it by trees to the north and west. Church Farm will remain the dominant building and since it replaces an existing building it is not considered that there will be any detrimental impact on the setting of the former farmhouse.
- 6.6 With regard to the Barn building there will be minimal changes to fenestration on the north elevation of the stone building. The new windows are in the timber infill area and entail the removal of four existing windows and their replacement. The main alteration is the erection of a gallery on the south elevation of the building, which provides for first floor access (a requirement of the Building Regulations and Disabled Discrimination Act) from across the school and allows for a more conventional layout inside the existing barn building. The timber framed feature introduces a new element onto the site, but one that is not considered to detract from the character of the Barn nor the setting of the site in relation to the Grade I Listed building and Church Farm itself.
- 6.7 The Old School building will essentially be repaired and rehabilitated. This includes works to the window details on the north and east elevations. The original Gothic style windows on the south gable elevation will also be restored. A new three light window is proposed in the south elevation that replaces an ugly modern window. New doorways and an enclosure for a lift are installed on the west elevation of the Old School. In response to concerns raised by some, the alterations proposed do not entail the removal of Gothic windows, indeed this building is enhanced with the restoration of existing windows and the rendering of a brick lean-to visible on the east elevation.
- 6.8 The new school block will essentially provide w.c. facilities on the ground floor and classrooms above, as previously approved. It was originally clad at both levels on the west elevation. The first floor area will, together with the southern gable end, be lime rendered as elsewhere on the site. This use of render will help differentiate the buildings when viewed in more distant public views from the south-west and south of the site.

- 6.9 The canopy on the western side of the classroom block continues as a flat roof over storage elements that also projects out on the western side of the proposed Hall. This flat roof replaces the originally approved sloping roofs. It is considered that the flat roof would provide a continuous visual link between the new hall and the classroom block immediately to the north. It is not considered to be a discordant feature on what is a modern building. The new hall, roofs to the Barn and Old School and Church Farm will remain the dominant features in the landscape. The use of more glazing, for solar gain, just below eaves level also enables more prominent rooflights to be omitted.
- 6.10 Representations were received regarding the installation of the ventilation cowls and the external flue which projected above the ridge line on the hall. The cowls have been omitted from the scheme and the flue incorporated into a chimney stack which projects out of the roof giving the building a more conventional silhouette comparable with Church Farm. In response to queries regarding the roof covering of the classroom block and hall, it is advised that the extant scheme allowed for the possibility of a turf or natural slate roof. Natural slate roof is proposed for all new buildings on the site and is considered entirely appropriate in this historic context.
- 6.11 It is considered that the enlargement of storage areas and the installation of a basement plant room under the new hall are matters that are acceptable in terms of their scale and visual impact. These changes have largely been driven by the floorspace requirements of Sport England and the desire to provide for a low energy fuel source. The changes accord with Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policies which promote sustainable development objectives.
- 6.12 The final building is the Eurythmy/Music block which has been re-modelled such that the music room is larger and the roof profile is altered to match the hipped roof on the kindergarten block attached to Church Farm. The issue of shutters has been raised with regard to this building. It is not considered that the timber shutters will be a discordant feature in the overall scheme such that they will detract from the character and setting of the site.
- 6.13 During the course of the consideration of this application, clarification has been sought in relation to the impact of the proposals upon pupil numbers and it is confirmed that there will be no intensification over the acknowledged school roll. Furthermore details of the projected vehicular movements associated with the delivery of woodchip to the biomass boiler suggest that a total of 12 deliveries will be made per annum. It is not considered that this modest uplift in traffic movements over and above existing vehicular activity would reasonably substantiate a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.14 In conclusion, the scheme has been revised from that originally approved. The new elements such as the gallery providing first floor access across the site are sensitively designed and will enhance the function of the new Academy as required by the Building Regulations and DDA regulations. The revised and more modest changes to Church Farm and its immediate setting are considered to be sensitive to this historic building. The new Woodwork Room is well sited and sensitively finished. The Barn and Old School buildings will alter little externally when viewed from public vantage points. Indeed it is considered that the Old School building will be enhanced with the proposed repair and replacement windows. The classroom block and hall alters from that approved with the use of lime render which will differentiate the building when viewed against the predominantly timber clad building. The flat roofed areas will not materially impact upon the setting of the Grade I Listed Church. It is considered that the reduction in glass on the south gable will reduce the impact of the building in

distant views from the south. The removal of the detached flue and prominent ventilation cowls omits elements that would have introduced discordant features within the site and the repositioning and traditional treatment of the revised flue is considered to be a significant improvement on the original submission. The Eurythmy/Music block will also compliment the existing and new buildings as regards materials and the hipped roof profile.

- 6.15 On the basis of the revised proposals, the scheme can be supported subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to no further objections raising additional material planning considerations by the end of the consultation period, the officers named in the scheme of delegation be authorised to approve the application subject to the following conditions and any further conditions deemed necessary by officers.

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. **B04 (Amendment to existing permission)**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to comply with the requirements of Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

4. **D05 (Details of external joinery finishes)**

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 the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

5. **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.

Informatives:

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

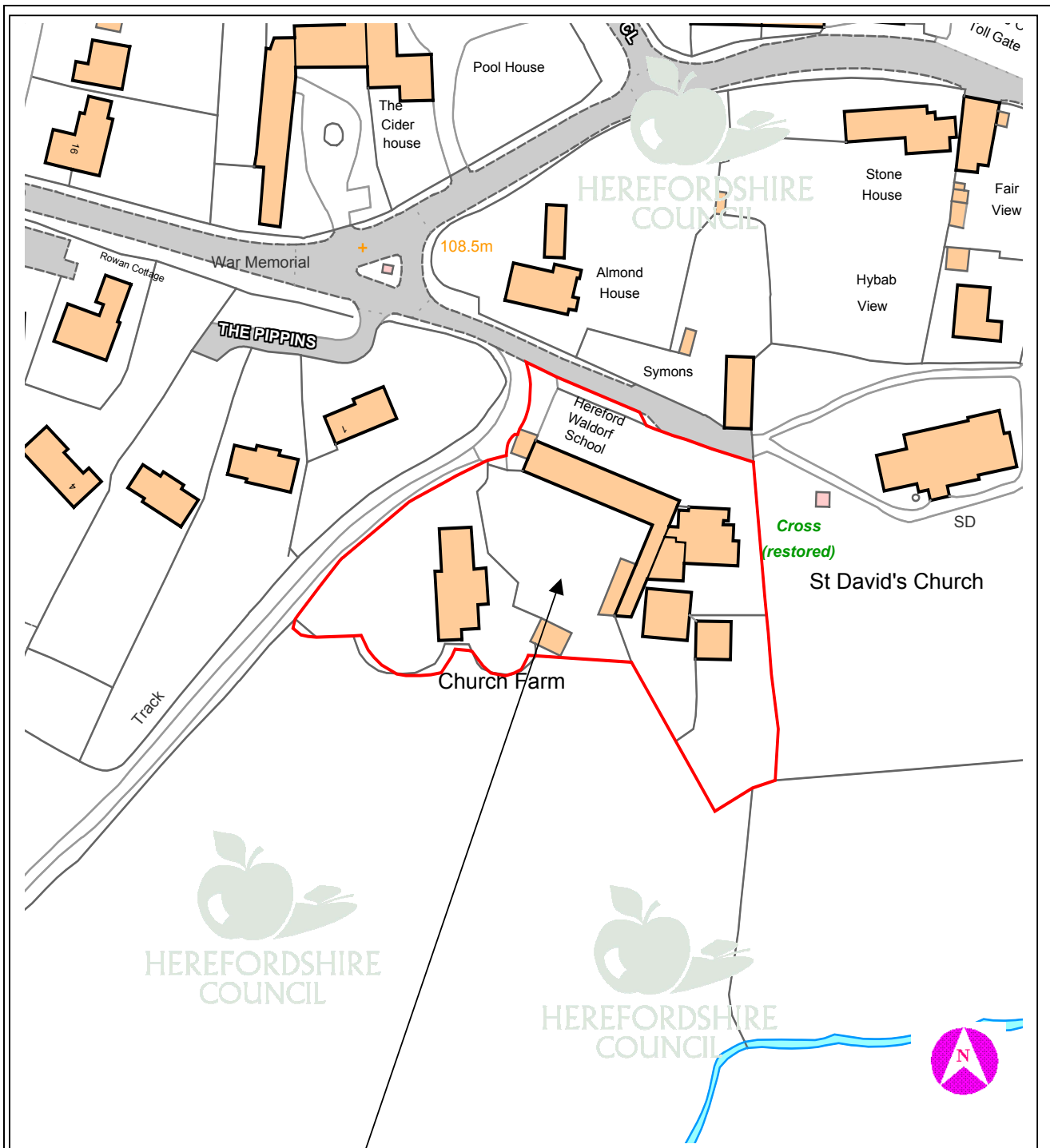
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSW2008/2972/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

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