

**5 DCSE09/1665/F - CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY CHANGING ROOM AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT ROSS ON WYE RUGBY CLUB, SIXTH AVENUE, GREYTREE, ROSS ON WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7AG.**

**For: Ross-on-Wye Rugby Football Club per Mr A Gray, 8 Station Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7AG.**

**Date Received: 18 September 2009 Ward: Ross-on-Wye (W) Grid Ref: 359423,225001**

**Expiry Date: 13 November 2009**

Local Members: Councillors CM Bartrum and G Lucas

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

- 1.1 The site lies to the southwest of Greytree and to the northwest of the A40(T). The River Wye lies to the southwest of the site. The site is accessed via a spur from the 90-degree bend at the bottom of the Greytree Road and is visible from the bridge and elevated land around. The site is bounded to the northeast by the recently constructed housing development (Abbots Close/Bell Place) which is elevated above the pitches. Land to the northwest and southwest is in agricultural usage and falls gently to the river. Adjacent the access is an electricity substation. The site extends to 3.65ha and comprises two marked out rugby pitches with potential for a third.
- 1.2 It is proposed to site temporary changing rooms, construct a car park/cycle park and undertake improvements to the vehicular access within an area concentrated around the access. The proposed temporary changing rooms would be a re-used temporary classroom building, clad with timber to make them more visually acceptable. This would be located a short distance from the southeast corner of Pitch 1. Between the changing rooms and the eastern boundary are the access drive and 11 parking spaces, with the remaining 7 spaces (including 2 disabled spaces) located immediately to the north together with a turning area. The changing rooms would measure 22.04m x 8.53m in plan and 3.95m tall. It would be served by a sewage treatment plant and comprise 4 changing rooms, showers, WCs, a kitchen area and store. Adjacent the existing lockable gate/kissing gate it is proposed to widen the access drive which will be tarmaced.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and also within Flood Zone 2. As such the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and consultation with the Environment Agency has been undertaken.

## **2. Policies**

### **2.1 Government Guidance**

PPG17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

### **2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**

S1 - Sustainable Development  
S2 - Development Requirements

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr E Thomas on 01432 260479

DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
DR3	-	Movement
DR7	-	Flood Risk
LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CF5	-	New Community Facilities
RST1	-	Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
RST2	-	Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### 3. Planning History

3.1	SH95/0171PF	Change of use from grazing land to sports field.	-	Approved 25.4.95
	SH96/0617PF	Erection of temporary clubhouse and provision of temporary car park: Application by Ross 93 football club.	-	Approved 18.9.96
	SE2002/3096/F	Construction of changing rooms and shower facilities.	-	Withdrawn 22.11.02
	SE2002/3661/F	Construction of changing rooms and shower facilities with improved access and car parking.	-	Approved 26.2.03

### 4. Consultation Summary

#### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency: No objection subject to the imposition of conditions governing the floor levels of the changing rooms (in order to protect them from flooding) and that the remainder of development should be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment.

#### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection subject to the imposition of conditions, including the submission of a Travel Plan to reinforce the proposed parking arrangements in relation to coaches and supporters.

In response to the specific concerns expressed by the objector the Traffic Manager has provided the following response:

“The car and cycle parking spaces have been agreed with the applicant and will be accompanied by a Travel Plan to support access to the site by sustainable modes of transport. Ross Rugby Club is also obliged to issue the Rugby Football Union (RFU) with information regarding the access arrangements for inclusion in the annual RFU handbook. Coaches visiting the site would utilise the nearby coach park whilst the carriageway fronting the site is subject to a Traffic Regulation Order preventing on-street parking. Visibility upon exiting the site is good in either direction.”

### 5. Representations

- 5.1 Ross Rural Parish Council: No objection

- 5.2 One letter of objection has been received from Mrs S. Roberts, 5 Bell Place, Greytrees, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7GA. The content can be summarised as follows:
- There is concern that the adjoining Bell Place will be used as an overspill car park;
  - Too much traffic uses the Greytrees Road and several ‘near misses’ have been witnessed on the corner where the entrance is proposed;
  - Visibility is not good and intensified use of the access is an accident waiting to happen;
  - What happens if teams arrive by coach? What provision is made for coaches to turn within the site? It is difficult enough when two cars meet on the road, let alone coaches;
  - The temporary changing rooms should be located out of sight of the properties that overlook the playing fields.
- 5.3 The submitted design and access statement contains the following points:
- The site has been owned by the Rugby Club for the last 7 years but is limited in terms of practicality owing to the lack of changing facilities;
  - The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the development would not, subject to appropriate construction, be unduly prone to flooding and would not increase the threat elsewhere;
  - Access onto the site will be limited to light vehicles, with coaches required to both offload passengers and park locally, an arrangement that will be reinforced by a Travel Plan, the Club’s website and the Rugby Football Union Annual Handbook;
  - Home and away supporters will also be asked to park locally and walk to the pitches;
  - The changing room will utilise timber cladding on all elevations under a shingle felt tiles so as to soften its appearance.
  - The changing rooms have been positioned to maximise contours of site with respect the flood plain and being overlooked by existing dwellings will discourage people from gathering on the site.
  - The site for the changing rooms is also described as the most efficient for maximising the main field for sporting activities whilst keeping the need for hard-standing to a minimum.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Committee meeting.

## **6. Officer’s Appraisal**

- 6.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application is the principle of development, the effect on highway safety, the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbouring uses.
- 6.2 Planning permission was granted in 1995 for the use of the application site as a sports playing field, with vehicular access gained from Homs Road/Greytrees Road. As such the principle of the use of the land for purposes bound up with this application has been established. In 2003 a planning permission was granted for a temporary changing rooms, showers, car parking and access in connection with Ross Rugby Club but was not implemented. It is worth noting that the 2003 planning permission granted approval for a 35-space car park, almost double that proposed now.
- 6.3 Unitary Development Plan policies support, promote and encourage the improvement of recreation facilities and PPG17 stresses the importance of retaining local sports facilities. New development on such areas should only be allowed where the proposal is ancillary to the use (e.g. changing rooms) and would adversely affect the quality or quantity of the site as a playing field.

- 6.4 It is acknowledged that the provision of a formal parking area upon the site will lead to an intensification of use of the access on Greytrees Road. However, the Traffic Manager has stated that visibility in either direction upon egress is good and further measures to prevent access by coaches and supporters have been described above. It was a condition of the 2003 planning permission that a barrier be put in place across the access to prevent coaches from entering the site and it is the case officer's belief that this would be an appropriate measure in this case, particularly as there is insufficient space within the site for large coaches to turn and leave the site in a forward gear. A height restriction barrier would prevent coaches entering the site and then having to reverse up the gradient onto the bend. This is an unusual but entirely reasonable measure that the Rugby Club has indicated a willingness to accept.
- 6.5 The site is located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The primary purpose of designation of these areas is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty. The most relevant policy with regard to the AONB is Unitary Development Plan Policy LA1. In addition, the pressure for recreation related development within the AONB merits a specific policy within the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan – Policy RST2. Whilst AONB designation allows recreation proposals to be accommodated where such developments do not compromise the landscape quality, it is important that precedence is given to the principal aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Development must:
- respect and be in keeping with the inherent distinctiveness of the local landscape;
  - be small-scale and constructed from appropriate materials; and
  - make a positive contribution to the understanding and quiet enjoyment of the natural beauty of the AONB.

Development should only be permitted when it meets these specific requirements.

- 6.6 The first policy issue is whether the development respects and is in keeping with the inherent distinctiveness of the local landscape. Given that the site is already used as a playing field and is located on the edge of the settlement, development of the scale proposed is considered to be acceptable and would constitute a limited change to the landscape character of the site. The building would not be unduly prominent from public vantage points and the local topography also assists in terms of reducing the impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to the immediate northeast. The playing fields are at a substantially lower level than the adjoining dwellings with the effect that views towards the changing form from the ground floor windows within these dwellings are likely to be over the roof of the building and mitigated by intervening planting. Views from the first floor windows will not be mitigated in the same way, but although the building is undeniably utilitarian in appearance, the visual harm to the wider area is not considered so significant as to warrant refusal, irrespective of the site's location within the AONB. In this case, and bearing in mind the backdrop provided by the 2003 permission, the proposal is not considered to have an undue effect on the rural quality and character of the AONB.

#### Summary and Conclusions

- 6.7 The proposal involves the provision of facilities ancillary to the existing land use. The parking provision is reduced compared to the 2003 planning permission and measures are intended to ensure that coaches and supporters either utilise local car parks or otherwise arrive at the site by alternative modes. The changing rooms are a temporary measure in the first instance and cladding is proposed to soften their appearance in the wider landscape. The fact that the changing rooms would be visible from adjoining dwellings does not of itself form the basis of a reason for refusal.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1        **A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
- 2        **H07 Single access - outline consent**
- 3        **H13 Access, turning area and parking**
- 4        **H29 Secure covered cycle parking provision**
- 5        **H30 Travel plans**
- 6        **Prior to the first use of the changing rooms hereby approved a barrier shall be erected across the vehicular access in order to prevent access by coaches. The barrier shall be installed and retained thereafter in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.**

**Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the free flow of traffic so as to comply with Policy DR3 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

- 7        **The floor levels of the changing rooms hereby approved shall be set at 33.43m AOD, in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (BMW266/FRA, dated 06/01/09).**

**Reason: To protect the development from flooding in accordance with Policy DR7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

- 8        **The development permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (BMW266/FRA, dated 06/01/09).**

**Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and provide water quality benefits by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.**

- 9        **C09 Details of cladding (agricultural and industrial buildings)**

**INFORMATIVES:**

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

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

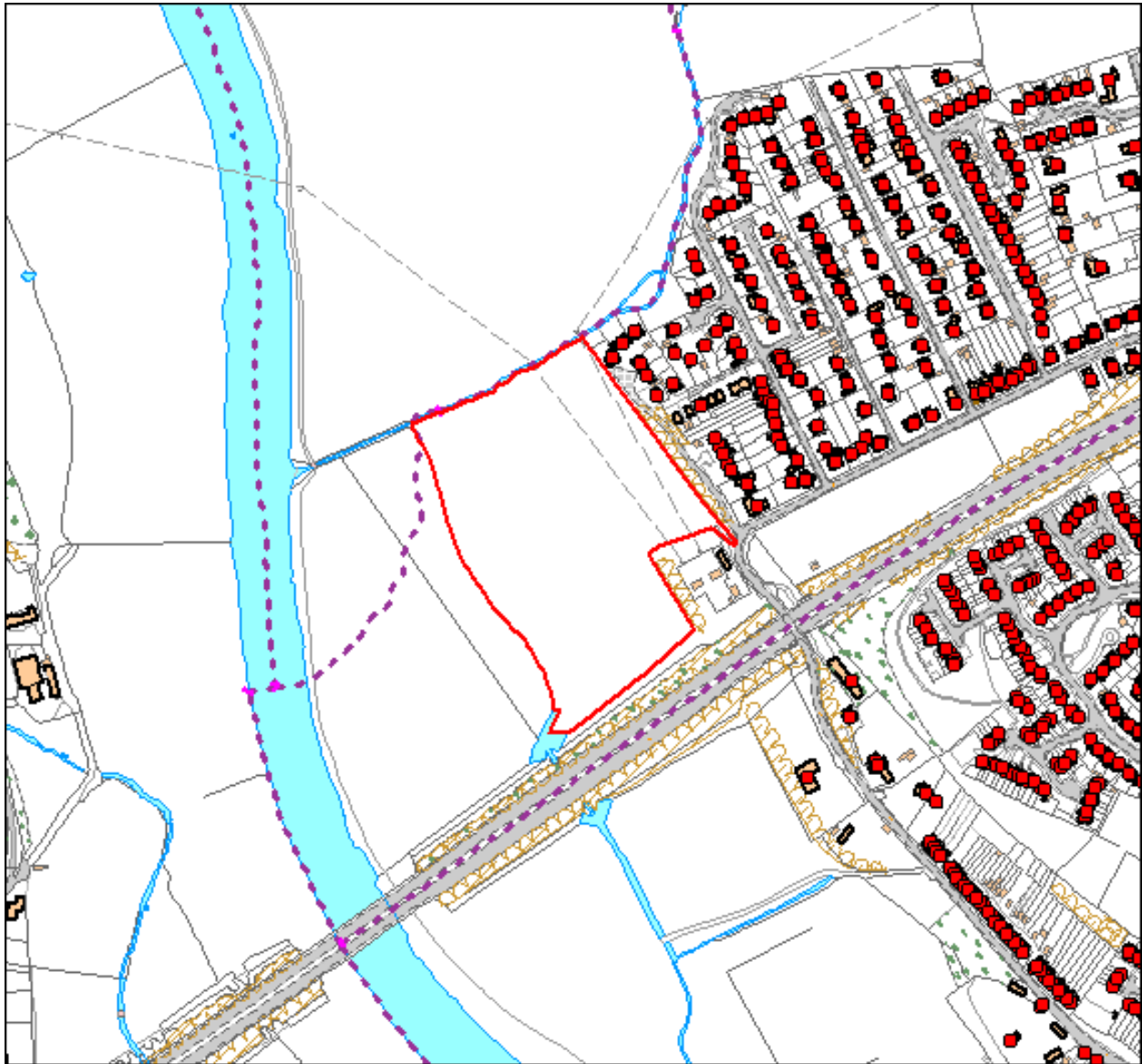
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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.

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**APPLICATION NO:** DMSE/091665/F

**SITE ADDRESS :** ROSS ON WYE RUGBY CLUB, SIXTH AVENUE, GREYTREE, ROSS ON WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7AY

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