

**1 DCCE2003/2992/F - PROVISION OF NEW W.C. ALTERATIONS TO PORCH AND ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, FOWNHOPE, HEREFORDSHIRE****For: St. Mary's PCC per Hook Mason, 11 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL****Date Received: 2nd October 2003      Ward: Backbury      Grid Ref: 58108, 34258****Expiry Date: 27th November 2003**

Local Member: Councillor Mrs. J. E. Pemberton

This application was deferred at the February meeting of the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee for a Committee site visit, the report and recommendation below remain unaltered.

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The application site is a Grade I Listed Parish Church located within the village of Fownhope on the corner of Capler Lane and the B4224. The site lies within the Fownhope Conservation Area and within the Wye Valley AONB and designated Area of Great Landscape Value. The church is set back from the main road by approximately 40m (from gate to entrance). The area of the church that is the subject of the application is the existing front porch to the northern elevation.
- 1.2 The proposal involves extending the church to the side of the existing porch to form a disabled toilet facility. The existing porch extends 3.8m from the building. The proposed extension would extend to east of the front porch by 2m. The roof would be a lean-to construction that would slope from the existing church from a height of 4m to 2m (min) and would be at a lower level than the existing porch that stands at a height of 5m. The disabled toilet would be accessed internally via the existing porch.
- 1.3 The application includes the repair of the existing porch structure. The main structure of the porch would not be altered but the repairs would include the re-tiling of the porch floor, new timber and glazed porch doors and other remedial repairs. Full joinery details have been supplied.
- 1.4 Although the church is a Listed Building, no Listed Building Application accompanies this application. This is because these works are included within works that can be completed with Listed Building Consent under the Ecclesiastical Exemption. As such, only planning permission is required.

**2. Policies****2.1 Planning Policy Guidance:**

PPG1 – General Policy and principles

PPG15 – Planning and Historic Environment

## 2.2 South Herefordshire District Local Plan:

GD1 – General Development Criteria  
C5 – Development within AONB  
C7 – Development within AGLV  
C22 – Maintain character of conservation area  
C23 – New development affecting conservation areas  
C.27B – Alterations or additions to a Listed Building  
CF6 – Access for All

## 2.3 Unitary Development Plan – Deposit Draft:

S11 – Community facilities and services  
LA1 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
LA2 – Landscape character and areas least resilient to change  
HBA1 – Alterations and extensions to listed buildings  
HBA4 – Setting of a listed building  
HBA6 – New development within Conservation Areas  
T16 – Access for All

## 3. Planning History

3.1 No relevant planning history.

## 4. Consultation Summary

### Statutory Consultations

4.1 English Heritage has no objection to the application.

### Internal Council Advice

4.2 The Chief Conservation Officer makes the following comments: I can confirm that the details now proposed concur with what was agreed at a pre-application meeting with the Agent, John Yates (English Heritage), The Council's Conservation Listed Building Officer and the Parochial Church Council, except for one item. That relates to the introduction of the rooflight to the proposed new extension. I feel it would be inappropriate if introduced in the position shown and can see no reason why it could not be included on the east elevation of the extension.

4.3 Head of Engineering and Transportation has no objection subject to conditions.

## 5. Representations

5.1 A letter was submitted by the agent with this application and is summarised as follows:-

Fownhope PCC first began considering the provision of new sanitary accommodation about five years ago and since then they have considered nine different schemes; some inside and some outside. Due to this Church expanding its ministry it was strongly considered that sanitary accommodation entered from the main entrance porch was the most suitable option. All of this has been discussed with your Conservation Officer, Mr. David Baxter and Mr. John Yates from English Heritage and we understand that they are in agreement with the present scheme.

Turning to the scheme itself, the existing north porch is in need of some general repair. The main structure will remain unaltered but the repair will be carried out as part of this scheme.

The existing floor is to be overlaid with a new floor to take into account the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act which comes into force in 2004.

The new toilet extension has been carefully designed so that it does not conflict with the existing building. It will be formed with new natural oak boarding and roofed with natural slates.

All joinery and other finishes will be of a high standard to suit this important Grade I Listed Building.

5.2 Fownhope Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds:

- 1) The style of the existing door should be retained because the proposed new door would not be in keeping with the character of the building.
- 2) The proposed vertical rather than diagonal timber cladding is; not deemed appropriate, as it would detract from the character of the building.
- 3) The tiles in the porch are worthy of retention and should not be covered with new tiles.
- 4) An outside door to access the toilet facilities would be far more appropriate than a door opening out within the main porch area.
- 5) There is concern over the proposed tree works to enable drainage pipes to access the toilet facilities. It appears that a mature Yew tree may need to be felled, as it does not appear on the new plans. This tree should be protected.

5.3 Hereford Access for All note the alterations with approval.

5.4 There have been no letters of representation on this application.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## **6. Officers Appraisal**

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of this proposal is the impact of the extension on the Grade I Listed Building and on the character and appearance of the Fownhope Conservation Area. Pre-application discussions were held with English Heritage given the sensitive nature of extending this important historic building.

6.2 Planning Policy Guidance 15 and the South Herefordshire District Local Plan allows for the extension of Listed Buildings as long as extensions are sympathetic to the character of the buildings and do not have a detrimental impact on the appearance or on the historic fabric of the building. In this instance, it is felt that a sympathetic scheme, that is minimal in its intrusion into the historic fabric, has been proposed. As such, it would not adversely affect the architectural or historical interest of the building. Neither the Council's Chief Conservation Officer nor English Heritage has raised any objection to this scheme.

- 6.3 The site is located within the Fownhope Conservation Area but is set back from the road in an unobtrusive position. As such, the proposed extension and alterations to the building would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the policies of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and advice contained within PPG15.
- 6.4 The Parish Council has raised objections (as above) to the scheme relating to the alterations and extension. Whilst the concern relating to the alterations have been considered, members should be mindful that the Chief Conservation Officer and English Heritage have raised no objection to the scheme.
- 6.5 The Parish Council comment regarding the siting of the toilet door internally has also been noted. It is assumed that this door being located internally would be for convenience as other possibilities have been explored. The door is required to open outwards for ease of access for disabled users. The Hereford Access for All committee have expressed their approval of these facilities. The floor also requires resurfacing in order to provide a level surface to the disabled toilet.
- 6.6 The Parish council also raises concern as to the loss of the Yew tree. The application form shows that some of the lower branches will be removed from the yew tree to the north-east. Details of this work can be obtained via a condition imposed on an approval. Works to fell or lop any other trees would require consent as the site lies within the Conservation Area.
- 6.7 Your Officers do, however, raise the concern over the insertion of the Velux window into the front elevation of the extension. The removal of this velux from this elevation and the insertion of a window into the east elevation has been agreed verbally with the agent and can be controlled by condition imposed on the approval.
- 6.8 The applicant has outlined the need to extend the church to provide a disabled toilet as part of their ongoing improvements. This also meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act that comes into force this year.

## 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. A07 (Development in accordance with approved plans).**

**Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.**

- 3. C02 (Approval of details).**

**(a) details and samples of external and internal materials**

**Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.**

- 4. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, the rooflight shown in the front elevation of the proposed extension shall be removed from the scheme. Prior to the commencement of development, full elevational details and joinery details of the positioning of a window in the East elevation shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of special architectural or historical interest.

- 5. Prior to commencement of development, details of the works proposed to the Yew tree to the north-east shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with these details.

Reason: In order to preserve the character and amenities of the area.

**Informatives:**

- 1. NC01 - Alterations to submitted/approved plans.
- 2. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission.

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.