

7 DCSE2003/3612/O - PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT CHURCH BUILDING AND OUTLINE CONSENT FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT OUR LADY AND ST TERESA OF LISEUX R.C. CHURCH, WHITCHURCH, SYMONDS YAT, HEREFORDSHIRE HR9 6DJ

For: Trustees of Archdiocese of Cardiff per Walter Davies, Chartered Surveyor, 12 Tawe Business Village, Phoenix Way, Enterprise Park, Swansea SA7 9LA

Date Received: 2nd December 2003 Ward: Kerne Bridge Grid Ref: 54952, 17631

Expiry Date: 27th January 2004

Local Member: Councillor Mrs R Lincoln

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1. The site lies within the larger settlement of Whitchurch, as defined in the Local Plan. It is accessed off the C1250, Llangrove to Whitchurch road, and is situated within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site slopes down from the northwest to the southeast. A stone wall and gate define the roadside boundary, with walls along the eastern and southern boundaries and mature planting along the western elevation.
- 1.2 The 0.9 hectre site is occupied by a detached building, known as Our Lady and St. Teresa of Liseux Roman Catholic Church. The building is of distinctive design having a steep roof pitch and a tall, narrow gable facing the road. The gable is centrally glazed with cream painted render to the sides and other elevations. The land around the church is open.
- 1.3 It is proposed to demolish the church building and develop the land for residential purposes. The application is in outline form, with all matters reserved for future consideration.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance

PPG 1	General Policy and Principles
PPG 3	Housing
PPG 7	The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic & Social Development

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy H18	Residential Development in Rural Settlements
Policy H16A	Housing in Rural Areas

Policy CTC1	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC9	Development Criteria

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

GD1	General Development Criteria
Policy C5	Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy C43	Foul sewerage
Policy C45	Drainage
Policy SH6	Housing Development in Larger Villages
Policy SH8	New Housing Development Criteria in Larger Villages
Policy SH14	Siting and design of buildings

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan – First Deposit Draft

Policy H4	Main Villages: Settlement Boundaries
Policy H14	Re-using Previously Developed Land and Buildings
Policy LA1	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

3. Planning History

- 3.1 1981 - Erection of Roman Catholic Church and formation of septic tank drainage - granted 25.7.1960.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency - No objections
- 4.2 Welsh Water - Foul discharge from the proposed development, which is equivalent to, or less than that of the foul flows from the existing site would be acceptable. No objection if the the proposal were for one dwelling in place of the Church.

Internal Council advice

- 4.3 Head of Engineering and Transportation has no comments.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Parish Council - Comments awaited
- 5.2 Three letters of representation have been received from Jan and Jonathan Knibbs of The Cedars, Ian and Paula Knight of Rosedene and Ross-on-Wye and District Civic Society. The main points raised are:
- the church building is a good example of 1960's architecture being attractive and architecturally interesting. Perhaps unlikely that the building would meet the stringent criteria for the listing of post-war buildings
 - it would be sacrilege to knock the church down
 - the site would not accommodate many new houses, suggest that the applicant is asked to consider the conversion of the existing building, which would make a fine house, especially providing studio space.

- the site would only be suitable for one bungalow, not a three storey executive house
- there is already a drainage problem in Whitchurch, another dwelling would add to the problem
- the access is directly opposite our house (The Cedars), we will not allow any construction to block our access, nor vehicles to stop and turn in our drive
- the church is only used once a week and with the access into the site and ours being opposite would be dangerous on such a narrow road
- our neighbour (Cedar Cottage) parks her car on the road, outside her house, this would cause major problems for access for developers
- the road is narrow and children often walk along it, large construction vehicles would put them in danger.
- there is a small wooded area between our property (Rosedene) and the site and it is unclear where the boundary is. How can the boundary be established?
- No development should take place, the site should be left exactly as it is.

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

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The main consideration in the determination of this application is the principle of residential development of the site. The demolition of the Church, which is not a listed building, does not constitute development. Advice has been sought to ascertain if the building would be worthy of listing. By reason of its age and that it was not designed by an eminent architect it is considered that the building would not be listed. As such the Local Planning Authority cannot prevent its demolition.
- 6.2 The site lies within the larger settlement of Whitchurch, as defined in the Local Plan. Policies H18 and H16A of the Structure Plan and SH8 of the Local Plan are therefore applicable. These policies state that new residential development will normally be permitted subject to compliance with specified criteria. Furthermore the site constitutes previously developed land under the definition set out in Annex C of PPG3 – Housing. The surrounding land uses are residential. It is therefore considered that residential use of the site is acceptable in principle.
- 6.3 It is proposed to dispose of foul waste to the mains sewer. Local Plan policy C43 encourages connection to the mains sewer where this is possible. Welsh Water have advised that the replacement of the church with one dwelling would be acceptable in terms of its impact upon the public sewerage system. It is considered that a site of 0.9 hectares could accommodate more than one dwelling. However in light of the existing problems with the public sewerage system and the character and appearance of the surrounding development and their building to plot ratios, the restriction of the site to the erection of a single dwelling would not be contrary to policy requirements.
- 6.4 Predominantly the surrounding dwellings are two storey. By virtue of land levels and due to the size of the site it is considered that there is no justification in planning terms to restrict a dwelling on the site to a single storey structure.
- 6.5 The concerns regarding the access are noted, however the application is in outline form with all matters, including access, reserved for future consideration.

6.6 In conclusion the principle of residential development is acceptable and drainage issues can be resolved by conditions. All other matters such as the access, siting, design, materials and landscaping will be considered at a later stage.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1 A02 (Time limit for submission of reserved matters (outline permission))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 A03 (Time limit for commencement (outline permission))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 A04 (Approval of reserved matters)

Reason: To enable the local planning authority to exercise proper control over these aspects of the development.

4 A05 (Plans and particulars of reserved matters)

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5 Only one dwelling shall be erected on the site.

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.

Informative(s):

1 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission.

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.