

**5 DCCW2004/1053/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM LABORATORY FACILITY TO STUDIOS/CLASSROOM FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE AT NELSON TECHNICAL CENTRE, H.P. BULMER, WHITECROSS ROAD, HEREFORD, HR4 0LE**

**For: Herefordshire College of Art and Design per Herefordshire Council Property Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB**

**Date Received: 23rd March, 2004**

**Ward: Three Elms**

**Grid Ref: 50418, 40149**

**Expiry Date: 18th May, 2004**

Local Members: Councillors Mrs. P.A. Andrews, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels and Ms. A.M. Toon

This application was discussed at last month's meeting of the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on the 30th June, 2004. The application was deferred to enable further consideration of the College's proposed Green Travel Plan and the possible contribution of £15,000 which would be made payable to Herefordshire Council to be used to implement a residents' parking scheme in the vicinity of the application site.

The report below remains as per the agenda of the 30th June, 2004, however it should be noted that a verbal update was given at that meeting confirming support for the scheme from the Economic Development Section of this Authority who confirmed the College of Art and Design plays a significant role as a local training provider and supports the development of a number of arts and crafts businesses in a sector which is now thriving in the county. The future development of the college and its courses are constrained by its current premises and this will provide essential additional floor space.

A draft Green Travel Plan has been received as part of this application and should Members be minded to grant either permanent or temporary planning permission, this could be controlled through the use of an appropriate planning condition. Furthermore, should an approval be granted by the Committee it would require the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement to enable the proposed £15,000 financial contribution to be made available to Herefordshire Council for the implementation of a residents' parking scheme.

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

1.1 The application site is located on the north side of Eign Street/Whitecross Road adjacent to the vehicular entrance to Aldi supermarket. The building itself which has a landmark position in the area is a modern building and the first part of the Bulmers complex one sees on travelling west out of the city centre.

1.2 This application seeks full planning permission for a change of use from the existing B1 classification to D1 (Non-residential Education and Training Centres) for the College of Art and Design currently based at Aylestone Hill. The details submitted with the application indicate the building would provide accommodation for between 150 and 200 staff and students and the provision of 15 parking spaces would be made available on land immediately to the west of the building for staff parking only. A detailed

supporting travel statement has been put in on behalf of the college which gives a breakdown of the hours of use of the building and that the college will encourage the following.

- a) Use of public transport - supported by closed proximity of existing bus stops.
- b) The limiting of the use of private vehicles on site by staff with authorised permit holders only.
- c) Students to make use of public car parking as present within the city.
- d) Drop-off point within the confines of designated parking area for mini-bus transfers from the main college campus as appropriate.
- e) Provision of a secure cycle shelter.
- f) Promotion of car sharing amongst staff.

- 1.3 There would be no external changes to the building and internally rooms would be set out for studios, offices, classrooms, low tech workshops and space for recreational breaks. The hours of use proposed would be 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, 9. a.m. - 7 p.m. (during college year Finals) and as the college curriculum determines. It should be noted that outside term time the building would not be in use.

## 2. Policies

- 2.1 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan:

Policy CTC9 - General Development Criteria

- 2.2 Hereford Local Plan:

Policy E2 - Established Employment Areas  
 Policy E6 - Other Uses on Employment Land  
 Policy T5 - Car Parking – Designated Areas  
 Policy T11 - Pedestrian Provision  
 Policy T12 - Cyclist Provision  
 Policy SC6 - Permanent Educational Accommodation

- 2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):

Policy E5 - Safeguarding Employment Land and Buildings  
 Policy E7 - Other Employment Proposals Within and Around Hereford and the Market Towns  
 Policy T6 - Walking  
 Policy T7 - Cycling  
 Policy T8 - Road Hierarchy  
 Policy T11 - Parking Provision  
 Policy T16 - Access for All

## 3. Planning History

- 3.1 HC880543PF/W Demolition of two storey building and construction of new technical centre and link block situate opposite Grimmer Road Whitecross Road - Approved 22nd February 1989.

#### **4. Consultation Summary**

4.1 There are no statutory consultation responses on this application.

##### Internal Council Advice

4.2 Head of Engineering and Transportation - concerns are expressed regarding insufficient parking as students are likely to use the superstore and or residential areas as opposed to paying for car parking in the locality. A travel plan should be requested to mitigate the reduced parking provision.

4.3 Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards - no objection.

#### **5. Representations**

5.1 Hereford City Council - recommend refusal on the grounds of inadequate parking facilities to support the use proposed.

#### **6. Officers Appraisal**

6.1 The key issues in the consideration of this application are the principle of the proposed development and the access and transportation issues associated with the change of use.

6.2 Bulmers Technical Centre consists of relatively modern office building and laboratory facility which has been decommissioned following the scaling down of operations on the site. It is proposed to change the use of the B1 building to allow its occupation by Herefordshire College of Art and Design with the building providing capacity of between 150 to 200 students and staff.

6.3 Policy E6 of the adopted Hereford Local Plan states that non Class B uses on established employment areas will not normally be permitted having regard to the need to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet likely unforeseeable needs for Class B employment uses to include the provision of a range of sites in terms of size, location and quality. Whilst the proposed D1 use does not sit comfortably with that adopted policy, the improvement in provision of educational facilities at the College of Art and Design is one which in principle Officers support. However, each building and site must be assessed on its own merits and in this instance the access and parking issues associated with the proposal must be the overriding consideration having regard to recognised parking and congestion issues in this part of the city centre.

6.4 The application is supported by a Transport Statement which indicates that there would be no availability for on site parking for students. This is supported with the college's commitment to encourage the methods and modes of transport in Part 1 of this report. Whilst in principle Officers welcome development proposals which promote sustainable forms of transport, in this case having regard to the strategic position of the existing college at Aylestone Hill and the location of the technical centre, it is considered unrealistic to expect almost all of the students to use public transport, the provision of mini-bus transfers or public pay and display car parks. Furthermore, there are no public car park facilities in close proximity to the application site which is likely to exacerbate the recognised parking problems within the surrounding streets.

- 6.5 Careful consideration has been given to the potential to increase parking provision on site, however it is extremely difficult to resolve. The full provision in accordance with adopted standards would require almost 90 spaces which is considered unsustainable. Should a reduced figure be suggested this will encourage the students to use private vehicles and once at capacity is likely to lead to overflow car parking on the side streets of Whitecross.
- 6.6 In view of the above, Officers conclude that the use of the building as proposed is not acceptable and is highly likely to exacerbate existing parking problems in this already congested part of the city. Whilst seeking to support the College of Art and Design in its aspirations to improve educational provision, this application fails to satisfy the fundamental transport issue and is also contrary to Policy E6 of the adopted Hereford Local Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be refused for the following reason:**

- 1. **The site is located in a busy part of Hereford City where on-street parking and congestion are a recognised problem. Having regard to the limited parking facilities associated with the proposal and having regard to the intensive use as proposed, the development is highly likely to exacerbate access and parking issues to the detriment of the locality and highway safety. Furthermore, the proposed use conflicts with Policy E6 of the adopted Hereford Local Plan which seeks to retain Class B uses on established employment sites to ensure sufficient land is available to meet likely foreseeable needs of employment uses including the provision of a range of sites in terms of size, location and quality.**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.