

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	14 MARCH 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	<p>S111970/F - PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING PUB WITH 10 BED ACCOMMODATION AND 2 STAFF DWELLINGS AT THE MILL RACE PUB, WALFORD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5QS</p> <p>For: Eagle Inns Ltd, Ruardean Works, Varnister Road, Nr Drybrook, Gloucestershire, GL17 9BH</p>

Date Received: 20 July 2011

Ward: Kerne Bridge

Grid Ref: 358673,22025

Expiry Date: 18 October 2011

Local Member: Councillor JG Jarvis

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The Mill Race Public House and associated car parking is on the west side of the B4234. Nelsons Court a development of 5 houses is to the north. Farm land adjoins the site on its west side with Goodrich Castle further to the west. Walford Timber Sawmill and open storage yard is to the southwest.
- 1.2 The car park on the north side of the pub and to the rear is in Flood Zone 2 and 3.
- 1.3 The site is located outside the identified main village boundary of Walford (Coughton) as shown on Inset Map 39 in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.4 This application proposes the erection of a 2-storey accommodation block that will be positioned in the southwest corner of the car park adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The accommodation block will provide 10 letting rooms each providing a bedroom, sitting area and bathroom.
- 1.5 The application also proposes the construction of a 2-storey building on the north side of the entrance off the B4234 that will accommodate 2 flats providing 2 bedrooms, kitchen/dining/lounge and shower room. The building will be gable end onto the B4234 and on a similar "building line" to the housing on the north side of the pub. Entrance to the flats will be off the driveway to the car park. The flats are intended to provide accommodation for staff employed at the Mill Race facility.
- 1.6 A single storey addition to the rear of the pub is also proposed that will extend the trading area. A balcony is proposed above the addition that will be screened either side by a 2 metre high wall. The balcony will look out over the car park towards farm land and Goodrich Castle.
- 1.7 It is proposed to dispose of sewerage by way of a new biodisc treatment plant that will be located in the northwest corner of the car park, close to the existing treatment plant.

2. Policies

2.1 National Planning Guidance:

PPS1	-	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4	-	Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS7	-	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS25	-	Development and Flood Risk

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan:

S1	-	Sustainable Development
S2	-	Development Requirements
S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
DR3	-	Movement
DR5	-	Planning Obligations
DR7	-	Flood Risk
DR14	-	Lighting
H7	-	Housing in the Countryside Outside Settlements
H8	-	Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings and Dwellings Associated with Rural Businesses
H13	-	Sustainable Residential Design
LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
RST1	-	Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
RST2	-	Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development Within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
RST12	-	Visitor Accommodation
RST13	-	Rural and Farm Tourism Development

3. Planning History

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|
| 3.1 | DCSE2005/0527/F | Refurbishment of public house and construction of 4 residential dwellings. Withdrawn. |
| 3.2 | DCSE2007/3912/F | Single storey extension. Withdrawn. |
| 3.3 | DCSE2008/2312/F | Extension to form delicatessen shop. Approved 5.11.2008. |
| 3.4 | S110887/F | Extension to public house, 10 bedroom accommodation block and 2 staff dwellings. Withdrawn. |

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 Environment Agency: Has no objection to the development subject to conditions.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: Has no objection subject to conditions.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Landscape): Has no objection.

4.4 Environmental Health and Trading Standards: Has no objection subject to a condition requiring the submission of lighting details.

5. Representations

5.1 Walford Parish Council has no objection to this application, provided the staff accommodation remains tied to the business.

5.2 Objections have been received from

B Taylor, Laburnum Cottage, Walford
TA Barnett, 4 Nelson's Court, Walford
CG Coggins, Giddis, Goodrich

J and E Underwood, 993 Bukit Timah Road, Mapplewoods, 01/11 Saraca Court, Singapore
G Smith, Walford Timber Ltd, The Sawmills, Walford

In summary it is said

- I am concerned the 10 bedroom accommodation unit is overpowering and very close to my boundary.
- Inadequate parking proposed.
- The new house, restaurant extension will look directly over my property.
- The plans are totally out of character, size and proportion to the room available.
- The application is inadequate in dealing with the disposal of foul drainage.
- The block of ten letting rooms would have a damaging impact on our property. It will blot out all view in that direction.
- The second floor windows will look into our garden and all our rear windows.
- Parking close to our property will cause disturbance, especially at night.
- The balcony will look straight into our property.
- The accommodation block will be extremely close to our business, Walford Timber.
- There may be conflict between our activities and the guest accommodation.
- This could have an impact on our business.

5.3 Letters of support have been received from:

A Rolfe, The Poppies, 12 Tudor Walk, Berry Hill, Coleford
NH Thomas, 6 Lilac Drive, Monmouth
B Ennis – No address given.

In summary it is said:

- The proposal will improve a valuable community asset.
- Local pubs should be allowed to diversify to ensure survival.
- Herefordshire needs good tourist accommodation.
- The proposal will provide additional employment.

5.4 A petition in support of the application with 56 signatures has been received.

5.5 A Design and Access has been submitted with the application. In summary it is said:

- The pub is situated in the centre of Walford.
- Behind the pub is a picturesque view of the River Wye with Goodrich Castle in the background.

- A 10 bedroom accommodation block is defined as the minimum size and therefore essential that at least 10 bedrooms were created together with additional dining space within the pub to accommodate the additional evening use.
- Staff accommodation is essential to ensure guests are catered for and ongoing viability of the business in securing and retaining competent staff as well as security and overlooking supervision. The scale of the development is in keeping with the existing street scene.
- The existing first floor flat has been demolished to create additional trading area to be used for conferences and business meetings.
- Overall 52 parking spaces are provided on the site. Providing an additional 15 spaces over the existing situation allowing 10 spaces if the accommodation is full.
- There will be a very small increase in activity within the car park over the existing situation.
- The vernacular design will blend the proposal into this countryside village.

5.6 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Hereford Customer Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB and prior to the Committee meeting.

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The Mill Race is located outside the main village boundary of Walford (Coughton) as shown on Inset Map 39 in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. Consequently, for the purpose of planning policy the site is located in the countryside. This application proposes the following:

Extension to Public House

6.2 The extension is proposed to the rear of the pub and will increase the bar area. The scale and form of the extension is considered acceptable in that it allows the form of the original building to remain dominant.

6.3 The application also proposes a balcony above the extension. The balcony will look out towards Goodrich Castle. A 2 metre high screen wall is proposed either side of the balcony. Having regard to the impact of the balcony on the residential amenity of the neighbouring property, it is considered the height and position of the screen wall will protect the amenity of the neighbour and reduce overlooking that may arise.

Accommodation Block

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 Policy RST2 reads as follows:

Within the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the conservation of the unique character and qualities of the landscape and of biodiversity and geological interests will have precedence over the development of facilities for recreation, sport and tourism. In particular such developments 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.
- 6.7 Council policy therefore places paramount importance on the protection of the natural beauty of the AONB, which is of national importance. For this reason the policy is particularly restrictive and development should only be permitted when it meets the specific requirements of the policy.
- 6.8 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 leisure facility and the existing landscape character is that of amenity land and car parking associated with the leisure facilities, development of the scale proposed is considered to be acceptable. There is very limited change to the landscape character of the site. The proposal is not considered to have an undue effect on the rural quality and character of the AONB.
- 6.9 The second policy issue is whether the development is small scale and constructed from appropriate materials. The proposed is for a 2-storey building that is positioned close to the rear boundary of the site.
- 6.10 Insofar as the visual impact of the proposed building is concerned that the building will be to the rear of the pub and will be seen as part of a group. It is considered siting the proposal in this position allows the building to relate visually to the group. The eaves height of the accommodation block will be no higher than the eaves height of the existing pub building, and on a similar contour. In this respect it is considered that the accommodation building will be viewed as a low-key structure that will not have a discernable impact on the acknowledged visual qualities of the area. Accordingly, it is not considered the proposal will cause harm to the character or quality of the landscape and the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to policy LA1. No objection, subject to conditions, is raised by the Conservation Manager/Landscape Officer in relation to the impact of this proposal on the landscape quality of the AONB.
- 6.11 The third issue is whether the development makes a positive contribution to the understanding and quiet enjoyment of the natural beauty of the AONB. There is an existing commercial use on site. This proposal is for additional guest accommodation that will be used in connection with the established leisure activities of the site and in this respect the policy requirement is met.
- 6.12 The site of the accommodation block lies partially within Flood Zone 3, the high risk Zone, and wholly within Flood Zone 2, the medium risk Zone. The proposed accommodation block is situated towards the western portion of the site, on land bordering Flood Zone 3.
- 6.13 PPS25: Development and Flood Risk requires 'a sequential risk-based approach to determining the suitability of land for development in flood risk areas is central to the policy statement and should be applied at all levels of the planning process.' The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding. Based on the scale of the accommodation block, the Environment Agency is satisfied the scale and nature of the proposal, which is considered 'minor development' in accordance with PPS25. The requirement for sequential testing of proposals within Flood Zones has been carefully considered. In view of the importance of integrating the guest accommodation with the existing facilities and upon the basis that the guest accommodation will be intermittently occupied, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable.

Staff Accommodation

- 6.14 As mentioned above the Mill Race is located outside the recognised boundary of Walford. The site is located in the countryside where Policy H7 restricts residential development. The policy does allow exceptions to this principle, as follows:
- the development is clearly necessary in connection with agriculture or forestry and cannot be located in a settlement and complies with policy H8; or
 - it is a necessary accompaniment to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with policy H8;
 - it results from the re-use of a rural building in accordance with policies HBA12 and HBA13;
 - it is a replacement for, comparable in size and scale with and on the same site as an existing building with established residential use rights;
 - it is an extension to an existing dwelling in accordance with policy H18;
 - it is a site providing for the needs of Gypsies or other Travellers in accordance with policy H12;
 - it is rural exception housing in accordance with policy H10.
- 6.15 While, it is said the staff dwellings are essential to the supervision of the accommodation block it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated why the accommodation must be provided on this site or why it cannot be provided within the pub or elsewhere in the locality. Also, until such time as the accommodation block has been constructed the reason for the dwellings is regarded as premature. None of the exceptions identified above are relevant to this application since there is no functional justification for the development of 2 dwellings in connection with either the proposed accommodation block or the pub business. Consequently, the need for a person or persons to live on the site in connection with the business has not been proven.
- 6.16 In conclusion, while the extension to the Mill Race is acceptable in term of its scale and form and the accommodation block complies with policies RST1 and RST2, the applicant has not demonstrated there is a functional requirement for the dwellings. As such this element of the proposal is contrary to policy H7 which restricts housing development in the countryside.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

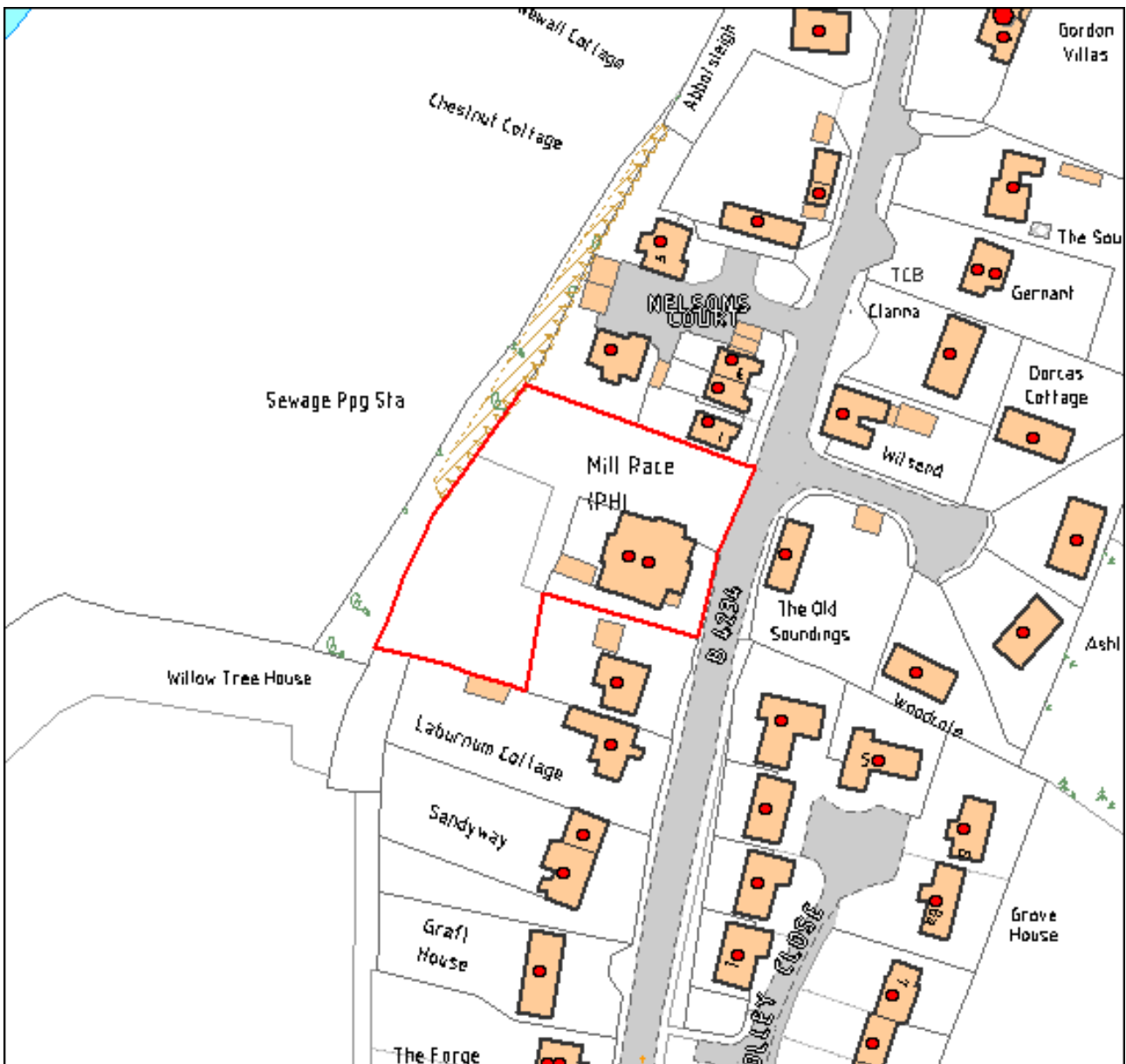
- 1. The proposed dwellings are considered to be contrary to Policy H7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan together with the advice contained in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, as the site is located outside a defined settlement and none of the exceptions to new housing development in the open countryside have been satisfied.**
- 2. In the absence of a functional justification, the proposed dwellings would be harmful to the local environment and to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which the use is located. As such the proposal conflicts with Policy LA1 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

Decision:

Notes:

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: S/111970/F

SITE ADDRESS : THE MILL RACE PUB, WALFORD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5QS

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