

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 SEPTEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	N121131/FH - ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING DWELLING AT THE COTTAGE, WOODEND, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE HR8 2RS For: Mr Ingleton per Mr Stephen Turner, 5 Barbourne Road, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR1 1RS
WEBSITE LINK:	http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/58286.aspx?ID=121131&NoSearch=True

Date Received: 16 April 2012

Ward: Frome

Grid Ref: 363560,241187

Expiry Date: 11 June 2012

Local Member: Councillor PM Morgan

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site lies at the end of a private drive, to the west of the C1151 at the hamlet of Wood End within the Parish of Ashperton. It is located approximately one kilometre to the south-west of Ashperton village. Upon the site at present is a genuinely small, two bay, one and a half storey, half-timbered eighteenth century cottage with a rear single storey extension. The original cottage has a width of 6.4 metres and a depth of 4 metres, whilst the single storey rear extension has a width of 6.4 metres and a depth of 2.6 metres. This means that the gross floor space of the existing cottage (including porch & ground floor cupboard) is approximately 74 square metres. However, the limited roof space of the first floor of the original cottage means that the useable floor area is some 12.8 square metres less. The front principal elevation of the cottage faces south. That elevation has two dormer windows.
- 1.2 The private drive which provides vehicular access to this property serves three other existing houses. They are 'Moorend Cottage', 'Woodmans Cottage' and 'Spring Grove Farm'. The mature rear garden of 'Woodmans Cottage' runs parallel to the application site, although 'Woodmans Cottage' itself is in excess of 25 metres to the south-east of the front elevation of the dwelling the subject of this application.
- 1.3 To the north-west of the site are a hedgerow and then an open field which falls to the north-west. Along the far northern boundary of that field, some 250 metres distant is a public footpath that runs in an east to west direction. The eastern boundary with 'Woodmans Cottage' also has a hedgerow.
- 1.4 In December of last year the applicant submitted an application (DMN/113379/FH) for a two extension to the rear of a contemporary design. In essence it was a cube and was to provide kitchen / diner utility room and decking at ground floor level and three additional bedrooms, a bathroom and a balcony at first floor level. This proposed extension was to have a depth of some 10.4 metres and a height of some 5.3 metres. It was to be rendered. That application was withdrawn in January of this year.

- 1.5 Following the previously withdrawn application revisions were made to the originally submitted scheme primarily consisting of:-
- a) Removing one of the additional bedrooms proposed at first floor level, so that the proposal is now only to create a three bedroomed house;
 - b) Deletion of the balcony at first floor level to address concerns with regard perceived overlooking;
 - c) Deletion of the decking at ground floor level;
 - d) A reduction in the depth of the proposed extension by some 3.4metres;
 - e) A reduction in the height of the building such that its height would be 0.42 metre less than the ridge of the existing cottage. This has been achieved by creating a step down (220mm) into the proposed extension and lowering the floor to ceiling height at first floor from some 2.3 metres to 2.1 metres; and
 - f) A change in the predominant external material from render to horizontal oak stack bonded boarding.
- 1.6 The consequence of this is that what is now proposed is a two storey flat roofed rear extension with a depth of 7 metres and a variable width of 7.5 metres 6.2 metres, other than the initial 2.3 metres of the first floor element which would be set in / recessed by 2.7 metres from the western flank / side elevation. The proposed extension is deliberately of a contemporary design to distinguish itself, rather than compete, with the original cottage. The proposed extension would have extensive glazing in the rear (northern) elevation and the side / flank western elevation. The kitchen / diner would have a pellet burning stove at the western side with a red brick chimney stack provided.
- 1.7 The external materials would comprise:-
- a) multi-stock red brick to the plinth and chimney stack;
 - b) timber cladding to the external elevations being oak stack bonding;
 - c) aluminium powder coated windows and sliding doors coated with a RAL 7016 Anthracite grey colour; and
 - d) timber boarded door to western side entrance.
- 1.8 In order to respect the privacy of the neighbouring property known as 'Woodmans Cottage' and ensure there is no overlooking to the east, only one window has been introduced onto the east – facing elevation, being that of the proposed utility room. In addition, it is proposed that this window be fitted with fixed external louvres, which both maintains the horizontal emphasis of the timber boarding and ensures that there will be no direct view either into or out of the room over the garden of the adjoining property, though still allowing ventilation and some natural light into the proposed utility room.
- 1.9 The resultant dwelling would have a gross floor space of 168 square metres.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

S2	-	Development Requirements
DR1	-	Design
H18	-	Alterations and extensions
S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
LA2	-	Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
HBA8	-	Locally important buildings
T11	-	Parking Provision

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr R Close on 01432 261803

- 2.2 The Unitary Development Plan policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Councils website by using the following link:-

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/29815.aspp>

3 History and Proposal

- 3.1 DMN/113379/FH - Alterations and extensions to existing dwelling. Withdrawn 4 January 2012

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 None

Internal Consultees

- 4.2 Conservation Manager:-

“The proposed extension would represent a 131% increase over the original cottage and its historic extension. When dealing with a small cottage the amount of extra floor space that can be gained before the new outweighs the old is relatively modest, though the actual amount will vary relative to the particular massing and scale of a scheme. The Cottage is acknowledged as having a small footprint and scale, but it is still considered that such a large increase to this property would be too great.

- 4.3 The overall height of the proposed extension is slightly less than the height of the original cottage but the provision of a full two storeys under a flat roof rather than one plus an attic results in the scale of the extension being larger than the original. The extension should be subservient to the original building and this has not been achieved with the proposed scheme. It has become a case of the tail wagging the dog and this is not considered acceptable for a scheme focussed on a locally important building.

- 4.4 I reiterate my previous comment that “though a flat roof extension of contemporary design may be able to work with the existing character and appearance of the historic cottage, it is considered that the extension would need to be a single storey rather than two-storey. Alternatively a one-and-a-half storey design with a pitched roof but with contemporary styling might be a more successful prospect.”

- 4.5 The combination of the size of footprint plus the height of the extension results in a building that dominates the original cottage and is out of proportion.

- 4.6 The main frontage to the west is also dominated by the slab of brickwork that it is the chimney. Though a chimney is welcomed in principle the form is rather brutal, especially as there is only a ground floor fireplace and therefore only one flue, which means that the chimney could slim towards the top in a similar manner to that of the original cottage.

- 4.7 The oak boarding proposed for the external walls is a smart, contemporary use of timber, which may be appropriate in this context if the walls were not as high.

- 4.8 The change to a timber frame character for the rebuilt rear extension to the cottage is not considered to be successful due to the lack of a pitched roof over it. Timber frames do not have flat roofs over them and, as can be seen here, the timber tends to appear fake because it has not been finished off (with a pitched roof).

- 4.9 In addition the new front porch is rather large for the cottage – a more traditional size would have been the same size as the door width. However both these items have been carried out under permitted development rights.
- 4.10 Overall it is considered that the scale of the proposal dominates the original cottage and its rear extension. The massing of the extension results in the rear of the property being visually heavier than the front which creates an unacceptable imbalance in the composition. The scheme does not comply with HBA8 as it is considered that it does adversely affect the appearance and setting of the original cottage.
- 4.11 The Transportation Manager raises no objection.
- 4.12 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/searchplanningapplications.aspx

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/consumer_advice/41840.asp

5. Representations

- 5.1 The Ashperton Parish Council object to the proposed development on the basis that the proposed extension by virtue of its design and size, would be disproportionate and out of character with both the existing dwelling and with its surroundings, in clear conflict with Part 2 of UDP Policy H18.
- 5.2 The occupiers of 'Chapel House' Noke Lane, Pembridge and the occupiers of 'Spring Grove Farm' and 'Woodmans Cottage' object on the following summarised grounds:-
- a) the floor area of the extension is well over double the size of the original cottage. This is not an extension but a new house attached to the old one, which is to be lived in by a different person to the householder;
 - b) the extension elevations are outrageously out of keeping with the local architecture, particularly from the east elevation. The western elevation is just as appalling;
 - c) the access track to is narrow and congested and turning onto the public highway has very poor visibility;
 - d) it is not the case that the site is only visible from one property;
 - e) the flank elevations of the proposed extension would be readily visible from neighbouring properties;
 - f) the shape and proportions of the proposed extension are inappropriate;
 - g) the proposed cladding is not traditional;
 - h) loss of privacy to adjoining dwellings;
 - i) a single storey pitched roof extension would be much more appropriate; and
 - j) the access and parking provision is inadequate.

6. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The Cottage was purchased at auction more than one year ago by the applicants. At the time that the property was being auction Officers received many enquiries by persons wishing to purchase the property, demolish it and replace it with a materially larger new house. At that time Officers considered that:-
- a) The cottage was not worthy of listing as being of special architectural or historic merit;

- b) Notwithstanding a) above, the cottage was of local importance and as such every attempt should be made to refurbish and possibly extend the existing cottage, rather than replace it; and
 - c) The cottage was in a very poor physical condition – it had a significant lean to it, the timber frame was in a poor condition and the panels were infilled with brick.
- 6.2 At that time the Cottage had visually harmful lean-to extensions to both sides / flanks, a rear extension (that has been replaced) and a porch (that has been replaced). I understand that the two side structures that have been removed had a floor space of some 9.3 square metres. In addition, a timber shed has been removed from the rear garden.
- 6.3 The applicants have gone about refurbishing the existing cottage by, amongst other matters, undertaking extensive repairs to the timber frame and replacing the brick infill panels with wattle and daub. It would be reasonable to state that a locally important building that was in a poor physical condition and arguably “at risk” has been saved.
- 6.4 The existing Cottage is extremely small by modern day standards. The fact that it has been restored is to be welcomed. It is considered that it is reasonable to extend such a property. The desire to extend the property to create a three bedroomed house does is not considered to be unreasonable. In purely numeric terms the proposed extension cannot be considered as modest as the floor space would increase considerably from some 74 square metres to some 168 square metres. As such, the proposal could be considered to conflict with policy H18 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007. The application has been advertised as a departure from the provisions of the Development Plan. However, that does not necessarily mean that the proposed development is harmful and in that respect a more detailed and thorough assessment is required.

Design Approach

- 6.5 To enlarge this property to create the accommodation that the applicant wishes to create is extremely challenging due to the unusually small size of the existing cottage, including its limited eaves height, ridge height and depth. To extend it in a traditional pastiche manner whilst ensuring that any extension remained subservient to the original cottage appears extremely difficult.
- 6.6 The approach that the architect has adopted is to create a modern contemporary piece of architecture physically linked to the building but separated at first floor level. This creates a clear physical distinction between “the old” and “the new”. This seems to me to be a perfectly legitimate approach provided it is executed to a high quality.
- 6.7 The beauty of the existing cottage is the view of the principal front elevation when approaching down the private drive. By locating the proposed extension to the rear of the existing dwelling, this view would remain largely unaltered although one may get an oblique view of part of the western side elevation.
- 6.8 Impressively by carefully limiting the height of the proposed extension by limiting the first floor ceiling height and creating a step down into the proposed extension from the existing house, the flat roof of the proposed extension would be lower than the ridge height of the existing cottage . It must be noted that the ridge height of the existing cottage is akin to the eaves height of most modern two storey houses – it is low. The flat roof of the proposed extension would be lower still.
- 6.9 Of course the quality of such modern pieces of architecture is largely dependent upon the quality of materials proposed. In this case the materials are considered to be both appropriate and of quality. The use of oak stack bonded horizontal boarding will be would be much less

harsh than the previously proposed render and will mellow / weather to a silvery / grey colour over time.

- 6.10 It is considered that rather than overwhelm the original or existing dwelling, the proposal would be viewed as a physically distinct, albeit linked at ground floor level piece of architecture. As such the original cottage will still be capable of being fully appreciated.

Visual Impact

- 6.11 The planning system is not designed to safeguard private views; it is the visual impact from public vantage points (i.e. the public realm) that needs to be addressed, including the public highway and public rights of way. This existing cottage is barely visible at present from any public vantage points. The one public vantage point which Officers have found from which the existing cottage and proposed extension is visible, albeit a brief glimpse, is from the public footpath some 250 metres to the north-west. From that point the roof of the existing cottage is visible which suggests that the first floor of the proposed extension would be visible. The entire western elevation of the proposed extension would not be readily visible. Furthermore when viewed from that vantage points both the existing cottage and the proposed extension would be viewed against the backdrop of woodland (i.e. the area marked Cook's Wood / Ashperton Park area on the Ordnance Survey map).

Impact Upon Neighbouring Residential Properties

- 6.12 There are no neighbouring houses within twenty-one metres of the proposed extension and it is considered that the proposal would not result in any undue loss of privacy to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties or patio areas / immediate rear amenity areas of neighbouring houses.
- 6.13 It is considered that the proposed extension would not result in any undue of sunlight and/or daylight to neighbouring houses.

Vehicular Access and Parking

- 6.14 The existing private drive is considered to be adequate to serve the resultant development. It is normal practise to have five or less houses served off a private drive. Access rights and maintenance issues are private civil matters. The plan shows the provision of two car parking spaces within the application site which is considered to be adequate. This is in an area where an existing dilapidated garage stands.

Other Comments

- 6.15 The retained rear garden if the proposal were to be permitted would have a depth of some twenty-two metres.
- 6.16 It is acknowledged that the design of the extension is different in that it adopts a contemporary approach. When one looks at the extension permitted and built at 'The Roakes' in the immediate vicinity, it is considered that this is a legitimate approach. It is also recognised that there are existing timber framed houses in the immediate vicinity that have historically been extended (e.g. 'Woodmans Cottage' and 'Little Tuston').
- 6.17 It is not the role of Local Planning Authorities to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative to conform to certain forms or styles. It is considered that this is a case where the professional Architect has responded to an extremely challenging brief of extending a genuinely small cottage into a reasonably sized three bedroomed family house in an innovative and appropriate manner. It is considered that such innovative design solutions helps to raise the standard of design more generally in the area. Members will have noted that the Senior Conservation Officer has a different view.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr R Close on 01432 261803

However, planning by its very nature often involves competing subjective opinions of trained professionals. This is clearly a balanced case where perfectly legitimate arguments can be forwarded both for and against the proposed development.

- 6.18 Whilst it is understood that the applicant's mother regularly stays at the property the proposal is for an extension and not for a separate dwellinghouse. There is no evidence whatsoever that the applicant's mother does not live communally with the other family members.
- 6.19 The proposal has some sustainability credentials with the use of a fleece-backed EPDM synthetic rubber roofing system (a low carbon produced material) and the provision of a wood pellet burner. E.P.D.M. synthetic rubber membrane is a material that can stretch, will not tear or crack and is unaffected by ozone and UV light. It is designed to outlast conventional roofing materials, normally with guarantees of twenty years and a fifty year life expectancy. EPDM is an inert material with limited environmental impact during manufacture and the use of the product (suppliers note that both Government and the International Kyoto Ecology agreement recommends EPDM rubber as Best Value sustainable eco-sound roofing). The colour of a dark grey slate looks natural and doesn't easily show dirt and the smooth synthetic rubber finish does not require ballast or chippings that can block gutters and downpipes.
- 6.20 With regard the pellet boiler, modern biomass stoves are efficient and reliable with clean burn methods. They cheaply convert biomass in the form of wood pellet fuel to heat, whilst giving off almost no smoke and little ash. Wood pellets are a renewable clean burn biomass fuel made from recycled wood waste or sawdust and the use of biomass fuel is a 'carbon neutral' process. The carbon dioxide released while burning is balanced by that absorbed by the tree during its growth. The UK Government Energy Savings Trust is encouraging the installation of wood pellet room heaters and stoves and is offering grants towards the cost of Pellet Stove Installation.
- 6.21 Wood pellet stoves can provide both space heating and hot water, provided by a heat exchanger, which can be integrated with the existing hot water and heating system to provide additional heat energy for the property. It is anticipated that the pellet burner, together with a highly insulated construction, will provide the majority of the heating energy needs for the extension.
- 6.22 It is proposed that the oak boarding/cladding would be from UK or European suppliers with PEFC UK (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certificates, ensuring environmental sourcing and responsible, sustainable forest management.
- 6.23 The recommendation is that full conditional planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
- 2. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in full accordance with the external materials specified upon the Planning Application Form received 16th April 2012, the Design & Access Statement received on 16th April 2012 and the approved plans referred to in condition 3 below and shall thereafter be maintained with those materials.**

Reason:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with policies DR1, H18, LA2 and HBA8 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007;

3. **B01 Development in accordance with the approved plans**
4. **The two car parking spaces shown upon drawing number Drg No. 1411-Bloc2 (Scale 1:500) received 16th April 2012 shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter be retained and maintained for the parking of two motor vehicles, free of obstruction;**

Reason:- To ensure adequate on-site car parking provision to prevent parking on the public highway, in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy T11 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007;

5. **Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town And Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended, including the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (no.2) (England) Order (2008) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no development normally permitted by Classes A, B, C, D and E of Part 1 and Classes A and C of Part 2 of schedule 2 of Article 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 shall be carried out without the express consent of the Local Planning Authority;**

Reason:- To prevent an overdevelopment of the site, to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residents and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with policies DR1, H18, LA2 and HBA8 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007;

Reason for Approval

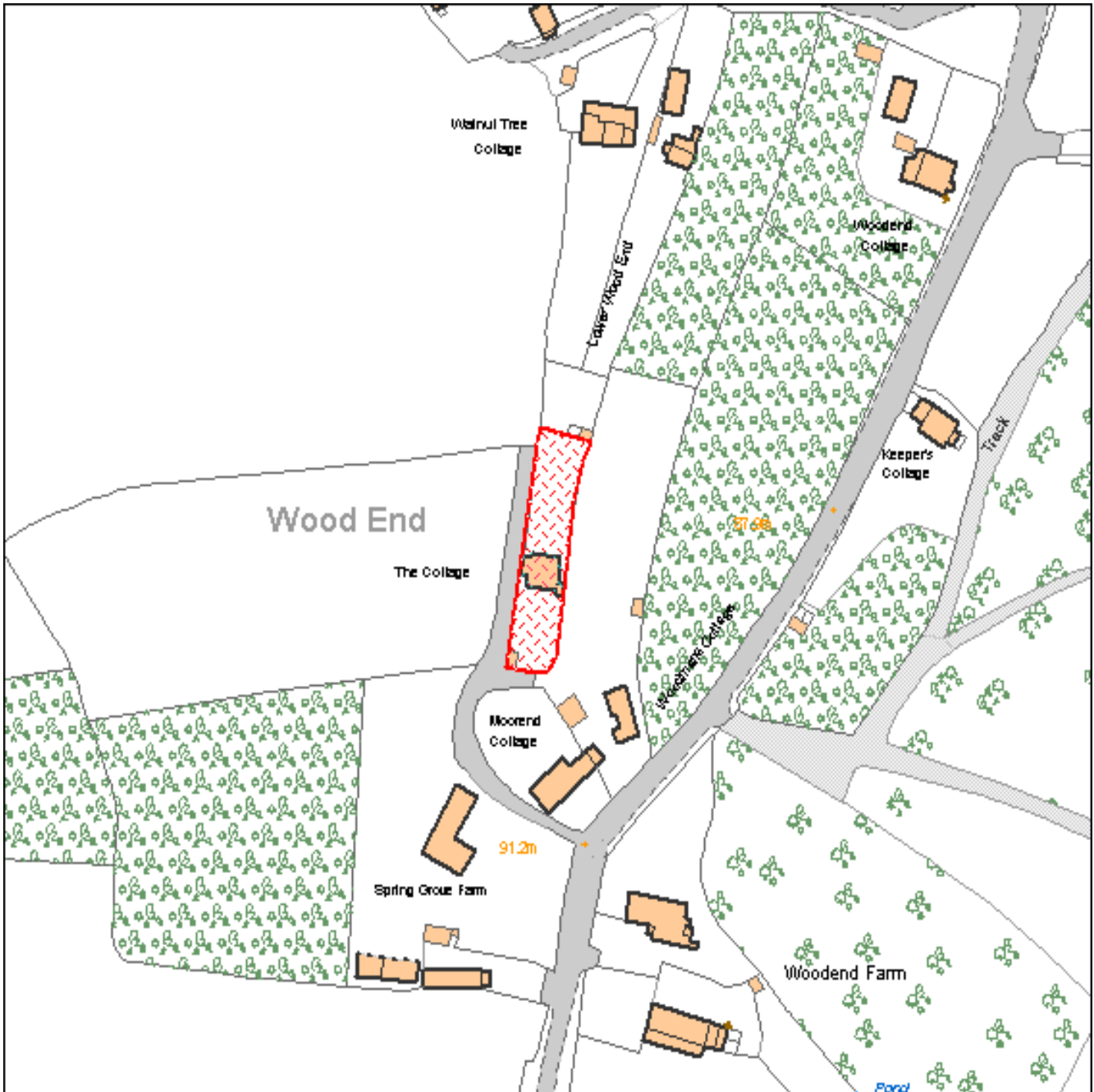
1. **The Local Planning Authority resolved to grant full conditional planning permission in this case despite the floor space increase of the extension being significant compared to the original cottage for the following reasons:-**
 - a) **The extension would not adversely affect the principal / front elevation of the original cottage;**
 - b) **The extension would visually appear as distinct / separate to the original cottage and its overall height would be some 42cm lower than the ridge height of the original cottage**
 - c) **The contemporary design of the proposed extension is considered to represent an innovative quality approach;**
 - d) **The extension would not be readily visible or visually harmful to the landscape when viewed from public vantage points;**
 - e) **The extension would not result in any undue loss of daylight and / or sunlight to habitable rooms of neighbouring houses; and**
 - f) **The extension would not result any undue loss of privacy to occupiers of neighbouring houses;**

As such, the extension was not considered to conflict with the purpose / objectives of policies S2, DR1, H18, S7, LA2, HBA8 and T11 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

Decision:

Notes:

Background Papers: Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: N/121131/FH

SITE ADDRESS : THE COTTAGE, WOODEND, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR8 2RS

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