

5 (A) DCCW2004/3707/F - RETENTION OF ART DECO FRONTAGE TO BRIDGE STREET AND PART OF CHAPEL, DEMOLITION OF REMAINING BUILDINGS AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL PURPOSES AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY WORKS AT 12-13 BRIDGE STREET, HEREFORD, HR4 9DF AND GWYNNE STREET, HEREFORD

For: Country Visions OK Limited per Harris Lamb, Grosvenor House, 75-76 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8SP

5 (B) DCCW2004/3708/C - RETENTION OF ART DECO FRONTAGE TO BRIDGE STREET AND PART OF CHAPEL, DEMOLITION OF REMAINING BUILDINGS AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL PURPOSES AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY WORKS AT 12-13 BRIDGE STREET, HEREFORD, HR4 9DF AND GWYNNE STREET, HEREFORD

For: Country Visions OK Limited per Harris Lamb, Grosvenor House, 75-76 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8SP

Date Received: 21st October 2004 Ward: Central Grid Ref: 50844, 39718

Expiry Date: 20th January 2005

Local Member: Councillor D.J. Fleet

Members will recall that the applications were deferred for a Committee site visit. In the intervening period Hereford Civic Society have reviewed their observations in light of additional information and have submitted additional comments.

1. On the architectural treatment proposed, we acknowledge that this is always a difficult area involving different aesthetic opinions, but we would suggest that consideration be given to:-
 - a. The penthouse on the Crystal Rooms frontage to Bridge Street be glazed rather than repeating the Art Deco treatment.

- b. That further thought be given to the extent of brickwork on the north and south (Gwynne Street) elevations. While the south elevation is broken up by balconies we are of the view that even greater variety could be achieved by incorporating some areas of rendering or timber. Similarly with the north elevation where there are no balconies to provide such variety.
- c. The top storey is clad in metal and glass as with the Left Bank but a higher proportion of glass might lighten the overall effect.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 This site consists of the former Crystal Rooms (13 Bridge Street), No. 12 Bridge Street, the chapel behind and former warehousing backing onto Gwynne Street, Hereford.
- 1.2 The proposal is to retain the Art Deco frontage to the Crystal Rooms and part of the chapel, demolition of the remaining buildings and construction of retail units fronting Bridge Street together with 23 apartments incorporating conversion of the chapel to the rear comprising 2 x one bed, 12 x 2 bed and 9 x 3 bed units. 19 will be flats with 4 maisonettes. In addition 23 car parking spaces are proposed.
- 1.3 The new build along Gwynne Street will follow generally the footprint of the former Crystal Rooms Nightclub. It will be five stories high and still be attached to the Gwynne Street Warehouse. The facade is proposed of brick, glazing and coloured metal panels. The panelling will mainly form the upper storey.
- 1.4 The Art Deco frontage to Bridge Street will be retained and repaired. The adjoining building will be demolished and replaced with a design similar to a late 18th century, three bay facade over a five bay shopfront with traditional design and classical proportions.
- 1.5 The chapel, which is set behind No. 11 Bridge Street, will have its eastern portion removed and installation of a new roof at the line of the true west gable. Four floors of apartments will be installed.
- 1.6 All the apartments will have a principal outlook overlooking the courtyard which will contain the car park. All vehicular access will be via Gwynne Street adjacent to the Gwynne Street Warehouse in the same position as the existing access. The car park will be surfaced with a mixture of differing patterns of block pavings.
- 1.7 The application documents include a supporting statement, design statement and archaeological site assessment.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance:

PPG1	-	General Policy and Principles
PPG3	-	Housing
PPG5	-	Simplified Planning Zones
PPG6	-	Town Centres and Retail Development
PPG15	-	Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16	-	Archaeology and Planning
PPG25	-	Development and Flood Risk

2.2 Hereford Local Plan:

Policy S1	-	Role of Central Shopping Area
Policy S2	-	Retail Development Within the Central Shopping Area
Policy S6	-	Secondary Shopping Frontages
Policy H23	-	City Centre Residential Accommodation
Policy CON24	-	Shopfronts
Policy CON35	-	Archaeological Evaluation
Policy CON36	-	Nationally Important Archaeological Remains
Policy CON37	-	Other Sites of Archaeological Interest
Policy CON39	-	Enhancement
Policy CON12	-	Conservation Areas
Policy CON13	-	Conservation Areas – Development Proposals
Policy CON14	-	Planning Applications in Conservation Areas
Policy CON15	-	Enhancement Schemes
Policy CON16	-	Conservation Area Consent
Policy CON17	-	Conservation Area Consent – Condition
Policy CON18	-	Historic Street Pattern
Policy CON19	-	Townscape
Policy CON20	-	Skyline
Policy CON28	-	Shopfronts – Materials

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S3	-	Housing
Policy S5	-	Town Centres and Retail
Policy S6	-	Transport
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy DR3	-	Housing
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy H1	-	Hereford and the Market Towns
Policy H9	-	Affordable Housing
Policy H16	-	Car Parking
Policy TRC8	-	Design Standards for Employment Sites
Policy HBA6	-	New Development Within Conservation Areas
Policy HBA7	-	Demolition of Unlisted Buildings within Conservation Areas
Policy HBA8	-	Locally Important Buildings
Policy HBA10	-	Shopfronts
Policy ARCH1	-	Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations
Policy ARCH2	-	Foundation Design and Mitigation for Urban Sites
Policy ARCH4	-	Other Sites of National or Regional Importance
Policy ARCH5	-	Sites of Regional or Local Importance
Policy ARCH6	-	Recording of Archaeological Remains
Policy ARCH7	-	Hereford AAI
Policy ARCH8	-	Enhancement and Improved Access to Archaeological Sites
Policy T11	-	Parking Provision

3. Planning History

3.1 None.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency - no objection in principle subject to conditions raising floor levels above a 1 in 100 year flood.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager recommends refusal as the level of parking will impact adversely on road safety in Gwynne Street.

- 4.3 Conservation Manager:

Archaeology - Following archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site any damage can be satisfactorily mitigated by attachment of a specific suite of archaeological conditions to any permission granted. These conditions would ensure the submission of an archaeologically acceptable foundation design, the appropriate recording of extant historic structures, an archaeological site investigation, on the satisfactory conclusion of the normal archaeological archiving, reporting and publication.

Historic Buildings and Conservation

Design comments on planning application

Character assessment of building: The site is located at the southern end of Bridge Street on the eastern side of the road and extends in a roughly 'L' shaped form to the southern end of Gwynne Street. It encompasses numbers 12 Bridge Street, which currently detracts from the conservation area by virtue of unsympathetic modern shopfronts and poor quality finishes to what is an oddly proportioned building. Number 13, the former Crystal Rooms building, has a 1930's Vitrolite clad facade, and is one of only 2 Art Deco Buildings in Hereford. It is therefore of local importance in terms of its architectural history, but is also of more regional significance as it is one of the earliest structures in the area with this type of cladding. The facade is a striking feature of the street scene, all the more so given the that the majority of building's along Bridge Street either date from or were re-faced in the 18th and 19th centuries, resulting in a strong architectural character to the frontages. It is therefore important to retain this frontage. The rear of this building is a utilitarian structure of poor quality construction and little architectural merit. It dominates the western end of Gwynne Street and detracts from the conservation area due to its shabby appearance and lack of architectural and built quality, and in that it relates poorly to neighbouring structures and creates a dead frontage. The Gwynne Street warehouse is a very attractive building of local importance, being the only surviving remnant of this type of industrial building within the city centre.

The site is located within the central conservation area at a point where due to topography, and the nature of the adjoining historic built environment, it is integral to key views into the city and of the Cathedral, especially when viewed from south of the river and when looking northeast along Gwynne Street. The development to the rear of the Crystal Rooms will have the greatest impact in this respect, especially on the skyline and in its relationship with the Cathedral. This site has great potential for enhancement of the conservation area within this sensitive historic context, although

the quality of the adjacent townscape and the nature of the site itself create a number of constraints.

Comments: This application is the result of extensive discussion between the applicants, English Heritage, and Herefordshire Council officers. The principle of demolishing number 12 Bridge Street and the building to the rear of number 13 are acceptable in principle on the grounds that they currently detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The retention of number 13 and the Gwynne Street warehouse are integral to the success of this scheme as their demolition could not be supported due to their local interest and the positive contribution they make to the vitality of the townscape. This was the basis for discussions and the applicant has recognised and respected these parameters.

The supporting information submitted with this application is very thorough and demonstrates a sound understanding of both the historical development of the site and its present character and quality, especially in regards to its importance in a wider townscape context. This has formed the basis for the development of, and justification for, the proposals as submitted. Instrumental to the success of any scheme for this site is that the design approach and its relationship with its context in townscape terms is of the highest quality. The need to integrate with both adjoining buildings and key buildings in wider views of the site is especially difficult given that this operates a number of different levels and with a number of constraints. Proposals have successfully achieved this solely because the quality of design has not been compromised.

Initial concerns regarding the scale and mass of the new Gwynne Street frontage and its relationship with the warehouse and Cathedral have been addressed. The stepping down and change in materials immediately adjacent to the warehouse allows this building to still stand alone visually and no longer competes with it in terms of detail. The recessing of the top storey and the use of a different material lessen the perception of the rise in scale to the west. The zinc roofs proposed are also unobtrusive within the skyline and will be subservient in views from the south, helping to reduce the perceived mass and height of the new build, and its vertical emphasis. The vertical emphasis is also tamed by the use of architectural devices such as the windows, balconies, and cornice running in continuous horizontal plans. The delineation of the Gwynne Street elevation will add interest at street level and help to break up the mass of the building in distance views. The relief provided to the existing blank walls which terminate views from the rear of the Left Bank is welcomed and will add vitality and interest at this junction within Gwynne Street. The new penthouse level above the Bridge Street frontage will have minimum impact when viewed from street level due to the extent to which it is recessed behind this facade, and its stepping down towards the west terminates the top storeys of the new build in an unobtrusive manner.

The retention of the western end of the chapel is welcome as this frontage is of some merit and the building itself positively contributes to the history and development of this site. The new glazed eastern end provides a marked contrast to the older building, which works well and will provide a focal point within the site. The dormer windows are the least successful addition to this building but will have minimal impact as the southern one will be hidden by the new block to Gwynne Street and the northern one seen only in views from the rear of King Street.

There were and remain some reservations regarding the scale of the proposed replacement for number 12 Bridge Street as this will be the tallest traditionally detailed property within Bridge Street. This in itself, combined with a traditionally accurate

replication of classical proportions and detail may result in a building that outshines the more vernacular quality of the historic buildings along Bridge Street, making it a prominent feature of the street scene. The shopfront details are of a high quality and a status that surpasses the existing historic shopfronts on Bridge Street, most of which date from the 19th century. Again this would add to the building's prominence and stature in comparison to its historic neighbours. However, details of the shopfront can be controlled by condition and ultimately this element of proposals has to be judged on whether it preserves or enhances the conservation area. Given the poor quality of the existing building and the positive contribution proposals would make there would not be sufficient grounds for refusal of the whole scheme on the basis of the above reservations.

- 4.4 Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards - no objection subject to a condition pertaining to construction time.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Hereford City Council - no objection.

- 5.2 Two letters of support from Andrew Morris & Co. and Sally Hocking, Flat 2, 10/11 Bridge Street, Hereford identifying the following:

1. As a freehold owner in Bridge Street of business premises I write to support the planning application which has been submitted in respect of the former Crystal Rooms site which I understand is to be considered by yourselves shortly.
2. I feel that the proposals which we have seen will considerably enhance the Bridge Street/Gwynne Street area of the City particularly as this areas has already been upgraded by the inclusion of the Left Bank development.
3. I feel that having residential and shop/office accommodation available in the street will bring back more people into the centre and certainly the scheme will blend in with the current character and surrounding buildings.
4. The apartments along with the retail units will improve the environment.

- 5.3 Conservation Area Advisory Committee – The retention of the Art Deco front was welcomed. Mixed uses for the development in Gwynne Street would be socially desirable to discourage disturbances at night. The roofs should be simplified and there is too much emphasis on brick. On the frontage the penthouse is too massive, it should be lightweight, transparent and set-back. It should not reproduce the Art Deco front. The retention of the chapel should be reconsidered. Affordable housing should form part of the scheme. A 3-dimensional model is desirable to show the urban context of the development including the Left Bank properties.

- 5.4 Two letters of objection from

1. Hereford Civic Society
2. RRA Architects

The main points raised are:

1. We believe this proposed redevelopment of the Crystal Rooms and the area to the rear is not of a sufficiently high standard of architectural design for this important site next to the Left Bank complex. In particular we feel there should be mixed use of the site with shops along the Gwynne Street frontage. There appears to be no provision of affordable housing. The access from the very narrow Gwynne Street to the car park is poor and should be moved more to the centre of the frontage. The proposed penthouse on top of the Crystal Room frontage is not a good addition.
2. An opportunity appears to have been lost to provide a courtyard/open space in the centre of the complex with the car park underneath. We also question whether the retention of the frontage of the old chapel is really worthwhile if, by its removal, better design and usage of the area could be obtained. Also the entire projects use of brick as a cladding material means that the scale is way out of proportion with the context. Different materials should be introduced to break up the mass.

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 key considerations in determining this Planning and Conservation Area Consent applications are:
 1. The principle of the proposed development.
 2. Conservation and archaeological issues.
 3. Flooding.
 4. Affordable Housing
 5. Parking provision

The Principle of the Proposed Development

- 6.2 The site is located within the settlement boundary for Hereford City wherein general terms the reuse of previously developed land is strongly encouraged by all forms of planning policy (PPG3).
- 6.3 Although no site specific policy exists in the Hereford Local Plan or Unitary Development Plan, both documents identify the site as being within the Central Conservation Area and Central Shopping Area. The frontage along Bridge Street is identified as being secondary shopping frontage. No shopping frontage is identified for Gwynne Street. The demolition of 12 Bridge Street and its replacement with retail units on the ground floor with residential above complies with Policy H23 of the adopted Hereford Local Plan provided it complies with all other policies of the Plan. In this particular instance the impact on the Conservation Area and skyline. This policy is further supported by both PPG6 and PPG3 which encourages and promotes mixed use developments above shops. They can increase activity within the city centre and contribute to the vitality and viability of the city centre. The retention of the Art Deco frontage to the former Crystal Rooms and development of retail with residential above further complements the proposal. The remainder of the Crystal Rooms including the

warehousing is demolished and replaced with residential apartments that retain the historic street pattern of Gwynne Street as required by Policy CON18. No retail is proposed on the Gwynne Street frontage but this frontage is not identified as either primary or secondary shopping frontage in the adopted Hereford Local Plan or emerging Unitary Development Plan.

Conservation and archaeological issues

- 6.4 Conservation Manager has thoroughly examined the proposal and despite concerns raised by the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, Hereford Civic Society and RRA Architects the proposal can be satisfactorily developed to protect any archaeological remains and that the proposal will enhance this part of the city centre on two important frontages and will add vitality and interest from the street level to the skyline.

Flooding

- 6.5 Part of the site lies within a Flood Zone 3, with the remainder in Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken by the applicant in line with PPG25. This has been assessed by the Environment Agency. The applicant on the advice of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Team has kept the current layout of buildings and ground levels as existing. Consequently the Environment Agency have confirmed that there will be no change in the current flooding regime and thus no adverse impact upon flood storage or flows and no objections are raised subject to appropriate conditions.

Affordable Housing

- 6.6 Concern has been expressed regarding the lack of affordable housing on this site in this respect.

National policy in PPG3 and Circular 6/98 provides guidance for local planning authorities and developers about the provision of affordable housing. The guidance in the circular states that affordable housing should be sought on suitable sites for development in excess of 25 units or on sites of 1 hectare, whichever is the lower threshold.

- 6.7 In terms of the adopted Hereford Local Plan, Policy H8 seeks the provision of affordable housing on suitable sites but does not contain any threshold limits.
- 6.8 The emerging Unitary Development Plan seeks to impose a threshold limit of 15 units and above. However, this policy is not part of the adopted local plan and, therefore, it cannot be used as a threshold against which to judge the current application since the advice in Circular 6/98 is clear that the Local Authority can only seek affordable housing for thresholds lower than that advised in the guidance if that threshold has been the subject of a development plan process.
- 6.9 In addition, Policy H9 of the revised deposit Unitary Development Plan accepts that it may not be appropriate to seek affordable housing on all sites. Sites must be judged to be suitable before affordable housing can be sought. There are three criteria contained within Policy H9 against which the suitability of sites to provide affordable housing will be judged.

6.10 The first criteria is proximity to local services and facilities which this site meets. However, criteria 2 and 3 relate to the particular cost associated with a development and whether affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority. In this respect the applicant has stated the following:

Development costs will be abnormal for the following reasons:

- Demolition costs will be abnormally high because of the need to take extra precautions and care owing to the proximity of adjoining buildings.
- Construction costs will be abnormally high because of the need to work around existing buildings.
- Construction costs will be abnormally high because it is necessary to retain the Art Deco façade to Bridge Street and particular care will be required as part of this process.
- The part demolition and conversion of the chapel will equally attract abnormally high demolition and construction costs whilst the retained structure is kept safe during the process of conversion.
- The development requires regard to be had to Environment Agency requirements in terms of the adjoining flood plain which will increase development costs, in particular the need to maintain a flood route for the proposed dwellings and the adjoining five storey warehouse building.
- The site sits within a Conservation Area. The quality of development will need to be very high in order to ensure that Conservation Area policies are complied with and that the roof of the building provides a high quality design solution in order to blend in with the cityscape.
- The regeneration of the site is to be desired in conservation terms and also to meet the Council's strategic housing requirements. Owing to the abnormally high costs of development, the potential regeneration will not arise if affordable housing is imposed upon the scheme.
- This would mean that a number of fundamental policy objectives could not be fulfilled. Perhaps just as importantly in the context of this particular site the Art Deco frontage could not be retained and repaired and given a new lease of life.

Your Officers therefore consider that it could not be feasible to impose affordable housing provision on this particular site.

Parking Provision and Road Network

- 6.11 Members will note that the Traffic Manager considers that one space per dwelling is excessive in this city centre location particularly in view of the local road network.
- 6.12 The site is accessed off Gwynne Street where traffic movements are slow due to its width and tortuous nature.
- 6.13 The guidance in PPG3 requires Local Planning Authorities to try to reduce car parking standards and an average car parking provision of 1.5 spaces per dwelling is now

encouraged. This standard is lower than the Council's current adopted standards for residential development which would normally require the provision of two spaces per dwelling in this sort of development.

- 6.14 Government guidance regarding housing does acknowledge that in the interest of good design, standards can be relaxed in order to achieve higher densities. In the case of the application proposal, the car parking standard of one space per dwelling unit is proposed and it is considered that this approach is fully in accordance with Government requirements to make the best use of land in the urban area.
- 6.15 National policy does not seek to prevent any car parking being provided with residential development, even in city centre locations. Indeed the Government provides very specific advice to Local Planning Authorities about the use of car parking standards in central locations and this is set out in paragraph 5.1 of PPG13.
- 6.16 The Council's policies makes it clear that neither the policy in the adopted Hereford Local Plan (Policy T6) or the policy in the emerging Unitary Development Plan (Policy T11) requires a nil parking provision with residential development.
- 6.17 Furthermore to insist on nil or limited parking could affect the viability of the scheme and undermine the desirability of residential development within the central area. It is therefore considered that one car parking space per unit is considered acceptable and will not compromise highway safety

Conclusion

- 6.18 This important site within the Central Conservation Area has been fully examined within the processing of the planning application. Issues such as conservation, archaeology, design, transportation and flooding have been thoroughly assessed and are all considered to be acceptable. This redevelopment with modern and traditional designs fully complements the sensitive location of the site. The removal of poor quality buildings on Bridge Street and Gwynne Street and their replacements with both modern and traditional buildings contributes positively to the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.19 The site clearly constitutes the reuse of previously developed land in the urban area and achieves urban regeneration which creates sustainable patterns of development. The proposal will continue the revitalisation of the area commenced with the Left Bank development and is considered to fully accord with the relevant National and Local Planning policies.

RECOMMENDATION

In respect of DCCW2004/3707/F:

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. A06 (Development in accordance with approved plans).**

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

3. B01 (Samples of external materials).

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

4. D01 (Site investigation - archaeology).

Reason: To ensure the archaeological interest of the site is recorded.

5. D04 (Submission of foundation design).

Reason: The development affects a site on which archaeologically significant remains survive. A design solution is sought to minimise archaeological disturbance through a sympathetic foundation design.

6. F16 (Restriction of hours during construction).

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

7. F17 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal).

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided.

8. F48 (Details of slab levels).

Reason: In order to define the permission and ensure that the development is of a scale and height appropriate to the site.

9. G13 (Landscape design proposals).

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

10. G15 (Landscaping implementation).

Reason: To ensure the site is satisfactorily landscaped.

11. H13 (Access, turning area and parking).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway.

12. Finished floor levels shall be set at least 600mm above the 1 in 100 year flood level of 52.62m AOD.

Reason: To protect the new development from flooding and to minimise the risk and damage to property.

13. H27 (Parking for site operatives).

Reason: To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interests of highway safety.

14. H29 (Secure cycle parking provision).

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

15. C12 (Repairs to match existing).

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

16. C11 (Specification of guttering and downpipes).

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

17. C05 (Details of external joinery finishes).

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

18. C02 (Approval of details).

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

Informative:

1. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.

In respect of DCCW2004/3708/C:

That Conservation Area Consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. CO1 (Time limit for commencement (Listed Building Consent)).

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. C14 (Signing of contract before demolition).

Reason: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17(3) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. C19 (Commencement condition).

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with Section 7 and 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Informative:

1. N15 – Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.