

16 DCCE2005/0507/F - REDEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING RESOURCE BLOCK WITH A NEW WORKSHOP BUILDING AND SEMINAR BLOCK WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING AT HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, FOLLY LANE, HEREFORD, HR1 1LS

For: Herefordshire College of Technology per Stubbs Rich Architects, 1a Riverside Business Park, Bath, BA2 3DW

Date Received: 15th February, 2005 Ward: Aylestone Grid Ref: 52284, 40594

Expiry Date: 12th April, 2005

Local Members: Councillors D.B. Wilcox and A.L. Williams

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Folly Lane near the junction with Aylestone Hill in Hereford City. The site is occupied by Herefordshire College of Technology and comprises buildings of predominantly four storeys in height and of varying ages and designs. Immediately to the north is Hereford Sixth Form College and south is Herefordshire College of Art and Design. To the east is an area of informal open space which is protected within both the Local Plan and Unitary Development Plan and on the western side of Folly Lane is an established residential area.
- 1.2 Ground levels fall away from Folly Lane eastwards within the site and to a lesser extent from north to south. The principal access to the site is currently off Folly Lane onto Whittern Way with 3 other secondary access points directly off Folly Lane.
- 1.3 The site is designated as white land in the Hereford Local Plan and Unitary Development Plan and the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area runs along (but beyond) the northern boundary of the site.
- 1.4 The application is a full application for Phase 1 of the redevelopment of the Hereford College of Technology. This Phase proposes the redevelopment of the eastern part of the site and will entail the demolition of 3 existing buildings to free up space for the construction of a new workshop block, new seminar block and redeveloped learning resource centre. The eastern boundary of the existing site will be redeveloped to provide new staff and student parking and secure cycle storage totaling around 600 new car parking spaces, 100 cycle spaces, 24 disability spaces and 5 goods vehicle spaces.

2. Policies

2.1 Government Guidance:

PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and recreation

2.2 Hereford Local Plan:

ENV14	-	Design
ENV16	-	Landscaping
ENV17	-	Safety and Security
H12	-	Established Residential Areas
CON12	-	Conservation Areas
T2	-	Highway and Junction Improvements
T3	-	Traffic Calming
T11	-	Pedestrian Provision
T12	-	Cyclist Provision
SC6	-	Permanent Educational Accommodation
SC9	-	Retention of Local Facilities

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):

S1	-	Sustainable Development
S2	-	Development Requirements
S6	-	Transport
S11	-	Community Facilities and Services
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
DR3	-	Movement
DR5	-	Planning Obligation
T1	-	Public Transport Facilities
T6	-	Walking
T7	-	Cycling
T11	-	Parking Provision
T12	-	Existing Parking Areas
T13	-	Traffic Management Scheme
T16	-	Access for All
CF5	-	New Community Facilities
CF6	-	Retention of Existing Facilities

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Extensive planning history exists for the college campus as a whole but the most relevant application is:

CE2004/0475/O - partial re-development of college campus to provide new learning village (application for outline permission including master plan).

- 3.2 This application was approved by the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on 7th April 2004 subject to the preparation and completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to cover the cost of implementing a residents only on-street parking scheme. This agreement has not yet been completed and therefore the permission has not yet been issued. It is envisaged that the agreement will be completed within the next month.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Commission for Architecture in Built Environment - no comments.

- 4.2 Sport England - A sizeable area of the existing playing fields will be lost to car parking and landscaping if the proposal were to proceed. Playing Fields Policy outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 identifies that 5 exceptions to the normal position of opposing development which may result in the loss of playing fields. Sport England considers that none of the exceptions identified in these policies have been addressed and satisfied and therefore Sport England objects to the planning application on the grounds that there will be loss of playing fields of value as local amenity land and to the interest of sport.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 Traffic Manager - currently recommends refusal due to lack of information. The applicants have now provided additional information requested by the Traffic Manager but formal comments are yet to be received.
- 4.4 Education - There are no objections to this application from an education perspective.
- 4.5 Landscape Officer - no comments.
- 4.6 Conservation Officer – ‘In terms of layout, the return of a grid like street scape would hopefully improve circulation interaction and the general internal flows through the site and reflects the traditional street pattern of the area. The landscaping ideas mentioned in the design statement would appear to enhance the street scape. Proposed buildings appear to be of the time, and designs would appear to enhance the built architecture of Hereford. The scale and massing of the blocks appear to be compatible with the existing buildings within the site. It is therefore acceptable. The facades of the Learning Resource Centre and HCT Workshop within the street interact well with each other and there appears to be variations and changes in materials to break up this facade which is welcomed’.
- 4.7 Forward Planning Manager - The college serves a wide community attracting students from across the county. The scale of development for the needs of the local community would appear to be appropriate. The current site has buildings that extend to three storeys similar to that of the proposed development. It is therefore considered that the development would reflect the current character of the location. Although established residential areas surround the site, it is not considered that the development of the college would affect residential amenity in any other way than it may at present. The proposal is unlikely to generate extra traffic as the project is a redevelopment rather than an extension, thus an increase in student intake is not the intention. There also appear to be no privacy issues raised. The site benefits from excellent pedestrian access together with good public transport links, the application also intends to extend the provision of cycle parking spaces which is encouraged by the plan.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Hereford City Council. The City Council considers the design modular and boring and inappropriate in a Conservation Area.
- 5.2 The applicants have also provided detailed information in support of the application including a design statement and updated transportation assessment information. This information will be referred to in the officer’s appraisal.

5.3 The full text of this letter can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 Outline Planning Permission for the re-development of the whole college campus was approved at the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on 7th April 2004 subject to the completion of a legal agreement requiring the applicant to make a final financial contribution to cover the costs of implementing a residents only parking scheme. Due to complications in securing the agreement between the colleges, the agreement has not yet been signed but it is anticipated that the Agreement will be signed within the next month, which will therefore allow the outline planning permission to be released. This outline application included a master plan for the site indicating the parking provision now proposed under this application along with a detailed transportation assessment. As such the principle of redeveloping the site along with the rationalisation of the parking provision and the consequential impact of the whole development, in principle, have been accepted by Council.

6.2 The existing buildings to be demolished along with other buildings within the site are of no architectural or historic merit and some are in a poor state of repair. The college undertook a structural, mechanical and electrical survey in 2002 which revealed concrete carbonation in a number of the teaching blocks, the electrical and mechanical infrastructure is antiquated and in need of substantial capital investment, many health and safety related concerns associated with the buildings and facilities and the traffic management situation has reached crisis point. As such all of these factors are sufficient to enable the principle of demolishing existing campus buildings to be accepted.

6.3 The development will comprise a new seminar block, new workshop/skill centre and refurbishment of the resource centre/library. The re-development proposals have been formulated around 10 principal issues with the end result aimed at achieving a first rate campus with modern, fit for purpose buildings, rationalised patterns of movement and high quality public space. These are:

1. Sustainability - All new structures both new and refurbished are to be built and operated to minimise the environmental impact.
2. Site Environment - High quality infrastructure will provide much needed social and break out space for students.
3. Built Environment - Modern, fit for purpose buildings will be capable of efficient and economic delivery of curriculum.
4. Car Parking - Centrally managed visitor and staff student car parks providing approximately 200 additional spaces.
5. Traffic Safety - Reduced level of vehicular penetration across the campus with provision of traffic calming and drop off points on Folly Lane.
6. Public Transport - Additional bus lay-by support and enhanced transport links to the City Centre.

7. Disabled Access - Rationalised patterns of movement to improve experience for disabled users and ensure compliance with the DDA.
 8. Security - Controlled site access and enhanced surveillance and lighting strategy.
 9. Business Development - Increased interaction with commerce through dedicated state of the art facilities.
 10. Community Use - Resident access to be provided to learning resource centre and event meeting space.
- 6.4 With the above principles in mind, it is considered there are three main issues relevant to the consideration of this application. These being:
1. Scale, design and materials,
 2. Highways
 3. Loss of open space.

Scale, Design and Materials

- 6.5 The new buildings are to be of a similar 4-storey scale to existing buildings but occupying a smaller footprint. It will comprise 2 separate blocks with a central connecting event space and seminar room. A contemporary design has been selected with the mass being broken up with a palette of 8 different materials to add interest to the elevations. The eastern elevation is to be constructed principally from a translucent cladding system, which diffuses the penetration of daylight in order to avoid glare. Varying degrees of insulation within the translucent panelling also gives the illusion of different light colours emanating from the development, which will provide interest to the buildings when in use in the evenings. This translucent panelling will be broken up with areas of weathered steel cladding giving a warm orange appearance creating an interesting contrast.
- 6.6 The principal elevation (west) overlooking the central landscaped area is predominantly to be faced with curtain walling, which is essentially large glazed panels within a metal frame. This will be translucent at lower levels but more opaque on the upper floor in order to control admission of direct sunlight. Horizontal and vertical metal louvers will be used to break up the expanse of glazing and provide a visual contrast to the proportions. A further area of weathered steel will be used for the seminar block to provide a central focal point and break up the linear form of the buildings. Brushed stainless steel metal panel cladding will be used for the gable ends of both buildings along with sections of cream and red pre-cast masonry cladding, which has the appearance of natural stone. Finally, the double-decked parking area will be clad in galvanised metal mesh screen to provide support for climbing plants. Ground levels are to be raised on the eastern side of the parking area along with strategic tree planting to soften the impact of the development from an easterly perspective.
- 6.7 Whilst the form of the buildings are not necessarily architecturally interesting, the modern and technologically advanced palette of materials outlined above along with the design features incorporated will create a land mark development for the site reflective of its end use and internal function. As such the scale, design, materials, siting and landscaping proposed under this application are considered acceptable in accordance with the principles of policy SC6 of the Local Plan and CF5 and CF6 of the

Unitary Development Plan. The proposals also accord with the more specific design policies including ENV14 of the Local Plan and DR1 of the Unitary Development Plan in that they will enhance the quality of the built environment in the locality whilst also respecting the context of the site including longer distant views.

Highway issues

- 6.8 The Traffic Manager raises no objection to the proposed parking provision which will create a total of 600 staff and student car parking spaces and 24 disabled spaces for all 3 colleges. This represents an increase of around 200 spaces. It should be noted that the re-development proposal will not increase student capacity and therefore the additional 200 spaces will ease existing parking problems both within the site and in nearby residential areas. This still represents a shortfall on the local plan maximum parking standard, which is a figure of 900. However, this figure is based upon student numbers and does not necessarily take into account the sustainable location of the site and accessibility to public transport.
- 6.9 The overall re-development proposals will also encompass improvements to public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities in order to discourage the use of cars. For example, the decked parking area will include covered secure cycle storage with a capacity of approximately 100 bicycles and the development as a whole will create a more permeable and legible pedestrian environment both through this application and particularly when complete. A Green Travel Plan is also to be formulated if permission is approved.
- 6.10 In order to further address the shortfall in parking provision, the previous application presented to Committee last year proposed a financial contribution to enable a residents parking scheme to be implemented. Part of this contribution is shortly to be provided by the Sixth Form College and the College of Technology have agreed to provide the outstanding contribution necessary to implement the residents parking scheme.
- 6.11 Whilst the Transport Manager currently objects, the objections relate to points of clarification concerning matters such as the circulation of vehicles within the site and proposed junction improvements to Whittern Way. These matters are currently being examined by the Transport Manager and an update on this matter will be reported to members at Committee.

Sport England's Objection

- 6.12 Sport England are presently objecting to the application as part of the car parking area and landscaping encroaches into the area of open space immediately to the east of the site. It should be noted that this situation has not changed from the application considered and approved last year by members. However, it has come to light that Sport England was not consulted on the previous application.
- 6.13 The applicant's have prepared a PPG17 Assessment (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) of the impact of this loss of informal recreation space. The encroachment is minimal and equates to less than a 1% reduction in the gross area of playing field. Based upon the information provided within the PPG17 report, it is considered that the loss will not adversely affect the usability of the existing open space. In fact, the existing recreational land is under used and of poor quality. This proposal seeks to promote the integration of the open space with the remainder of the

college through creating stronger pedestrian priority links encouraging the more beneficial use of this open space. Notwithstanding these points, the further information has been forwarded to Sport England for their comments.

Conclusion

- 6.14 The proposal will create an imaginative development, which through an innovative palette of non-traditional materials will be the first step towards meeting the applicant's primary objective. This being a first rate campus with modern fit for purpose buildings, rationalised patterns of movement and high quality public space. More importantly, the proposal accords with the relevant Development Plan Policies both in the Local Plan and the Deposit Unitary Development Plan. Therefore, subject to the highway concerns being addressed and the applicant providing the outstanding contribution to enable the residents parking scheme to be implemented, the proposals are considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to there being no objection from the Traffic Manager by the end of the consultation period and the County Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to complete a planning obligation or unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring the applicants to provide the outstanding financial contribution to enable the residents only parking scheme in the locality to be implemented, and that if deemed necessary:

- (i) the application is notified to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**
- (ii) subject to the Deputy Prime Minister confirming that he does not intend to call it in, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any further conditions considered necessary by Officers:**
 - 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 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))**
Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.
 - 3 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))**
Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.
 - 4 Prior to occupation of any part of the development hereby approved, a Green Travel Plan shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing and implemented as approved. The Green Travel Plan should also include details of all intended methods of managing the staff/student car parks and shall be made available for inspection by the local planning authority upon reasonable request so as to enable monitoring of the Plan to be routinely carried out.**

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure a sustainable form of development.

- 5 A08 (Development in accordance with approved plans and materials) (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority)**

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans and to protect the general character and amenities of the area.

- 6 H17 (Junction improvement/off site works) (Whittern Way junction)**

Reason: To ensure the safe and free flow of traffic on the highway.

- 7 H27 (Parking for site operatives)**

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

- 8 Prior to the commencement of the development, details of the phasing of the development shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the agreed phasing.**

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out with minimal disruption to the educational use of the existing site or adverse impact on highway safety.

Informative:

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

Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.