

SITE VISIT

6A DCSE2005/0949/F - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING 1970'S HALL AND LIVING ACCOMMODATION. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BLOCK OF 8 NO. FLATS AT ST JOSEPHS CONVENT, WALFORD ROAD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5PQ

6B DCSE2005/0951/C - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING 1970'S HALL AND LIVING ACCOMMODATION. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BLOCK OF 8 NO. FLATS AT ST JOSEPHS CONVENT, WALFORD ROAD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5PQ

**For: Woodfield Developments Ltd per Mr. J. Spreckley,
Brinsop House, Brinsop, Hereford, HR4 7AS**

Date Received: 31st March, 2005 Ward: Ross-on-Wye East Grid Ref: 59829, 23548

Expiry Date: 26th May, 2005

Local Members: Councillor Mrs. C.J. Davis and Councillor Mrs. A.E. Gray

Consideration of this application was deferred by the Sub-Committee on 11th May, 2005 in order that a site visit could be held. This took place on 23rd May, 2005.

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 St Joseph's Convent occupies a large Victorian stone villa and grounds situated on the east side of Walford Road. To the north of the main building an extensive single-storey building was erected in the 1970's. The convent is in a primarily residential part of Ross on Wye but adjoining it to the east is a primary school (St Joseph's), to the north is a social club and to the south a residential house for the elderly (Lawfords House). Adjoining the north-east part of the site are dwellings in The Avenue and there are further dwellings on the west side of Walford Road and to the south of Lawfords House.

1.2 It is proposed to demolish the single-storey building and to erect a 3-storey block of 8 flats. The modern building comprises hall with linked residential accommodation to the rear. It is mainly of brick construction with a hipped roof and very shallow ridge roof over the hall. The proposed 3-storey block of flats would occupy the site of the hall and about a third of the residential section, a footprint of about 355m² rectangular in shape except that the rear half would project a few metres closer to the main building. It would be of modern design and materials with a cantilevered flat roof. The height would be about 8m, which viewed from Walford Road would be just below eaves level of the main convent building. Sections of the south side wall in the rear section would be recessed to form small terraces at ground and first floor level, with a larger terrace at second floor level on both the side and front of the building. The walls of the block

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would be partly rendered, partly Rockwool Rockpanel Rainscreen Cladding, partly larch cladding. All the flats would have 2 bedrooms.

- 1.3 Additional car parking would be provided within the grounds plus an enclosed refuse and cycle store clad in natural finish larch to match the cladding on the new flats.
- 1.4 An application (DCSE2004/3495/F) to convert the main convent building into 6 units has also been submitted.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance

PPG3 - Housing

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy H16 - Location of Growth
Policy CTC9 - Development Criteria

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy SH5 - Housing Land In Ross on Wye
Policy SH14 - Siting and Design of Buildings
Policy SH15 - Criteria for New Housing Schemes
Policy C23 - New Development affecting Conservation Areas
Policy C25 - Demolition and Redevelopment

Part 3
Policy 3 - Infill Sites for Housing
Policy 5 - Housing in Built-up Areas

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

Policy H1 - Settlement Boundaries and Established Residential Areas
Policy H13 - Sustainable Residential Design

3. Planning History

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|--|---|---|
| 3.1 | SE2002/1929/F | Extension to provide classroom, cloaks & store. Re-provision of displaced car parking. | - | Council Approved Application 19.08.2002 |
| | DCSE2004/2614/F | New access. | - | Approved 04.11.04 |
| | DCSE2004/3905/F | Demolition of existing 1970's hall and living accommodation. Construction of new block of 11 no. flats | - | Withdrawn 31.03.05 |
| | DCSE2004/3906 | Demolition of existing 1970's hall and living accommodation. | - | Not determined |
| | DCSE2004/3495/F | Conversion from house in multiple occupancy into six residential units. | - | Not determined |

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4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Welsh Water recommend conditions regarding foul and surface water drainage.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager requests further information regarding the car parking layout.
- 4.3 The Conservation Manager supports these latest proposals subject to the high quality of materials and detailed design that we have discussed and should anticipate. No details submitted of refuse and cycle store and initially it does give me some concern. Applicant has agreed to consider this further. With regard to the trees on the site the following advice is given:

"In the revised site plan, three of the trees on the northern site boundary are to be retained. These trees will help to screen the car park area and maintain the mature landscape character of the site. With regard to the northern boundary, I recommend that T1, the Thuja, be retained, not removed.

At the northern site entrance it appears that T6 (Coast Redwood) and T9 (Thuja) are to be retained. The identification numbers used by Jerry Ross, the Arboricultural Consultant have not been transferred onto the site plan, so it is difficult to cross-reference the tree survey with the site plan. Regarding the parking spaces that run diagonally between the Coast Redwood and the Thuja (T9) and the two multi-stemmed Thujas close to the building, I am concerned that three of the parking spaces impinge within the canopy spread of the Coast Redwood and the Thuja. It is probably that 50% of the area beneath the canopy of the Thuja would be affected by construction works. Both of these trees have been classed as having only moderate resilience to stress or disturbance. If there is no option but to site the parking spaces in this location, then it is essential that the applicant submits an appropriate specification for the construction of these spaces. A geotextile could be used that is designed specifically to enable a lead-bearing surface to be constructed directly onto the soil without the need for excavating and laying compacted sub-bases. This means that underlying roots can be left undisturbed."

5. Representations

- 5.1 Town Council's observations are as follows:

"Should be aware that there is a social club next door which holds regular late night functions."

- 5.2 7 letters have been received which express the following concerns/objections:

- (1) One of main concerns is that size, shape and proximity to houses in The Avenue would harm amenities - loss on natural light and privacy and be completely overpowering.
- (2) 3-storey structure will have severe and negative impact on amenity and no opportunity to screen with trees; gardens are small (on average only 45ft.)

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- (3) The properties do not have uninterrupted views but do have privacy – proposed development would completely overlook gardens and properties of nearby houses and Conservative Club.
- (4) Compared to earlier application there is a reduction in number of flats from 11 to 8 and movement of east face some 10ft. back to line up with division wall between the Conservative Club and Invermoray - this makes very little difference or no difference at all to concerns expressed.
- (5) Unattractive, mundane, 'shoe-box' like block, completely out of keeping with any nearby buildings; a flat roof, East European style and low grade construction materials have nil architectural merit - negative impact on area and absolutely conflict with very fine Victorian townhouse in Gothic tradition with Venetian elements and other details. Large landscaped garden was integral to the house which should be listed.
- (6) Accept that there is legitimate case for infill development but must be sympathetic to architectural quality of both Conservative Club and Convent. Single-storey only if same footprint. Garden to east too small for mass of proposed building.
- (7) Development in curtilage should be sensitively sited, carefully designed and of suitable scale and mass – current proposals are not.
- (8) One letter considers design an improvement compared to previous application.
- (9) Removal of steel mesh balustrades and cladding in terracotta squares, with the more irregular disposition of window and variety of wall surface all serve to reduce the grid-like effect however remains basically rectangular flat roofed structure which seems out of keeping with the splendid Victorian house.
- (10) Given quality and historical importance of the house (built for Thomas Blake, benefactor of Ross) and that it is in a conservation area should it not at least have a pitched roof?
- (11) One letter expresses support in principle except for external treatment of elevations (very soon become inappropriate eyesore), and mono-pitch steel roof of bicycle/bin store, flat roof and metal grille balconies are all out of keeping.
- (12) Concern is expressed over treatment of boundaries adjacent to the school, in view of safety of pupils.
- (13) No scope to landscape to north and east of proposal where screening is most needed to protect amenities of adjacent properties.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 There are considered to be two main issues, firstly the effect on the character and appearance of the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area and secondly the effect on the

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amenities of neighbours. On the first issue it is agreed that the main convent building is of unusual quality and architectural interest, although not in fact listed. Any new building should not detract from the setting of this former villa. However this does not mean that the new building should be of the same architectural style. The position of the proposed building and height would ensure, it is considered, that it was visually subservient to the main building. As noted by the Conservation Manager it is critical that materials and detailing are of high quality. Further details can be required by planning condition. The scheme has been very fully considered by the Conservation Manager and he concludes that the proposed block of flats would complement the main convent building. The building is set well back from Walford Road and provided the trees along the frontage and the significant trees within the grounds are retained it would not be prominent in the street scene. It would be clearly visible from The Avenue and this side elevation therefore needs as much care as the front elevation.

- 6.2 The second issue relates to the impact on neighbours' amenities. This has two aspects. Firstly the impact on occupants of the houses in The Avenue. The rear of these houses faces towards the north side of the proposed building which is higher than the existing single-storey building (about 2.6m at the eastern corner of the new block but significantly higher to the west). However the existing building extends across the rear of the curtilage of Invermoray, the proposal extends only to the boundary between social club and Invermoray. There would therefore be both benefits and disbenefits in terms of the outlook of residents of The Avenue. On balance it is considered that the proposal would not be so overbearing as to justify refusing planning permission. However a number of bedroom windows overlook these residential properties and this needs to be resolved.
- 6.3 The second aspect is the relationship with the existing building which is to be converted into flats. Windows in the side wall of the latter would face towards flats in the new block of flats. The main windows on the second floor rear flat would be angled away from the convent building. Nevertheless this would not entirely resolve the problem. However the space between the sides of buildings is generally significantly less than between fronts and backs and, bearing in mind that both blocks of flats (new building and conversion) have yet to be developed, it is thought that the living conditions of occupants would be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

With regards DCSE2005/0949/F

That subject to the receipt of suitably revised drawings with regard to fenestration/layout and the refuse/cycle store and car parking the officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following conditions and any additional 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 C02 (Approval of details)**

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

3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

5 G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.

Informative:

1 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission.

With regards DCSE2005/0951/C

1 C01 (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.

Informative:

1 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Conservation Area Consent

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.