

**20 DCNC2005/1372/F - ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO CLUB HOUSE, PROPOSED HOLIDAY LODGES, NEW GROUNDSMAN'S SHED AND NEW TREATMENT PLANT AT BROCKINGTON GOLF CLUB, BODENHAM, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 3HX**

**For: Brockington Hall Golf Club per Barton Hasker Ltd  
1620-1622 High Street Knowle Solihull West Midlands  
B93 0JU**

**Date Received:**

**29th April 2005**

**Expiry Date:**

**24th June 2005**

Local Member: Councillor K Grumbley

**Ward:**

**Hampton Court**

**Grid Ref:**

**54648, 51150**

**AJ/CR**

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The site is located on the A417 road between Leominster and Gloucester and near the village of Bodenham, outside the settlement boundary.
- 1.2 This application proposes alterations and extensions to the clubhouse and, in addition, the building of holiday lodges, a treatment plant and a new groundsman's shed.
- 1.3 The full extent of the application site measures 11.6 hectares, whilst the existing clubhouse has a floor area of 103.2 square metres. The proposed Groundsman's Hut measures 111.1 square metres, and the extended Club House as proposed (including Conservatory, stairwell and both floors) would measure 563.02 square metres. The log cabins element of the proposal measures 1197.6m<sup>2</sup> making a combined total of 1871.72m<sup>2</sup> of additional floor space for the proposed development.

**2. Policies**

**2.1 Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire):**

- A.1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
- A.2 – Settlement Hierarchy
- A.9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
- A.24 – Scale and Character of Development
- A.25 – Protection of Open Areas or Green Spaces
- A.35 – Rural Employment and Economic Development
- A.38 – Rural Tourism and Recreational Activities
- A.39 – Holiday Chalet, Caravan and Camping Site
- A.53 – Protection from Encroachment into the Countryside
- A.61 – Community, Social and Recreational Facilities

**2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft) Statement Policies:**

- S1 – Sustainable Development
- S2 – Development Requirements
- S4 – Employment
- S11 – Community Facilities and services
- H7 – Housing in the Countryside Outside Settlements
- H16 – Car Parking
- E11 – Employment in the Countryside
- E6 – Expansion of Existing Buildings
- T11 – Parking Provision
- RST11 – Golf Courses
- RST12 – Visitor Accommodation
- RST13 – Rural and Farm Tourism Development
- RST14 – Static Caravans, Chalets, Camping and Touring Caravan Sites
- CF5 – New Community Facilities
- CF6 – Retention of Existing Facilities

**2.3 Planning Policy Statements:**

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG13 – Transport

**3. Planning History**

- 3.1 NC04/3367/F – Similar application. Withdrawn 2.10.2004

**4. Consultation Summary****Statutory Consultations**

- 4.1 Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions.

**Internal Council Advice**

- 4.2 Transport Manager: No objections subject to conditions:
- 4.3 Environmental Health: No comment.
- 4.4 Drainage Engineer: Recommend conditions with any approval that may be given to limit the total rate of discharge to that of Greenfield runoff in order that conditions will not be exacerbated. Suggests that Building Control would be able to advise on the suitability of the package treatment plant, and the Environment Agency should be consulted on the water quality of the final discharge.
- 4.5 Minerals and Waste Manager: No objection.
- 4.6 Tourism Officer.: “ The existing golf club and cafe, which is open to non members, is already proving successful in drawing in visitors. The position of the club on the A417, which is a major route into the County, means that it is very well placed to attract passing trade as well as specific visitors. It can also serve as a 'gateway', providing visitor information to its customers.

There is also increasing interest in golf and golfing breaks, and the club will need to improve its facilities to be successful in this market.

The tourism unit is always keen to encourage successful businesses to expand and enhance their facilities - their experience stands them in good stead, and we are strongly committed to the principle of improving standards and encouraging development in tourism businesses.

The proposed development would allow the owners to build on their existing success by providing enhanced facilities for golfers as well as accommodation and catering for visitors, and for the local community. This area of work has already generated additional customers and employment, indicating a market for the facilities the owners wish to offer should the development go ahead. The rustic cabins coupled with golfing short breaks are sufficiently different from the bed & breakfast establishments in the area that they complement rather than compete with the local accommodation provision."

4.7 Conservation Manager: landscaping response : no objection.

## 5. Representations

5.1 Parish Council: The Parish Council advises:

"Recently issued HALC guidance for Parish Councils says that the first consideration must be whether an application conforms to Development Plan policies.

All of site lies outside Bodenham Development Boundary. There are 3 distinct parts to the application:

- Changes to Club House and New Groundsmans Shed
- Holiday Chalets
- System for sewerage disposal

### Club House & Groundsmans Shed

Proposals are largely in line with UDP Policy S8 (p211) which encourages enhanced facilities at existing sport venues & RST11 (p226) dealing with golf courses which states that "new buildings will only be permitted where they are essential and ancillary to the operation of the course". However, in the light of the close proximity and fragile financial position of the Parish Hall I believe that any consent for this first part of the proposal should be conditioned to ensure that the club house function room is solely used in connection with, and ancillary to the on-site golfing activity. I can understand the need for close managerial control over the Club but cannot support the proposal to incorporate a manager's flat above the club house. The provision of new residential accommodation at this location does not appear to comply with LP Policy A.2(d) & UDP Policy H10 (p85) rural exceptions policy covering residential accommodation outside the settlement boundary. It is not explained why the manager needs to reside on-site & why he/she cannot be accommodated in the newly refurbished Brockington Hall or in the new granny flat annex which was given consent on 27 April 2004. I'm not aware of any other County golf club manager who has on-site accommodation and certainly not at a 9 hole venue.

### Holiday Chalets

The proposal for five holiday chalets appears to conflict with UDP Policy RST12 (p227) – Visitor Accommodation – which states “outside of identified settlements, the provision of permanent serviced or self-catering accommodation...will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use or adaption of a rural building”. As mentioned the whole site lies outside the settlement boundary and it’s made clear at para 10.6.3 (p227) that “there is no special reason to apply less demanding policies for new build visitor accommodation than to other types of development in the countryside”.

UDP Policy E10 (p109) suggests a presumption in favour of employment generating proposals where such proposals can be clearly related to the employment needs of the local economy. The applicant’s agent states provision of the 5 chalets will provide work for approx. 4 staff, and secure the existing four staff. It would seem that this is a very generous level of staffing to service 5 chalets. I would mention that, according to the latest Herefordshire Quarterly Economic Report’ Hampton Court Ward has one of the lowest levels of unemployment in the county and this will be confirmed by anyone who attempted to secure the services of cleaning staff in Bodenham.

### Sewerage Disposal

It is understood that part of the site lies within a zone 3 flood risk area and in these circumstances UDP Policy DR7 (p46) requires that applications can be accompanied by a flood risk assessment. It also states that *proposals will need to demonstrate through a sequential test that there are no reasonable alternative locations available on land of a lower flood risk*. It does not appear that this requirement has been satisfied. The Environment Agency objected to previous planning application (DCNC2004/3367/F). Although I am not aware that a change-of-use application has been submitted in respect of Brockington Hall it is apparent that the recent creation of six visitors’ bedrooms will generate considerably increased waste volumes and I believe that the Local Planning Authority need to be alerted to ensure that this aspect is fully considered, particularly so in view of the recent history of serious flooding when the Millbrook burst its banks in April 1998. I believe that Parish Council should be seeking reassurance from the Local Planning Authority that they conduct a most rigorous assessment of the proposed method of sewerage disposal and ensure that any planning permission is conditional on the grant of a Environment Agency consent to discharge into Millbrook.

I propose that all of the above-mentioned comments should be incorporated in the Parish Council’s response.

- 5.2 The responses to the statutory advertisement procedure are as follows:
- 1 objection: Mrs Betty Tilford, Woodside, Bowley Lane, Bodenham, HR1 3LF. The letter includes concerns with detrimental impact on the viability of the village hall and the consequences of discharge of treated foul waste into Millbrook which she states flooded in recent history.
  - 8 supportive from :
    - M.A. Porter, Hilldene, Dog Kennel Lane, Bucknell, Shropshire
    - Jane Lewis, Cultural Services Manager (Interim), Policy & Community Section, Herefordshire Council
    - Mr P Boughey (Treasurer), Rose Cottage, Edwyn Ralph

Janet Parker, Ladies Captain, Brockington Hall Golf Club  
David Lloyd, Apple Barn, Townsend Farm, Stretton Grandison  
A N Shave, 20 Sedgefield Road, Hereford  
T Allwood, Lower Vern, Marden, Hereford  
R V Hooper, No. 1 The Mews, Kington Court, Victoria Road, Kington

- 5.3 The applicant advises why the proposal is appropriate in their Brockington Golf Club Redevelopment Business Plan (received on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2005) which explains the past history of the site and the background the application proposal.

This Plan indicates that local competition already has adequate facilities and some local courses also have on-site accommodation.

The applicant claims that this proposal will greatly enhance the locality – in the provision of both community and county /national facilities.

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

## **6. Officers Appraisal**

- 6.1 The main elements of this application are as follows:

1. Alteration and extension to the clubhouse
2. Provision of holiday lodges in the open countryside
3. New Grounds man's shed
4. New treatment plant

- 6.2 The main issues arising from this application are as follows:

1. New build in the open countryside
2. Sustainability of the development
3. Transportation
4. Drainage aspects
5. Tourism provision

- 6.3 The application site lies alongside the A417 is outside the settlement boundary for Bodenham and as such lies within the open countryside in a policy context.

### New build in the open countryside

- 6.4 There are serious reservations with regards to the enlargement and extension of the clubhouse especially the inclusion of accommodation of a permanent nature within this for a staff member: a point also noted by the Parish Council - a planning consideration which is also a reason for objection, being contrary to the UDP policy H7 and Leominster District Local Plan policy A2(d).
- 6.5 A recent appeal ruling held that "In some cases 'club houses' or 'pavilions' may be proposed which may add to any visual intrusion objections. In a similar case in South Pembrokeshire a pavilion at a target golf/nine hole course was proposed including a coffee lounge, refreshment area, function room and an indoor skittle alley. An inspector felt that such facilities went far beyond what was necessary for such a development and would be akin to a highly active commercial business. The

intensive nature of the proposal was out of character with the peaceful atmosphere of a quiet rural area.”

- 6.6 It is considered that the material planning considerations are not sufficient to override local or national planning policy.
- 6.7 In addition the application Business Plan claims that the Club café is advertised and used as a public café. There is no planning permission for this and the applicant is reminded of the need to regularise this situation at their earliest convenience. Licensing has been requested to advise as to the current status of the Club Licence. This advice is pending.
- 6.8 This application proposes facilities that are considered inappropriate by reason of scale, siting and location in the open countryside and thereby would be contrary to Leominster District Local Plan Policies A1, A2, A36, A38 and A60, also to Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (RDD) Policy H7 and also to Planning Policy Statement 7.
- 6.9 The proposed holiday lodges would also be new buildings in the open countryside and as such would be required to comply with Policy A.9 of the Leominster District Local Plan in respect of their visual impact on the landscape quality of the site and surroundings. In addition Policy A36 states that employment generating enterprises wishing to locate in existing rural buildings will be permitted where conversion doesn't lead to dispersed activities on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality.
- 6.10 The proposal fails these policy tests in that it is considered inappropriate by reason of its scale and design and is thereby contrary to the Local Plan Policies A1, A35 and A38.
- 6.11 The Grounds man's shed and a new treatment plant are acceptable in principle, though the Parish comments on the treatment plant is noted.

#### Sustainability of the Development

- 6.12 Policies A1 and A38 of the Local Plan and PPS1, PPS7 require the proposal to be sustainable. The proposal's Redevelopment Business Plan explains the past history of the business and the challenges that the current owners now face. The Plan also describes the applicants hopes and aspirations but does not substantiate a clear planning case to prove the sustainability of the proposal as a whole and in the absence of this evidence the proposal is clearly contrary to these policies.

#### Transportation

- 6.13 The Head of Transportation has no objection subject to conditions to this application. There are no additional transportation implications for this proposal.

#### Drainage aspects

- 6.14 The Environment Agency has withdrawn the objection given to the previous application for this proposal subject to a number of conditions thus removing any drainage objections to the proposal. One respondent and the Parish Council make objections to this aspect of the proposal, however the Environment Agencies' response clarifies that these objections cannot be substantiated (subject to conditions).

Tourism

6.15 Tourism has responded with an email noting their support for the proposal and belief that this compliments rather than competes with existing facilities. The Business Development Brief within the application, notes the relevance of tourism to the area and to this proposal. In the Officers opinion, Tourism support is helpful but is not considered sufficiently robust to overcome the policy objections to new buildings in the open countryside.

Summary

- 6.16 To conclude, the proposal represents a considerable investment and expansion of the site in the open countryside.
- 6.17 In support of this proposal there is a number of plans, a Business Development Plan, support from Tourism and one letter of support.
- 6.18 However the Business Plan fails to prove the sustainability and viability of the proposal, in addition the café has permission only for Club members use.
- 6.19 The Parish Council and one resident object to the proposal. In addition, by reason of its scale, siting, and location the proposal is contrary to Leominster District Local Plan Policies and also to Planning Policy Statements 1 and 7.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 1 - This proposal for rural tourism enterprise is considered inappropriate by reason of its scale and design. Furthermore there is an absence of evidence to prove the viability and sustainability of the proposal and is contrary to Leominster Local District Plan (Herefordshire) Policies A1, A2(d) A35, A38 and A39 and the Herefordshire UDP (RDD) S1, and E11 and thereby also contrary to PPS1.**
- 2. The proposal to enlarge the Club House and add permanent staff accomodation is considered inappropriate by reason of its scale, siting and location in the open countryside and would be contrary to Leominster District Local Plan Policies A2 and A60 and Herefordshire UDP (RDD) Policy H7, and also contrary to Planning Policy Statement 7.**
- 3. It is considered that the proposal would be contrary to the Leominster District Local Plan Policies A2 and A24, and Herefordshire Unitary Development (Revised Deposit Draft) Policy H7, in that the development would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.