

8 DCSE2004/3971/F - CONSTRUCTION OF NURSES ACCOMMODATION AT BROCKHAMPTON COURT NURSING HOME, BROCKHAMPTON, HEREFORD, HR1 4TQ**For: Dr. C.J. Allen per Trevor Hewett Architects, 25 Castle Street, Hereford HR1 2NW****Date Received: 17th November, 2004 Ward: Old Gore Grid Ref: 59887, 31788****Expiry Date: 12th January, 2005**

Local Member: Councillor J.W. Edwards

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Brockhampton Court is a large country house now used as a nursing home. Planning permission has recently been granted for a 16-bed extension to the nursing home and this is now being constructed. The current proposal is to provide residential accommodation for nursing staff. The site chosen is a former tennis court located some 80m from Brockhampton Court. The south-eastern boundary of this rectangular site of some 48 m x 26 m is formed by a high wall. Along the other boundaries there is existing planting although a number of trees would need to be removed to facilitate the development. The main formal gardens of Brockhampton Court are to the west and south-west of the application site.
- 1.2 The proposal is a terrace of three two-storey units. Each unit would have a living-dining area with kitchen, a bathroom and one bedroom (double or twin) on ground floor with five bedrooms and a bathroom on first floor. This would provide a total of 21-23 bed-spaces. The elevations would be of brick construction up to first floor cill level with weather boarding above and on the end elevations. The north-eastern unit (no. 3) would be lower at eaves/ridge level with the upper floor partly within the roof slope and lit by rooflights.
- 1.3 Access would be via a new drive extending from the southern end of the main drive through the Court and skirting the eastern side of the formal gardens. Nine car parking spaces are proposed.

2. Policies**2.1 Planning Policy Guidance**

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy H16A - Housing in Rural Areas
Policy H20 - Housing in Rural Areas
Policy CTC1 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC2 - Area of Great Landscape Value

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy C1	-	Development within Open Countryside
Policy C2	-	Settlement Boundaries
Policy C5	-	Development within AONB
Policy C8	-	Development Within Area of Great Landscape Value
Policy C29	-	Setting of a Listed Building
Policy SH11	-	Housing in the Countryside

2.4 Herefordshire UDP (Revised Deposit Draft)

Policy H7	-	Housing in the Countryside
Policy H8	-	Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings and Dwellings Associated with Rural Businesses
Policy LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

3. Planning History

3.1	CE1999/3231/F	Conversion of existing outbuildings to provide three registerable bedrooms with en-suite facilities	-	Approved 19.1.00
	CE1999/3171/L	Conversion of outbuildings to 3 no registerable bedrooms, new windows and alterations to existing door openings.	-	Approved 14.1.00
	CE2003/0060/F	Single block of 4 No. units of sheltered housing with garages/stores	-	Approved 3.3.03
	DCSE2003/1482/L	Two storey, 12 bedroom extension with single storey link to existing building.	-	Approved 1.7.03
	DCSE2003/1485/F	Two storey 12 bedroom extension with single storey link to existing building.	-	Approved 1.7.03
	DCSE2004/3441/F	Extension to existing nursing home: variation of condition 2 (SE2003/1485/F)	-	Approved 12.1.04
	DCSE2004/3443/L	Extension to existing nursing home: variation of conditions 2 and 7 (SE03/1482/L)	-	Approved 7.1.05

4. Consultation SummaryStatutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency raises a holding objection as insufficient information has been submitted regarding foul drainage.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager recommends that conditions be imposed regarding provision of car parking.
- 4.3 The Conservation Manager does not object in principle but raises concerns regarding detailing of the weatherboarding.

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicant has submitted two letters explaining his reasons for making the application. These are reproduced in full in the Appendix to this report. In addition financial details have been supplied in support of the financial case.
- 5.2 Parish Council have not replied.
- 5.3 One letter has been received from local residents. They raise the following concerns, although not objecting in principle:
- (1) grey slate roof would be very visible above the old garden wall from their property which would limit light to occupants - building should be sited several metres further from wall;
 - (2) rooms extremely small : suited for student accommodation but not for professionals as their sole dwelling;
 - (3) presumably rooflights unacceptable as rejected recently on a neighbouring property;
 - (4) additional traffic on very narrow road and new driveway along edge of orchard - shorter route would be to connect to the existing drive north of the Court;
 - (5) Potential noise from traffic especially as shift working and should be contained within existing area occupied by the Court as far as possible;
 - (6) significant increase in light pollution (first floor windows, outside lights, vehicles lights);
 - (7) mature walnut tree not shown on plans; removal of 3 conifers on eastern side will reduce visual screening.

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 The current Development Plan does not allow new housing in the open countryside except for agricultural and forestry workers dwellings. The proposal clearly conflicts with the Council's adopted policies for residential development. Policy H7 of the emerging UDP widens the exceptions to include dwellings necessary for the growth of a rural enterprise. However this policy carries limited weight pending the UDP Inquiry Inspector's report. Advice in Annexe A of PPS7 is more supportive of the principle of occupational dwellings in the countryside. It points out that "there still be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work.

Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved". Criteria is set out for assessing the need for a rural dwelling(s). These are:

- (i) there is a clearly established existing functional need
- (ii) the need relates to a full-time worker or a worker whose primary employment is at the rural enterprise and is not a part-time requirement
- (iii) the enterprise has been established for at least 3 years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so
- (iv) the functional need could not be met by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.

6.2 Full details to enable the financial test to be considered have been submitted and carefully assessed. It is considered that the nursing home, which has been established for a number of years is financially sound, taking into account the substantial investment currently underway and planned.

6.3 The key issues are therefore considered to be whether the nurses' accommodation is necessary and what the visual effect would be on the setting of the Listed Building and on the landscape which is both an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and of Great Landscape Value. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) have indicated that for a nursing home 1 carer (including nurses) is needed for every 5 residents during the day (2 shift) and 1 for 10 at night. The current application to CSCI for an additional 15 places (i.e. the extension) would result in the total number of places at Brockhampton Court being 58. Consequently 12 carers would be needed each day shift, 6 for each night shift. On this basis 40 plus carers would be required. Administrative, catering, maintenance and other staff would be additional to that number. The applicant seems to imply that the home would function as a post operative unit which may require higher staffing level but it is understood that Brockhampton Court is not registered for that purpose at the moment.

6.4 On the limited evidence available there do seem to be difficulties in attracting sufficient trained staff particularly for residential and nursing homes in rural locations. In this case the home is some distance from a village of any size and is not on a bus route. According to the applicant job advertisements have offered transport and "excellent pay" but sufficient carers and qualified nurses have not been recruited. Like farming these rural businesses are turning to foreign workers to make up the shortfall, although in this case it is full-time, qualified nurses that are being recruited rather than seasonal, unskilled farm workers. It seems reasonable to assume that the same problems of accommodation would arise but with a need for permanent accommodation. Although not researched or fully documented information from CSCI supports this picture.

6.5 But accepting that there is a need for staff accommodation there are two remaining considerations: does the accommodation need to be on site and how much accommodation? The isolated position of Brockhampton Court, distance from any sizeable settlement and lack of public transport noted above all suggest on-site provision and it is not clear that there are obvious alternative site(s) suitable for such development within easy reach of the Court. Whilst the number of staff (carers) needed can be calculated with some confidence the number that need to be housed at Brockhampton cannot be estimated from the evidence submitted. No information is

available on present numbers of staff. It may be reasonable to assume that significant investment such as this proposal would not be undertaken without sound reasons.

- 6.6 On the second issue a major consideration is the effect on the setting of the listed building. Ideally these new units should be sited close to Brockhampton Court but it is considered that there is no better site in view of the extensive gardens to the east of the Court which are an important part of its setting. Furthermore the application site would be partially screened by the higher wall, and existing planting and topography. It would still be visible from certain vantage points but it is considered that the adverse visual impact would not be so serious as to justify refusal if the Committee is satisfied required on the need for accommodation. The access chosen similarly minimises any harm to Brockhampton Court's setting and the landscape, as it can be cut below the level of the gardens. There is considered to be sufficient distance (about 65 m) to the nearest house to ensure that residential amenities would not be unduly affected. Re-siting the building may be practicable and allow additional planting. This will be discussed with the applicant's agent.
- 6.7 The Traffic Manager recommends 18 parking spaces whereas only 9 are proposed. It would be difficult to accommodate this number on the application site and despite the rural location it may be doubted if every occupant will have private transport. The fact that transport is one of the problems and the need for foreign workers both suggest that a lower provision would suffice.
- 6.8 There is ample space for a septic tank drainage system and this can be required by planning condition.
- 6.9 It is concluded that on the evidence available, the need for nurses accommodation has been demonstrated with the one reservation about precise numbers. Accepting that this is not readily quantifiable it is therefore recommended as follows:

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to revised drawings showing acceptable design, external appearance and siting of the building 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 B01 (Samples of external materials)

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

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 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.

6 E30 (Use as staff accommodation)

Reason: It would be contrary to the policy of the local planning authority to grant planning permission in this location without the special need to provide on site accommodation.

7 F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

8 F18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal)

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

9 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.

Informative:

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

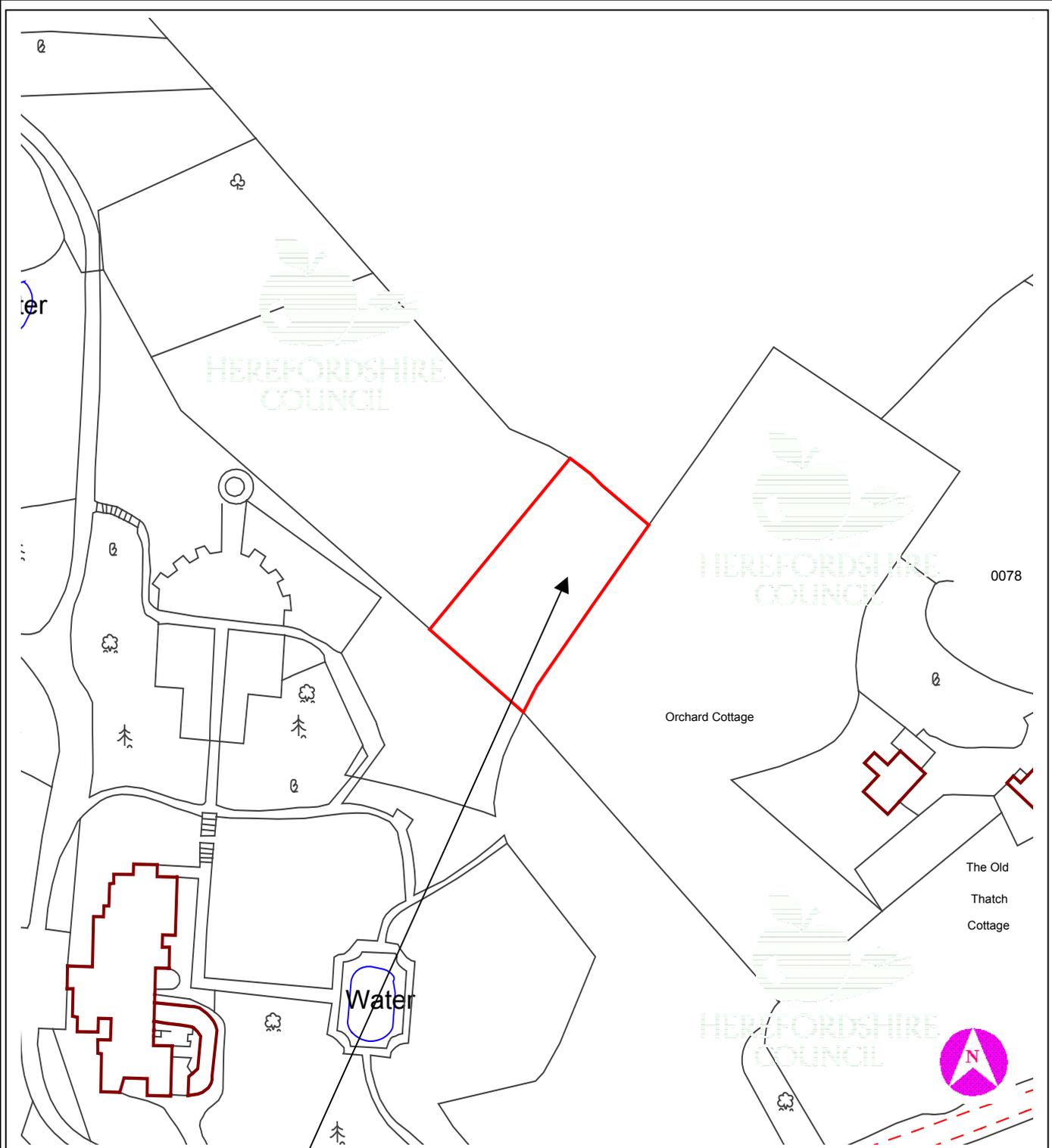
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2004/3971/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Brockhampton Court Nursing Home, -, Brockhampton, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4TQ

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