

10 DCSE2005/1374/F - CHANGE OF USE OF 9 HOLIDAY COTTAGES TO RETIREMENT CENTRE, WYE LEA COUNTRY MANOR, BRIDSTOW, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 6PZ

For: Mr C Bateman per M E Thorne & Co, The Ridge, Buckcastle Hill, Bridstow, Ross on Wye

Date Received: 27th April, 2005

Ward: Llangarron

Grid Ref: 58203, 25637

Expiry Date: 22nd June, 2005

Local Member: Councillor Mrs. J.A. Hyde

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 Wye Lea is a holiday centre situated close to the west bank of the River wye to the north of Bridstow. It comprises self-catering holiday accommodation, including a number of converted buildings and 6 modern purpose-built units, plus a swimming pool and leisure centre, restaurant and extensive grounds and facilities, including fishing rights. The current proposal is the response to a recent decline in bookings, which according to the applicant, put in question the future viability of the enterprise.

1.2 It is now proposed to change the use of 6 of the modern units (the manager's flat is excluded) and 3 of the remaining holiday units into retired persons' accommodation. The units would be leased or rented and contribute to maintenance of the site as a whole.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance

PPS.7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC.1 - Development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 Policy CTC.2 - Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value
 Policy CTC.13 - Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
 Policy CTC.14 - Criteria for the Conversion of Buildings in Rural Areas
 Policy H.20 - Residential Development in Open Countryside

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy C.1 - Development within Open Countryside
 Policy C.5 - Development within Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 Policy C.8 - Development within Area of Great Landscape Value
 Policy C.36 - Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings
 Policy C.37 - Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use
 Policy SH.11 - Housing in the Countryside

2.4 Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

Policy H.7	-	Housing in the Countryside outside Settlements
Policy LA.1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy HBA.12	-	Re-use of Traditional Rural Buildings
Policy HBA.13	-	Re-use of Traditional Rural Buildings for Residential Purposes

3. Planning History

3.1	SH850645PF	Change of use of first floor to two holiday suites	-	Approved 25.10.86
	SH850877PF	Conversion to form 3 holiday cottages, erection of covered swimming pool	-	Approved 25.10.86
	SH871326PF	6 holiday cottages with caretaker's flat	-	Approved 25.11.87
	SH880057PF	Alterations & extensions to cottage	-	Approved 08.02.88
	SH910236PF	Removal of Condition 2 (SH871407PF)	-	Approved 01.05.91
	SH910958PF	Squash court and tennis court	-	Approved 11.10.91
	SH921435PF	Removal of Condition 2 (SH910236PF)	-	Approved 13.01.93
	SH941107PF	New entrance, drive and car parking for 57 cars	-	Approved 19.10.94
	SH941108PF	Leisure building	-	Approved 19.10.94
	SH950662PF	Conservatory extension to restaurant	-	Approved 27.07.95
	SE2002/0327/F	6 holiday cottages, tourist information centre and offices, manager's house, shift manager's room and machinery store	-	Appeal Dismissed 19.03.03
	SE2003/1502/F	6 holiday/letting units, information centre and machinery store; creation of lake	-	Approved 11.10.03
	SE2003/1859/F	Extension to manager's house, office and relief manager's bedroom and detached garage	-	Approved 14.08.03
	SE2003/3554/F	Removal of Condition 3 of SE2003/1859/F	-	Approved 21.01.04

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager has no objection to the grant of permission.
- 4.3 Tourism Officer has commented verbally, a written response is awaited.

5. Representations

- 5.1 A detailed letter from the applicant's agent explaining the background to the proposal is included as an appendix to this report. In addition, the sales particulars and letters from the applicant's estate agent regarding the marketing of the enterprise have been submitted.
- 5.2 Parish Council has no objections to the proposal.
- 5.3 Two letters have been received which support the proposal. It is pointed out that:
- the holiday complex has been an asset to the village but even better as retirement housing
 - it is difficult to find suitable retirement accommodation
 - easier to retain independence if security and part of a small community
 - a splendid proposal.

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 Tourism is actively encouraged in the Development Plan and the loss of a significant part of Wye Lea would diminish the range of self-catering accommodation in the County. However the Tourism Officer confirms that there is an over-provision of such accommodation. This and changes in the type of holidays people take may at least partly explain the sudden and serious decline in bookings over just a few years. Even two years ago the applicant was seeking to expand his accommodation and facilities.
- 6.2 The Council's policy for change of use of rural buildings is to encourage use for commercial purposes. In this instance it is accepted that there are unlikely to be alternative uses that would benefit the local economy and the centre has therefore been marketed appropriately for holiday purposes. Whilst fixing a sale price that would attract interest cannot be done with certainty the estate agent confirms that in his view 'the price being asked for the complex is realistic in the present market' bearing in mind that reasonable offers would be considered. As at the beginning of June 2005 after 6 months of marketing there had been 'not a single response' (letter from agent). On this basis it is considered that the holiday centre has been marketed as required in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

6.3 It follows that residential use can be considered, there being no realistic prospect of commercial/tourism use. The proposal of elderly people’s housing is not ideal, in that current policies encourage new housing and residential homes in locations close to public facility and on public transport routes. Nevertheless this is not sufficient grounds to refuse permission it is considered.

6.4 In view of the financial position of the business there is no justification for building the 6 new units and other provision granted permission but not yet implemented. It is recommended that a Section 106 agreement should be entered into to ensure that further tourism development does not go ahead before planning permission is granted for the current proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

That : (i) The County Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to complete a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure:

- 1. That the 6 holiday letting units, information centre, extension to manager's house, office and shift manager's bedroom approved under SE2003/1502/F, SE2003/1859/F and SE2003/3554/F not be implemented.**
- 2. The occupation of the retirement centre accommodation be limited to elderly people.**

(ii) Upon completion of the aforementioned planning obligation, officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following condition and any other 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.

Informative:

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

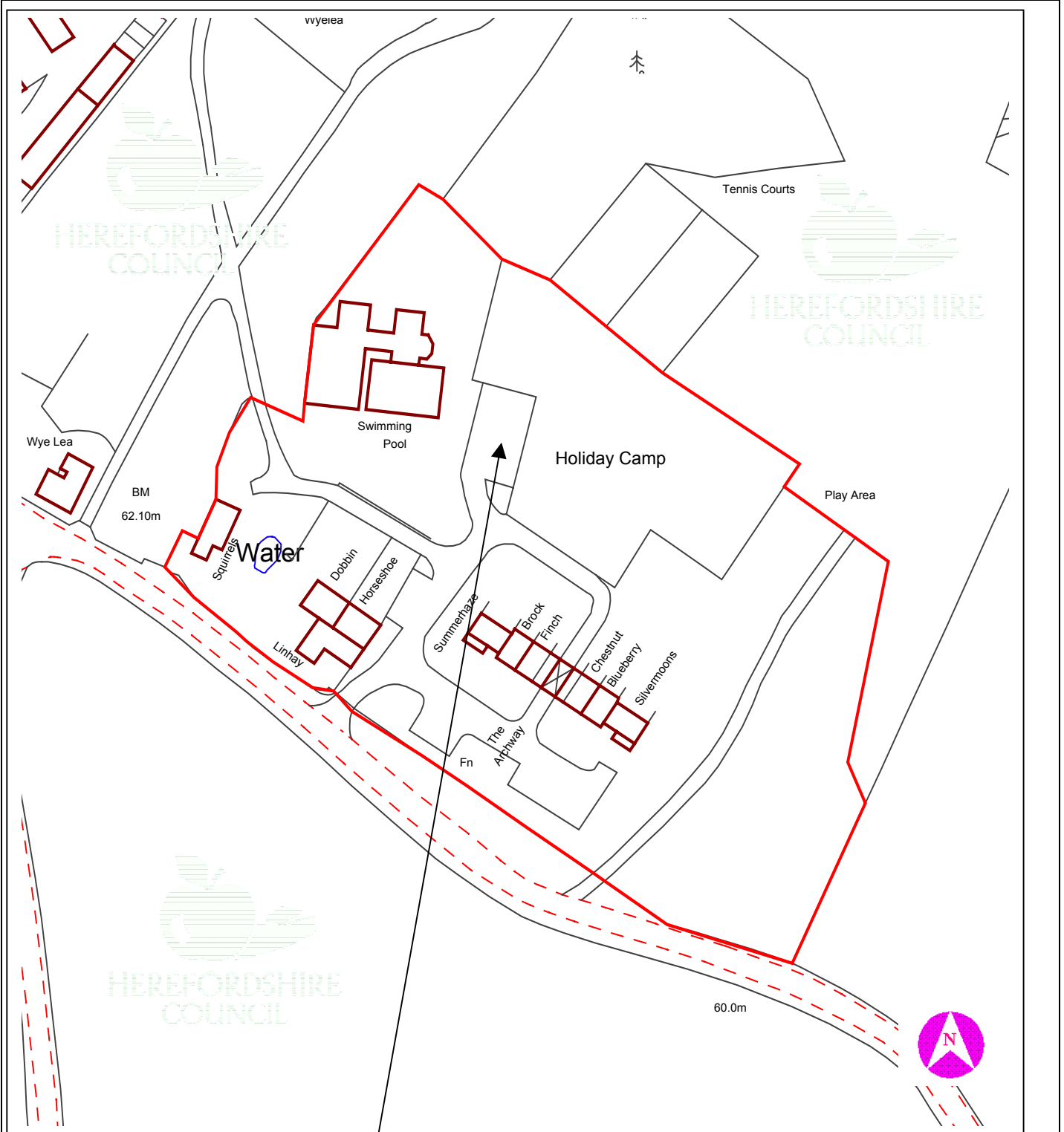
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2005/1374/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Wye Lea Country Manor, Bridstow, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6PZ

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