

**14A DCCE2005/3258/F - CONSTRUCTION OF 16 NO. RESIDENTIAL UNITS, ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING & LANDSCAPING. CARFAX HOUSE SITE, AYLESTONE HILL, HEREFORD, HR1 1HX**

**For: I.E. Developments Ltd, Warren Benbow Architects, 21 Mill Street, Kington, Herefordshire, HR5 3AL**

**14B DCCE2005/3259/C - DEMOLITION OF CARFAX HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS, REPLACEMENT RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS. CARFAX HOUSE SITE, AYLESTONE HILL, HEREFORD, HR1 1HX**

**For: I.E. Developments Ltd, Warren Benbow Architects, 21 Mill Street, Kington, Herefordshire, HR5 3AL**

**Date Received: 11th October, 2005      Ward: Aylestone      Grid Ref: 52170, 40729**

**Expiry Date: 6th December, 2005**

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

### **Introduction**

Recently, previous applications DCCE2005/12356/F and DCCE2005/2330/C sought permission for a contemporary development of 16 units and associated works on this site. These applications were refused at the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on the 21st September, 2005 on the basis of a detrimental visual impact and a failure to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation. This application represents a resubmission for a development of a similar scale but with a traditional design concept.

### **1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 These applications relate to a revised proposal for a development involving the demolition of Carfax House and Carfax Cottage, and the erection of 16 residential units with associated car parking and landscaping.
- 1.2 The application site is in a corner location on the junction between Aylestone Hill and Folly Lane. Carfax House is assessed to have an early 19th Century core which was extended and altered in the Victorian period and underwent remodelling during the 20th Century. The site is also home to Carfax Cottage, a red brick building of more modest scale located adjacent to Carfax House running down Aylestone Hill, as well

as, three demountable structures. The site is located within the designated Aylestone Hill Conservation Area. Neither Carfax House, nor Carfax Cottage, are Listed Buildings. The last use of the site was for educational purposes in association with Hereford College of Technology. The site falls within the Established Residential Area as defined by both the Hereford City Local Plan and the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft).

- 1.3 This proposal involves the erection of a four storey apartment building on the site of Carfax House (14 units total), and a three storey pair of townhouses in place of Carfax Cottage (two units total). The design concept of the proposed new development is traditional, utilising white render and natural slate to create a sympathetic development reflective of the perceived character of the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area. The new development is sited in the same manner as the previous application, being principally in the same positions as the existing built form on site. The existing demountable buildings will be removed and the parking area recreated, including garaging, refuse storage area, and cover cycle parking. The existing parking facilities found to the south of the site will be removed and additional open space formed. The proposal also involves the stopping up two of the existing three access points with the access currently found between the House and Cottage enhanced to serve the proposed development. The existing site is notable for the fine trees currently found in situ.

## 2. Policies

### 2.1 Planning Policy Guidance:

|               |   |                                       |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| PPS1          | - | Delivering sustainable development    |
| PPG3          | - | Housing                               |
| PPS9          | - | Nature Conservation                   |
| PPG13         | - | Transport                             |
| PPG15         | - | Planning and the historic environment |
| Circular 6/98 | - | Planning and affordable housing       |
| Circular 5/05 | - | Planning obligations                  |

### 2.2 Hereford Local Plan

|       |   |                                                                  |
|-------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ENV14 | - | Design                                                           |
| ENV16 | - | Alterations and extensions                                       |
| H3    | - | Design of new residential development                            |
| H6    | - | Amenity open space provision to smaller schemes                  |
| H8    | - | Affordable housing                                               |
| H12   | - | Established residential areas - character and amenity            |
| H13   | - | Established residential areas - loss of features                 |
| H14   | - | Established residential areas - site factors                     |
| CON1  | - | Preservation of buildings of architectural and historic interest |
| CON12 | - | Conservation areas                                               |
| CON13 | - | Conservation areas - development proposals                       |
| CON16 | - | Conservation area consent                                        |
| CON17 | - | Conservation area consent - condition                            |
| CON19 | - | Townscape                                                        |
| CON20 | - | Skyline                                                          |
| CON21 | - | Protection of trees                                              |
| CON22 | - | Urban forestry management                                        |
| CON23 | - | Tree planting                                                    |

|     |   |                                    |
|-----|---|------------------------------------|
| NC6 | - | Criteria for development proposals |
| NC8 | - | Protected species                  |
| T5  | - | Car parking - designated areas     |
| T11 | - | Pedestrian provision               |
| T12 | - | Cyclist provision                  |

### 2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

|      |   |                                                                                        |
|------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S1   | - | Sustainable development                                                                |
| S2   | - | Development requirements                                                               |
| S3   | - | Housing                                                                                |
| S4   | - | Employment                                                                             |
| S6   | - | Transport                                                                              |
| S7   | - | Natural and historic heritage                                                          |
| DR1  | - | Design                                                                                 |
| DR2  | - | Land use and activity                                                                  |
| DR3  | - | Movement                                                                               |
| DR4  | - | Environment                                                                            |
| DR5  | - | Planning obligations                                                                   |
| H1   | - | Hereford and the market towns: settlement boundaries and established residential areas |
| H2   | - | Hereford and the market towns: housing land allocations                                |
| H9   | - | Affordable housing                                                                     |
| H13  | - | Sustainable residential design                                                         |
| H14  | - | Re-using previously developed land and buildings                                       |
| H15  | - | Density                                                                                |
| H16  | - | Car parking                                                                            |
| E5   | - | Safeguarding employment land and buildings                                             |
| T7   | - | Cycling                                                                                |
| T11  | - | Parking provision                                                                      |
| LA5  | - | Protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows                                           |
| LA6  | - | Landscaping schemes                                                                    |
| NC1  | - | Nature conservation: biodiversity and development                                      |
| NC5  | - | European and nationally protected species                                              |
| NC6  | - | Biodiversity action plan priority habitats and species                                 |
| NC8  | - | Habitat creation, restoration and enhancement                                          |
| HBA6 | - | New development within conservation areas                                              |
| HBA7 | - | Demolition of unlisted buildings within conservation areas                             |
| HBA8 | - | Locally important buildings                                                            |
| HBA9 | - | Protection of open areas and green spaces                                              |

## 3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCCE2005/12356/F and DCCE2005/2330/C Construction of 16 residential units with associated car parking and landscaping. Refused 21st September, 2005
- 3.2 DCCE2004/0475/O Partial redevelopment of College Campus to provide new learning village. Approved 12th August, 2005.

## 4. Consultation Summary

### Statutory Consultations

## 4.1 Water Authority - No objection

Internal Council Advice

## 4.2 Conservation Manager -

Landscape and Trees: The comments relating to landscaping and tree issues associated with this application echoed those of the previous application. The majority of the trees on the site are protected by Tree Preservation Order 523, though an application is currently in to vary this to remove 3 further trees, identified as being of poor quality. This application is considered acceptable, subject to conditions.

Conservation Area: Objections were raised to this revised scheme on the basis of the design details.

Ecology: No objection subject to condition

## 4.3 Traffic Manager - No objection subject to conditions and planning contribution to provide for a pedestrian crossing.

**5. Representations**

## 5.1 Hereford City Parish Council – decline to comment on the new development but raise an objection to the demolition of Carfax House and Cottage

## 5.2 Conservation Area Panel – No response received

## 5.3 Local Residents – Seven letters of objection have been received against this proposal. The points raised can be summarised as follows:

1. Detrimental impact upon character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
2. Demolition of this locally important building is undesirable;
3. Scale is excessive for this location;
4. Traffic generation and access hazard;
5. Inappropriate urbanisation in this 'semi-rural' location;
6. Unacceptable design;

## 5.5 A single letter of support has also been received

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

**6. Officers Appraisal**

## 6.1 It is considered that the following issues represent the main considerations in these applications:

1. Principle of development;
2. Density and affordable housing provision;
3. Demolition of existing buildings;
4. Design and scale;
5. Residential amenities;
6. Highway issues;

7. Landscaping, trees, and ecology;
8. Visual amenities and impact upon Conservation Area.

#### Principle of Development

- 6.2 The application site was last used for educational purposes, however, the site falls within the defined Established Residential Area and as such a residential use is not contrary to planning policy. Hereford City Local Plan Policies H14 and H13 advise that residential development within the Established Residential Area should resolve a number of issues relating to highways, amenities, design and layout, density, landscaping, visual impact, and impact upon the character and amenity of the area. This stance is echoed in Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft). The property no longer forms part of the proposed College redevelopment as signified through its sale. On the basis of this it is considered that the fundamental principle of this development can be accepted with the acceptability or otherwise of this scheme dependent upon the details of this proposal.

#### Density and Affordable Housing Provision

- 6.3 The proposal seeks permission for a development of 16 units on a site in the region of half a hectare in size. This represents a density of approximately 32 dwellings to the hectare. PPG3 identifies 30 – 50 hectares as an appropriate density for development. This development is therefore at the lower end of this spectrum, however, having regard to the location of the site within a Conservation Area, as well as, in consideration of the generally low-density nature of the locality, the proposed density level is considered acceptable.
- 6.4 Turning to the provision of affordable housing on this site, this scheme does not currently propose an allocation of such a housing type. Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft) Policy H9 states that a target of 35% affordable units will be required in developments for 15 dwellings or more. It is of note, however, that adopted planning policy contained within the Hereford City Local Plan states only that a reasonable mix of housing will be encouraged with affordable housing particularly encouraged. On the basis of this it is considered appropriate to turn to national guidance contained within PPG3 and Circular 6/98. National guidance advises that affordable housing in locations such as this should be provided for development on sites of 1 hectare or more, or 25 dwellings. In consideration of this, and the current un-adopted nature of the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, it is considered that the provision of no affordable element in this scheme is acceptable in this instance.

#### Demolition of Existing Buildings

- 6.5 Carfax House is assessed as having an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century core, which was later extended a number of times in the Victorian period and also underwent a number of remodelling during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is not considered to be of any particular architectural merit, is not worthy of listing and the majority of internal fittings of particular interest have been lost. The number and quality of the extensions and alterations have severely compromised what may have at one time been an architecturally interesting building. They appear to have been added without any particular consideration for the composition of the original building. It would have been expected that the original building faced onto Aylestone Hill but with the extensions it would appear that an attempt was made to have the façade facing the grounds

towards the college. Unfortunately this has not been as successful as would have been hoped as it appears that the needs of space and possibly cost outweighed any design consideration during this time. Internally the building has been almost completely gutted over time and there are few surviving features of interest. The extent of the alterations which have taken place are such that the restoration of the existing building is not viable. The building as found is not worthy of conversion and the original elements of Carfax House have been significantly compromised to an extent that the removal of the undesirable additions would leave nothing of value to convert.

- 6.6 Objections received have commented on the unacceptability of the demolition of the existing buildings on site, and in particular, Carfax House itself. The first point to stress is that Carfax House is not a Listed Building (nor is Carfax Cottage) as has been suggested by some. Notwithstanding this, the application does involve the demolition of a prominent building within a Conservation Area. The Conservation Manager has fully investigated the buildings on site, both inside and out, and the conclusion reached was that the buildings are not worthy of Listing. Furthermore, the extent of the alterations made to Carfax House is such that the building is assessed as having no particular architectural interest. It therefore considered that the demolition of the existing buildings on site could be supported subject to the proposed development being of a high standard of design. In the case of this revised scheme the Conservation Manager has expressed objections to the detailing of the scheme. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the proposal represents a traditional development with a sensitive design concept that is appropriate for this area having regard to the character and appearance of the locality. A condition will ensure that those features that are of note are reclaimed.

#### Design and Scale

- 6.7 This revised proposal has taken a very different tack from that of the previous scheme. This proposal has abandoned the contemporary approach and instead has been developed so as to be informed by the architecture of the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area. Although the immediate area is characterised by modern residential developments and educational facilities of little merit, and notwithstanding the eclectic mix materials, of old and new dwellings, and of modest and substantial properties, in the wider Conservation Area the perceived character of the Aylestone Hill area is of relatively substantial detached dwellings in large grounds. The buildings which dominate the Conservation Area are the grand rendered properties and the imposing brick/stone dwellings. It is these properties which have informed this revised development which reflects not only the underlying character of the application site as it is current found, but also recognises and acknowledges in its design the wider Conservation Area disposition. The sizing of the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to the college buildings, hospital building, and aforementioned properties which typify this locality. The design is considered to be of a high standard that would preserve the character and appearance of the site and locality.

#### Residential Amenities

- 6.8 As with the previous application, the sole direction of concern in relation to residential amenities is the North/Northeast where a single storey dwelling and Aylestone Grange, a modern suburban cul-de-sac development of residential properties, is found. The proposed semi-detached townhouse has no habitable openings in this direction and in relation to these neighbouring dwellings it is considered that the existing landscaping and the distances involved (35 metres between the apartment building and neighbours

at the closest point) are adequate to ensure an acceptable relationship between these sites. The townhouse is not significantly larger than the existing cottage and it is considered that the impact of this building will be similar to that currently found. The college buildings are 25 metres at their closest point which is considered more than adequate having regard to the use of this building. It is considered that the use of this site for residential purposes will not cause disruption or disturbance of residential amenities to an unacceptable degree beyond that of the previous use of this site for educational purposes.

#### Highway Issues

- 6.9 The application site is currently served by three access points. The proposal involves the stopping up of the two most southerly access points, with the third improved to provide the required visibility splay and access specifications. The Traffic Manager has evaluated the access and confirms that it is in accordance with highway safety requirements. It is considered that the access point identified for retention is the most appropriate and acceptable being furthest away from the junction to the south whilst still being able to provide the required access splays. 24 parking spaces will be provided on site, conforming to the 1.5 per unit requirement specified in the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft). This ratio is considered appropriate having regard to the central location of this development site and the ready access to the main Hereford public transport interchanges at the bottom of Aylestone Hill. Although the existing parking area to the south of the site appears to be unauthorised, it is of note that a parking area of similar size 'under' the portable classrooms currently found on site. In relation to the intensity of use, the Traffic Manager has evaluated the existing and proposed vehicles movements and it has been concluded that no intensification of traffic will result from this proposal over the previous on site activities. The closure of the two accesses nearest the roundabout is seen as *'very beneficial'*.
- 6.10 Independently of this application there is a current requirement for a pedestrian crossing at the top of Aylestone Hill identified by the Traffic Manager as part of the 'Safer Routes to School' Project. I understand that the Agent for this application is prepared to make a voluntary contribution to the works but, as they are not required for the development, the contribution cannot be the subject of a planning condition. At the time of drafting this report negotiations were continuing on the details of the proposed pedestrian crossing, including costings, and the means of securing the voluntary contribution. A verbal update will be made at the meeting.

#### Landscaping, Trees, and Ecology

- 6.11 The County Arbouriculturist and Landscape Officers have been involved in this scheme from an early stage. This development site is particularly notable for the fine trees currently found. The presence of these trees informed the nature of this development from the earliest point and this is reflected in the fact that the majority of the trees on site are now protected by a Tree Preservation Order. This development, as with the previous one, has taken careful regard of the valuable trees on site. As with the highway situation, it is considered that in relation to landscaping and trees this application represents an enhancement of the site. The existing parking area to the South of Carfax House is to be removed and re-landscaped and this will be beneficial to the health of the adjacent trees. The design concept is based around the maintenance of the existing trees on site as the dominant visual form. In relation to trees and

landscaping on site it is therefore considered that this application represents an acceptable form of development, subject to conditions.

#### Visual Amenities and Impact Upon Conservation Area

- 6.12 It is considered that this development represents an acceptable form of development within this designated Conservation Area that will preserve the character and appearance of this area. It is recognised that the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area has some fine architecture and buildings of historical note, it is also the case that this site is flanked by a modern hospital and college developments, as well as suburban residential developments to the north and south of no outstanding merit. The proposed development is considered to be of a high design standard but in this context particularly it is suggested that this development will represent an enhancement to the visual amenities of the locality.

#### Conclusion

- 6.13 The sensitive nature of this site is recognised, however, in this prominent gateway site this development is considered to represent a high quality scheme that will form an impressive gateway building that will enhance this entranceway to the City.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Conservation Area Consent and Planning Permission be approved subject to the following conditions:**

- 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 A07 (Development in accordance with approved plans)**

**Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.**

- 3 B01 (Samples of external materials)**

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

- 4 E08 (Domestic use only of garage)**

**Reason: To ensure that the garage is used only for the purposes ancillary to the dwelling.**

- 5 E09 (No conversion of garage to habitable accommodation)**

**Reason: To ensure adequate off street parking arrangements remain available at all times.**

- 6 E16 (Removal of permitted development rights)**



**Reason: In the interests of maintaining the special architectural value of this development**

**7 E18 (No new windows in specified elevation)**

**Reason: In order to protect the residential amenity of adjacent properties.**

**8 F16 (Restriction of hours during construction)**

**Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.**

**9 F39 (Scheme of refuse storage)**

**Reason: In the interests of amenity.**

**10 G01 (Details of boundary treatments)**

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

**11 G02 (Landscaping scheme (housing development))**

**Reason: To ensure a satisfactory and well planned development and to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment.**

**12 G03 (Landscaping scheme (housing development) - implementation)**

**Reason: To ensure a satisfactory and well planned development and to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment.**

**13 G16 (Protection of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order)**

**Reason: To ensure the proper care and maintenance of the trees.**

**14 G17 (Protection of trees in a Conservation Area)**

**Reason: To ensure the proper care and maintenance of the trees.**

**15 G18 (Protection of trees)**

**Reason: To ensure adequate protection to existing trees which are to be retained, in the interests of the character and amenities of the area.**

**16 H06 (Vehicular access construction)**

**Reason: In the interests of highway safety.**

**17 H08 (Access closure)**

**Reason: To ensure the safe and free flow of traffic using the adjoining County highway.**

**18 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.**

**19 H27 (Parking for site operatives)**

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

**20 H29 (Secure cycle parking provision)**

**Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy.**

**informatives:**

- 1 NC01 - Alterations to submitted/approved plans**
- 2 HN01 - Mud on highway**
- 3 HN04 - Private apparatus within highway**
- 4 HN05 - Works within the highway**
- 5 HN10 - No drainage to discharge to highway**
- 6 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC**

**DCCE2005/2330/C**

**1. C01 - (Time limit for commencement (full permission))**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.**

- 2. Prior to the commencement of demolition, a photographic recording of Carfax House and Carfax Cottage shall be deposited with the Council in accordance with details to be agreed prior the conducting of said recording.**

**Reason: In the interests of maintaining a record of the history and development of this site**

- 3. Prior to the commencement of demolition a schedule of reclamation of items of architectural and/or historical interest shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The identified items shall then be reclaimed in accordance with the agreed details.**

**Reason: In the interests of preserving items of architectural or historic interest associated with this application site.**

**Informatives:**

- 1. N03 – (Adjoining property rights)**

- 2. It is advised that the staircase in Carfax House is of a high quality and it would be desirable for this to be salvaged. Please do not hesitate to contact the Conservation Manager on 01423 261950 to discuss this matter further.
  
- 3. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

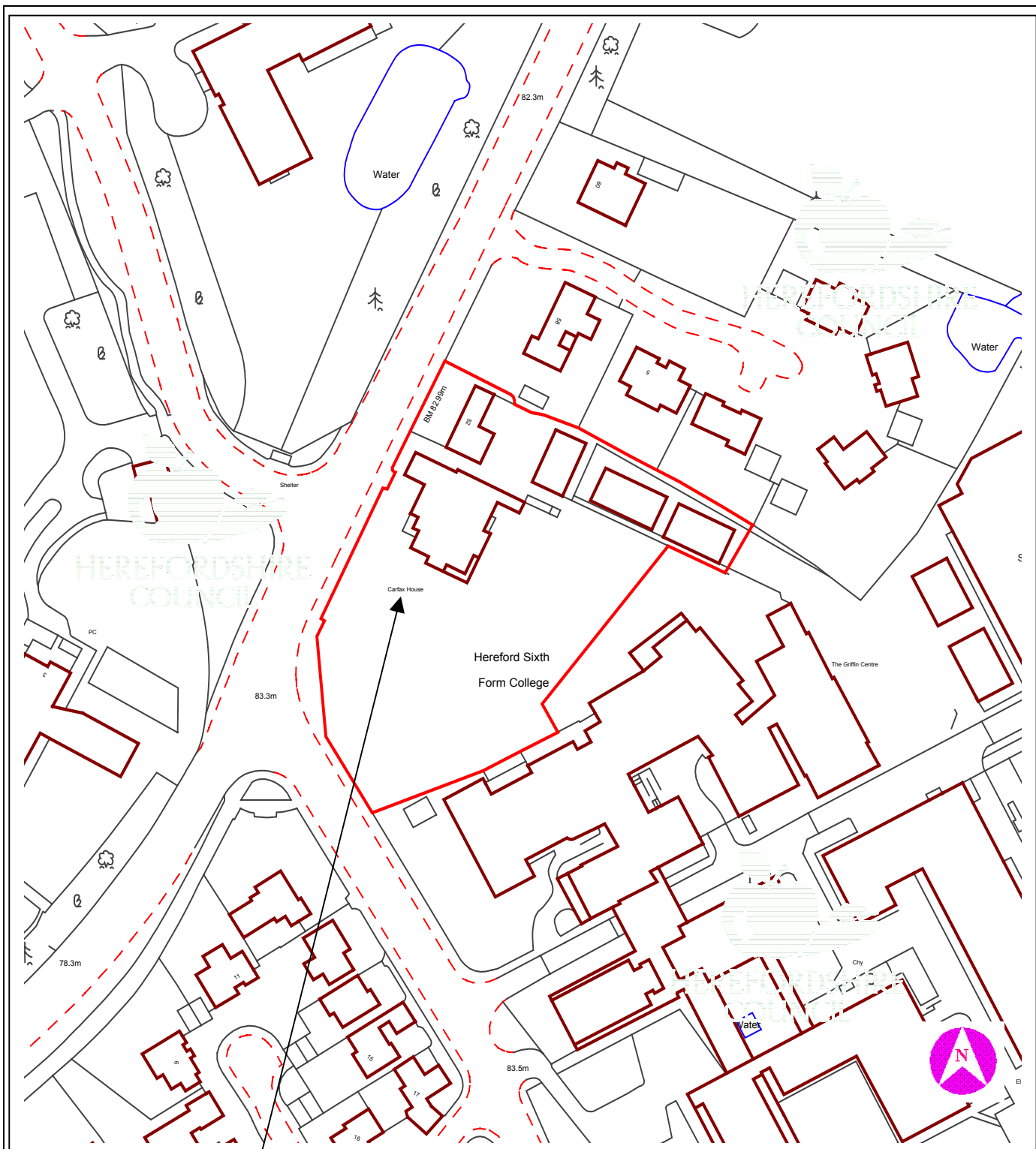
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCCE2005/3258/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** Carfax House Site, Aylestone Hill, Hereford HR1 1HX

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