

8 DCSW2005/4060/F - CONVERSION OF FORMER TELEPHONE REPEATER STATION TO DWELLING, TELEPHONE REPEATER STATION, ST WEONARDS, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR2 8QA.**For: Mr. J.H. Evans, No. 2 Pike Cottage, St. Weonards, Herefordshire, HR2 8NU****Date Received: 16th December, 2005****Ward: Pontrilas****Grid Ref: 49476, 24876****Expiry Date: 10th February, 2006**

Local Member: Councillor G.W. Davis

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal site is on the eastern side of the A466 road approximately half a kilometre north of the built up area of St. Weonards. It is proposed to convert the brick faced former BT repeater station building into a dwelling. The building is set back from 22 to 25.5 metres from the edge of the A466 road from which access is gained. There is a field gate access leading off to the north-east that allows for vehicles using the site to turn and manoeuvre. Two parking spaces will be provided just to the west of the western gable end of the brick building. A 1200mm high post and wire fence is proposed on the northern boundary of the site that adjoins a field in separate ownership.
- 1.2 The building is 5.4 metres wide and 14.2 metres in length. It is 3.1 metres to the eaves and 5.1 metres to the ridge. The four existing windows in the south and northern elevations facing a bank and woodland and open field respectively are 2 metres above ground floor such that it is not possible to look in or out of the building. Four new windows will replace these functional windows, the windows proposed to be 1.1 metres above ground level. On the north elevation an open porch is created by extending the roof a further 1.5 metres out. This roof is supported by poles and underneath a new door and side light is created. The existing openings are exposed, i.e. utilised on the west elevation, facing the highway. On the eastern elevation an existing ground floor window opening is increased in height. There is also a window installed higher up in order to produce light for a new first floor providing two bedrooms. Six rooflights are proposed on the north and southern roof slopes, i.e. three lights on each roof slope.
- 1.3 The building has been marketed as required by policy contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and in accordance with Government advice contained in PPS.7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

2. Policies**2.1 Planning Policy Guidance**

PPS.7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

- Policy CTC.14 - Conversion of Buildings
Policy H.20 - Housing in Rural Areas Outside the Green Belt

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

- Policy GD.1 - General Development Criteria
Policy SH.11 - Housing in the Countryside
Policy C.1 - Development within Open Countryside
Policy C.36 - Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings
Policy C.37 - Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use

2.4 Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

- Policy H.7 - Housing in the Countryside Outside Settlements
Policy HBA.12 - Re-use of Rural Buildings
Policy HBA.13 - Re-use of Rural Buildings for Residential Purposes

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCSW2005/2756/F Conversion of former telephone repeater station to dwelling - Refused 13.10.05

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager recommends that conditions be attached to any grant of planning permission.

5. Representations

- 5.1 In a letter that accompanied the application the applicant makes the following main points:

- reasons for refused planning due to excessive changes to building
- building marketed for non-residential use, no interest has been shown
- minimal changes required, i.e. ground floor windows, new front door and rooflights. Deleted dormer window. Scheme now complies with Policies C.36 and C.37 in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan
- proposal in accordance with Unitary Development Plan Policy H.7(3), HBA.12 and HBA.13, 'traditional' rural buildings being altered to rural buildings only
- noted similar 'utilities' building granted permission at Byford (former pumping station)
- no reference made to Unitary Development Plan previously. Logical to use up to date Unitary Development Plan when there are no significant objections being considered by the Inspector
- prefer porch to remain in scheme, if only issue please see alternative plan and condition accordingly.

- 5.2 The Parish Council has no objections to the proposed conversion of the telephone repeater station to a dwelling.

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 main issue relates to the suitability of the building for conversion into a dwelling.
- 6.2 The brick faced repeater station is one that has a good means of access, and will not cause unacceptable disturbance to local amenities. Policy C.36 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan requires that the building in question needs to be suitable for the new use proposed. This is evidently not the case given that four primary windows are being altered given that they all have to be dropped in order for future occupants to even look out of the building. Therefore, the character of the building is not being maintained. This is exacerbated by the addition of a porch on the north elevation, notwithstanding that the applicant has stated that if it were the only issue it could be deleted from the scheme. This is a utilitarian building in open countryside. It is not sufficient for it to be structurally sound and having a safe access and further not conflicting with other land uses. There is a further policy contained in the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan, namely Policy H.20 that requires that in order to satisfy the criteria for environmentally acceptable conversions of redundant rural buildings it needs to be worthy of retention. This is the crux of this particular scheme. It is not sufficient to identify a redundant rural building, the building has to have qualities that it is worthwhile retaining. There are many brick built buildings in the Herefordshire countryside that are larger, have more openings, need fewer alterations. However, are they worthy of retention. This building is not one that is of such high architectural value that it would be desirable retaining. This is notwithstanding the fact that the alterations proposed do not reflect nor maintain the character of the original building.
- 6.3 The applicant has drawn attention to Policies HBA.12, HBA.13 and H.7 contained in the emerging Unitary Development Plan. It is stated that the local planning authority has not referred to these policies as they refer to rural buildings unlike those in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan, and that they are more up to date. Policy HBA.12 requires that the changes proposed should not adversely affect the character, amongst other criteria such as being of good construction. This is not the case given the changes outlined above. Policy HBA.13 requires in criterion (I) that there are acknowledged historical, architectural, local landscape or amenity benefits of retaining the building in question. This is demonstrably not the case. Also there is a requirement that the proposed dwelling meets a demonstrated local need. Policy H.7 contained in the Unitary Development Plan requires that the re-use of rural buildings should be in accordance with Policies HBA.12 and HBA.13.
- 6.4 Therefore the proposal is contrary to the provisions of Policies contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan, the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan and the emerging Unitary Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

1. The proposed conversion of this simple red brick utility building entails alterations that are not compatible with its simple aspect and unbroken roof plane of the existing building. The resultant building would be incongruous and detract from the amenity of the surrounding countryside. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the provision of Policies GD.1, C.36 and C.37 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and Policy CTC.14 in the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan. Further, the building is not worthy of retention as required by Policy H.20 contained in the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan together with the provisions of Policy SH.11 in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan. The proposal is contrary to the provisions of Policies H.7, HBA.12 and HBA.13 contained in the emerging Unitary Development Plan.

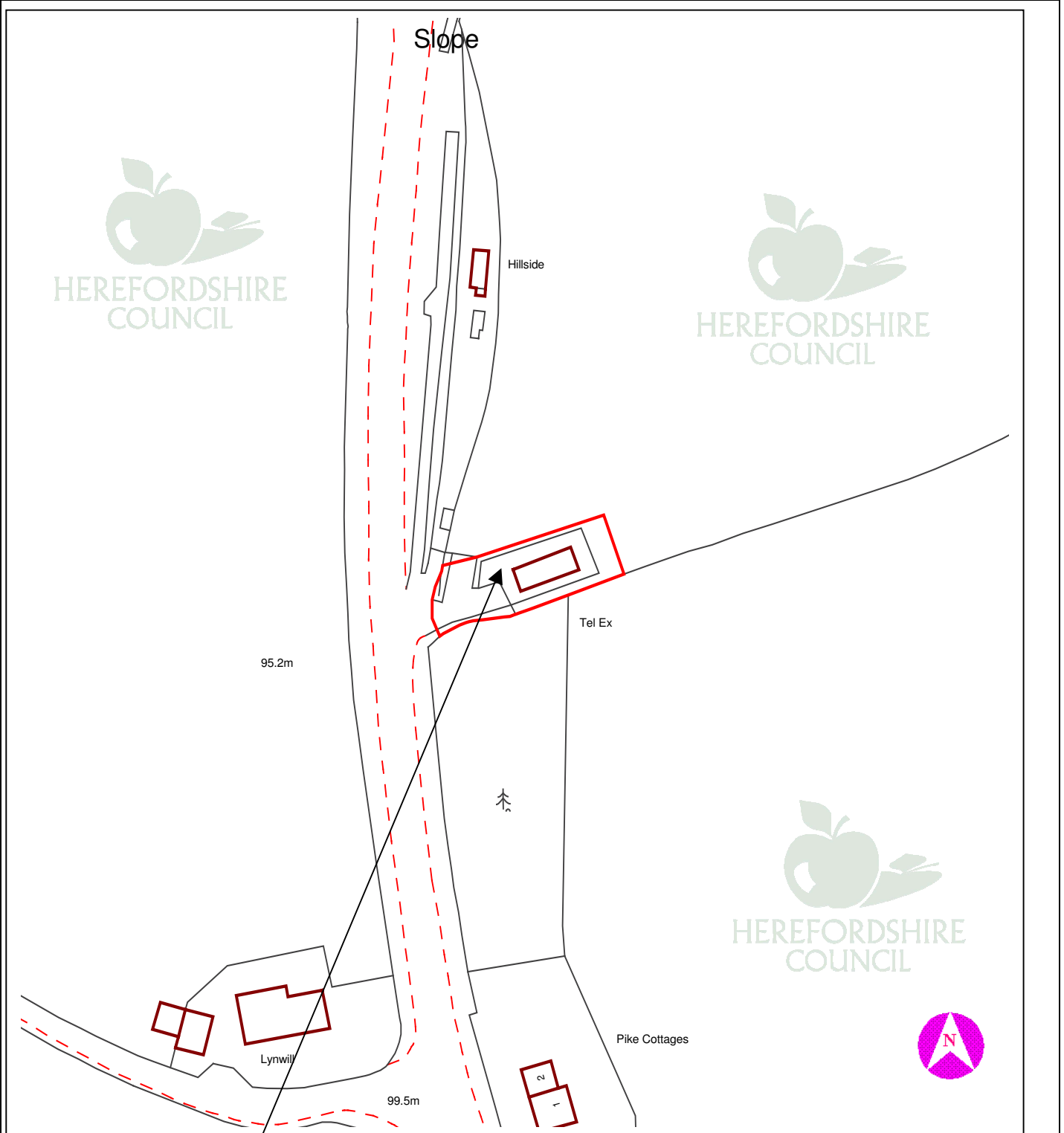
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSW2005/4060/F

SCALE: 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS: Telephone repeater station, St Weonards, Herefordshire, HR2 8QA.

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