

8 DCNC2006/0612/F - NEW POLICE STATION BUILDING WITH CUSTODIAL SUITE, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT PLOT 13, LEOMINSTER ENTERPRISE PARK, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE

**For: West Mercia Constabulary per Buttress Fuller
Alsop Williams 31-33 Princess Street Manchester
M2 4BF**

**Date Received:
1st March 2006**

Ward: Leominster South

**Grid Ref:
50216, 57824**

**Expiry Date:
26th April 2006**

Local Member: Councillors R Burke and J P Thomas

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site area is 0.8 hectares of allocated employment land on the Leominster Enterprise Park. The site is also adjacent to safeguarded employment land where industrial units are located to the south of Leominster town.
- 1.2 The proposal is to build a new police station with associated custodial suite. The site will also accommodate a helicopter pad along with 80 proposed parking spaces and landscaping. Office space is proposed on the first floor along with canteen facilities. A helipad is also proposed.

2. Policies

2.1 Leominster District Local Plan

- A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
- A2 – Settlement Hierarchy
- A24 – Scale and Character of Development
- A27 – Maintaining the Supply of Employment Land on Industrial Estates
- A70 – Accommodating Traffic from Development
- L4 – Extension to Leominster Industrial Estate

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

- DR1 – Design
- DR2 – Land use and activity
- DR3 – Movement
- DR4 – Environment
- DR7 – Flood Risk
- E3 – Other employment land allocations
- E5 – Safeguarding employment land and buildings
- E7 – Other employment proposals within Hereford and the market towns
- E8 – Design standards for employment sites
- CF4 – Renewable energy

2.3 The following Central Government advice is also relevant to the application:

- PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG 4 – Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms
- PPS 6 – Planning for Town Centres

3. Planning History

NC03/2330/F - B1 office development with ancillary workshop use - Approved 20/10/03

NC99/2883/O - Change of use to industrial use of land, construction of an access road and ancillary works - Approved 23/12/03

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 None required

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Transportation Manager - No objection subject to condition

4.3 Minerals and Waste Officer - No objection

4.4 Forward Planning Manager - Since the proposal is for a sui generis use on an area of land allocated in the adopted local plan and Revised UDP (UDP Policy E3) for B1 B2 or B8 uses only, then it is contrary to that plan and the principle of development on the site is not established. The land the site is proposed on is the main industrial and commercial land for the north of Herefordshire. This application is in conflict with what the site was originally planned for in terms of employment use and if this application is granted permission then a precedent has been set for other organisations to follow. It has been taken into account that the Station needs to be accommodated within the settlement boundary and this edge of centre site can be considered if there are sufficient transport links.

5. Representations

5.1 Leominster Town Council - Recommends approval

5.2 River Lugg Internal Drainage Board - On the basis that the balancing pond has been designed to accommodate flows from this and other sites and the rates of discharge into the open watercourse have previously been agreed and consented to by the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board, there are no other comments to be made.

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 The application raises the following issues:

1. Whether the proposal represents a departure from policy
2. Whether it is sustainable
3. Design issues

Policy Issues

- 6.2 Leominster Enterprise Park is listed as an employment land allocation for part B uses under Policy E3 of the Unitary Development Plan. Policy E5 mentions the prevention of employment land loss to non-employment uses. The proposal does not fall within this category but is sui generis as the proposed police station is not a commercial use as required by these policies. Therefore the proposal does not entirely fit within the spirit of the policy.
- 6.3 However, PPS6 makes specific reference to developments by public bodies. It suggests that sequential tests should be used to identify the most appropriate sites for developments that would usually be expected to occupy town centre locations, and it can be argued that a police station falls within this scope. Out of town locations are the last to be considered when it can be demonstrated that no alternative exists within either a town centre or edge of centre location. In light of the scale of the facility to be provided, which includes a landing area for a helicopter, it is clear to your officers that there are no sites of sufficient size within either of the first two locations and this view is endorsed by the Urban Capacity Study carried out in May 2004. Therefore it is concluded that a sequential test would not offer any feasible alternative and the applicant's agent has not been requested to complete one.
- 6.4 In light of the fact that there is no alternative within closer proximity to the town centre it is considered that there is sufficient justification to set aside the policies seeking to protect allocated employment land. The provision of a new police station is an exceptional circumstance where no specific allocation has been made under either adopted or emerging policy and any such application is likely to come into conflict with policy in some respect.

Sustainability

- 6.5 The design statement submitted as part of the application highlights the good transport links of the site and states that this will facilitate quick vehicular responses to incidents. In terms of its location as far as sustainability is concerned a balance needs to be struck between the advantages this provides against the slightly remote siting outside of the town centre. The design statement also highlights an intention to retain a presence within Leominster town centre, although a location is yet to be agreed. This will allow continued accessibility to members of the public and will achieve sustainability objectives.
- 6.6 More generally, the project must be commended for its proposed use of sustainable technology and renewable energy methods such as the use of ground source heat pumps, photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting for re-use, and meets the criteria set out in Policy CF4 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Design

- 6.7 The architectural response to the requirements of the client has been to propose a contemporary structure with a dominant three-storey element with a monopitch roof with two single storey wings projecting in parallel to the west. The whole of the development, including parking areas and the helicopter landing pad, is situated within a comprehensively landscaped setting.

6.8 The design is well considered and will provide a high standard on the Enterprise Park that others can be encouraged to follow. The proposal accords with the criteria of policy E.8 of the Unitary Development Plan and is acceptable in this respect.

Conclusion

6.9 Whilst the proposal does not accord with policies requiring that the site is protected for employment generating uses described by Part B of the Use Classes Order, it is considered that the fact that no specific allocation is made for a police station, the fact that it is sustainable in terms of transport links and the high quality of design are all material planning considerations that justify those policies being set aside. It is therefore concluded that the proposal is acceptable and it is accordingly recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted 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 - A09 (Amended plans)

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the amended plans.

3 - B01 (Samples of external materials)

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

4 - G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

5 - G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

6 - H30 (Travel plans)

Reason: In order to ensure that the development is carried out in combination with a scheme aimed at promoting the use of a range of sustainable transport initiatives.

Informatives:

1 - HN25 - Travel plans

2 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

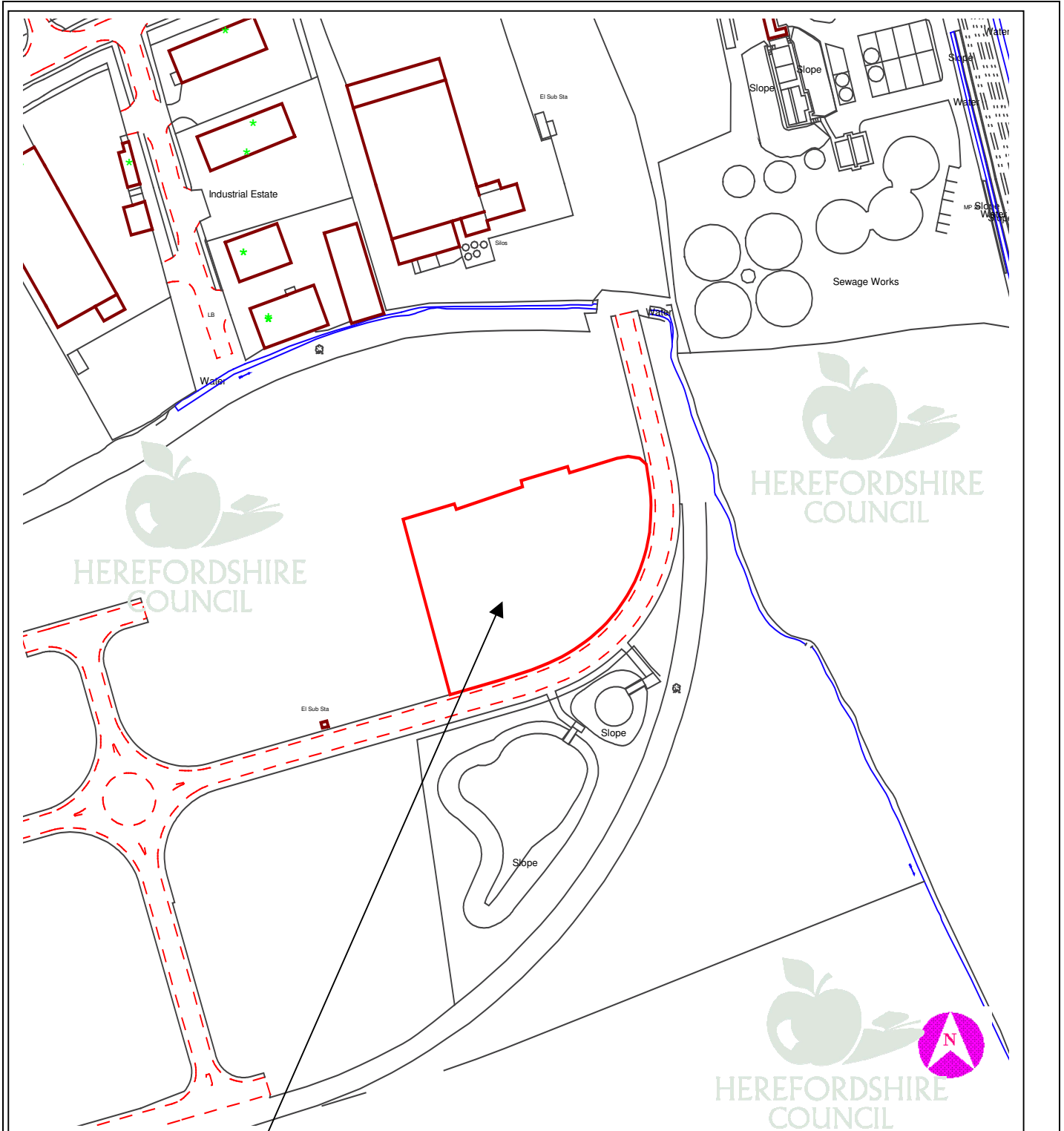
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies



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APPLICATION NO: DCNC2006/0612/F

SCALE : 1 : 2500

SITE ADDRESS : Plot 13, Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster, Herefordshire

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