

10A DCNW2006/0280/F - PROPOSED NEW MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM AND PORCH WITH DISABLED ACCESS, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT SHEDS AT FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, ALMELEY, WOOTTON, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR3 6PY

10B DCNW2006/0281/L – AS ABOVE

**For: K Byatt per Nicolette & Martin Baines Architects,
6A South Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8JB**

Date Received:
27th January 2006

Ward: Castle

Grid Ref:
33261, 52419

Expiry Date:
24th March 2006

Local Member: Councillor J Hope

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site lies within the hamlet of Almeley Wootton, it currently houses a detached Grade II* listed building that was erected in 1672 and restored in 1957. The building has a sandstone rubble plinth with timber frame and later infill. A single storey extension was added in the early 1980's to the rear. Immediately to the south of the building there are a number of sheds constructed of corrugated tin. The existing building is used as a meeting house. The only access to the site is from the highway onto a driveway in front of these sheds, which could accommodate only 2 vehicles.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the demolition of the redundant sheds and erection of an extension, using a contemporary style in its place. The extension would have a curved façade facing out to the land at the rear. The accommodation would comprise a single meeting room and extension to the earlier modern extension, extending the kitchen and circulation space / hallway and providing disabled access to the building. The materials proposed for this use are painted render and oak boarding, standing seam zinc or aluminium for the roof and a natural finish to south west windows and oak entrance door.
- 1.3 The plans also show a disabled parking area in front of the building and new fence of the boundary with the field to the rear. The plans also show the removal of a mature Silver Birch tree to the southern corner of the site.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire & Worcester Council Structure Plan

Policy H16A – Development Criteria

Policy CTC13 – Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

2.2 Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire)

Policy A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
Policy A2(D) – Settlement Hierarchy
Policy A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
Policy A18 – Listed Building and their Setting
Policy A21 – Development within Conservation Areas
Policy A24 – Scale and Character of Development
Policy A70 – Accommodating Traffic from Development

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

Policy S2 – Development Requirements
Policy S7 – Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR1 – Design
Policy LA2 – Landscape Character

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCNW2004/0565/L - Fitting of cast iron gutters to half-hips and weatherings and barge boards to end walls - Approved with Conditions - 15th April 2005
- 3.2 NW2002/0513/L - New door to porch - Approved with Conditions - 12th April 2002
- 3.3 93/0243/L - Provision of oak weather boarding to the west elevation - Approved 9th August 1993
- 3.4 87/0636 - Conversion to one residence of ex friends meeting house - Approved with conditions - 14th December 1987
- 3.5 80/0707/N - Erection of an extension comprising one children's room and a toilet and kitchen at friends - Approved 28th July 1980
- 3.6 79/0390/N - Erection of an extension to provide an additional meeting room with lobby and wc and new septic tank drainage - Refused - 23rd July 1979
- 3.7 75/0268/L - Provision of a stone front boundary wall - Approved with Conditions - 30th July 1975

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 English Heritage - This appears to be a well designed and appropriate scheme, but visual success will be dependent on materials, finishes and colours, together with landscaping. Conditions should be imposed requiring your prior approval of these elements.
- 4.2 Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - For your information the SPAB does not wish to comment on this application however this should be taken necessarily to imply support or approval.

- 4.3 Ancient Monuments Society - The newcomer is appropriately subordinate in scale and demonstrably superior as a neighbour to the tatty sheds. The crescent shape is perhaps rather formal in vernacular context but the external impression is low key whilst the use of oak left to weather to silvergrey will soften it.

The scheme should help to guarantee the long-term use of this Grade II* listed building as a place of worship and we raise no objections on those grounds and because it is visually benign.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.4 Transportation Manager recommends that any permission which this Authority may wish to give include the following condition H29 - Provision of Cycle Parking.

- 4.5 The Conservation Manager responded as follows:

The redundant sheds, which are to be demolished, have no particular architectural significance.

The proposed extension is complimentary to the Meeting House in its scale, design, massing and alignment. It fulfils Policy A18 (B) of the Leominster District Local Plan.

I do not consider that this extension will have a negative impact on the architectural or historic character of the listed building. The proposed extension will enable this significant building to be used as historically intended.

No objection subject to conditions relating to the use of materials.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Almeley Parish Council makes the following comments:

“The proposed flat, sloping roof would not blend with existing pitched roofs of existing building. Maintenance of such a large sloping roof could present problems. The proposed wooden slate both front and rear make the extension like a shed, or a barn conversion. The design does not blend in with buildings in the area. The design, though interesting in itself, is not sufficiently of note to be sensitive to the local environment and should be rejected. The large silver birch should be protected.”

- 5.2 Letters of objection have been received from:

- CPRE, (NW) Buttington, Hopleys Green, Almeley
- Michael Ellis Jones - Buttington, Hopleys Green, Almeley,
- Louise Parry Robbins, The Malt House, Almeley Wootton
- Peter Beresford, Corner House, Almeley

- 5.3 These letters raise the following issues:

- The design is utterly insensitive and inappropriate
- The extension is gross and cheap looking insult to the venerable and attractive 17th Century Meeting House
- The flat aluminium roof is banal and shows no sensitivity towards the delightful character of the existing tile roof

- The character of this design is weak, and is not adequate to solve the difficult problem presented by the project
- Urge that the Council is carried out in a similar vein to the original building which is timber framed, hip roofed, with boarding at the rear.
- A modern, contemporary design with a tin roof and circular form with large windows overlooking my neighbours field at the rear, some 8ft larger than the stables and shed they propose to demolish, is wholly inappropriate given the unspoilt nature of the delightful hamlet that forgot time.
- Any extension should be sympathetic in material and modest in size (not overpowering) and not impact on the valuable and unspoilt surrounding properties.
- The existing Meeting House is a sturdy, plain, square timber frame. The two elements, frame and roof, make an utterly convincing unity, and the Society of Friends is lucky to have a building so expressive of honest strength and certainty.
- The proposal shies away from the real challenge of producing a worthy companion roof, and wanders off and inserts a tin roof like that on the scruffy shed which occupies the site at the moment. The building would end up being half one thing and half another and thus lose unity.
- Modern construction, treated with simplicity, can be worthy continuation of it, without pretending to be old.
- The roofs are the key to the whole solution and, if the roofs can be got right, the walls could be got right by making it less fussy. The fancy wooden free-standing posts on the outer (west) side of the extension do nothing except make the situation worse, and plain, rendered walls all round would be far more effective and nearer the true spirit of the building.
- One of the principal messages of the UDP Design Guidance Document was that compatibility and the avoidance of incongruity was the key to harmonious development and the proper combination of new and old.
- It would be quite wrong to double the size of this splendid old building by putting an incongruous shed alongside it and trying to pretend that this was only an addition, the extension is too massive to be dealt with in this way.
- The new meeting room is larger than the existing meeting room - is this realistic of the future / potential increase in Friends that intend to use the premises?
- The felling of the splendid and mature Silver Birch tree is monstrous. Its presence is an intrinsic part of the locality.

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

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration is the determination of this application are as follows:-

- The impact of the proposed extension on the Grade II* listed building.
- The impact on the Conservation Area
- The removal of the Silver Birch tree
- Access, parking and highway safety

- 6.2 The Friends Meeting House is a distinctive Grade II* listed building with strong characteristics. The building is clearly visible from the highway and sits amongst a number of other listed buildings within the attractive hamlet of Almeley Wootton that lies approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the village of Almeley. The main issue for consideration is the impact that the proposed contemporary extension would have on the character, appearance and setting of this important listed building.
- 6.3 One of the prime aims of the guidance regarding listed building is to keep such buildings in use, The Friends have a desire to increase the size of their accommodation and provide an attractive environment for their members. Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment acknowledges that many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing to new uses and that listed buildings vary greatly in the extent that which they can accommodate change without loss of special interest. The key is to find the proper balance and the ‘flexible’ approach is encouraged in PPG15 which states: ‘an architect can respect the structural limitations of a building and abandon conventional design solutions in favour of a more imaginative approach’.
- 6.4 Design is a subjective matter and the objectors to this development have clearly analysed and reported their thoughts on this proposal. You will note however from the responses above that this approach has gained the support of English Heritage, who undertook a site visit, and the Ancients Monuments Society, along with the Councils Conservation Manager. Emphasis is placed by each of these on the materials that would be used and this can be controlled by condition. The extension is considered to meet the tests of policy A18(B0 of the Leominster District Local Plan, HBA1 of the Unitary Development Plan and the guidance contained within PPG15 in that it is subservient in scale and design and preserves the character and appearance of the existing Grade II* listed building.
- 6.5 In terms of impact upon the Conservation Area, this building replaced the unsightly tin sheds that currently fill this part of the site. There is no objection to their removal as they contribute little to the character of the Conservation Area or Listed Building. The proposed extension would be single storey and would be unobtrusive on the rural street scene and character due to the level of screening along the road frontage and change in levels from the highway to the application site. The proposed extension would preserve the character of the Conservation Area and accord with Policies A21 of the Leominster District Local Plan and HBA6 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 6.6 The proposal, as submitted includes the removal of a mature Silver Birch tree to facilitate development and this has raised objection and concern from local residents and the Parish Council. It is acknowledged that this tree is quite distinctive and adds to the character of the area. The Councils Tree Officer has been consulted and his response is awaited as to its health and worth. The agent has also been asked to re-assess the need to remove the tree to facilitate this scheme which would overcome these objections.
- 6.7 The proposed extension would have the effect of increasing the size of the accommodation that the building currently provides for meetings. This would potentially increase the numbers of vehicles and persons attending the building at any one time. It is acknowledged that parking is limited on site and the plans suggest that these two parking spaces would be used for disabled parking. Presumably the remainder of the parking is on road as per the existing situation. No objections have been raised with regards to the current or proposed situation and it is acknowledged that the use is not continual. There is no scope for providing additional off road parking within the

application site. The Transportation Manager raises no objection but requests a condition requiring secure cycle parking to be provided on the site. Subject to the sensitive design and location this can help support sustainable modes of transport.

- 6.8 To conclude, the main issue is the acceptability of the design and impact on the Grade II* Listed Building. This has been carefully considered and has gained the support of English Heritage, The Ancient Monuments Society and the Councils Conservation Officer. The proposed extension does not adversely affect the building or its setting nor does it harm the character of the Conservation Area. Materials, boundary treatments and landscaping can be controlled by condition to ensure that the development is undertaken and completed in a satisfactory manner. As such the proposal accords with the policies of the Local Plan and Unitary Development Plan and is recommended for approval subject to conditions and referral to the Secretary of State (required due to Grade II* listed status)

RECOMMENDATION

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That subject to the Secretary of State confirming that he does not intend to call in the Listed Building Consent, Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any 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 - A06 (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 - 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.

- 5 - G01 (Details of boundary treatments)**

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

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That:

- i) The application is notified to the Secretary of State – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- ii) Subject to the Secretary of State confirming that he does not intend to call it in, Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the following conditions and any conditions considered necessary by Officers.

1 - C01 (Time limit for commencement (Listed Building Consent))

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

2 - A06 (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.

Informatives:

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

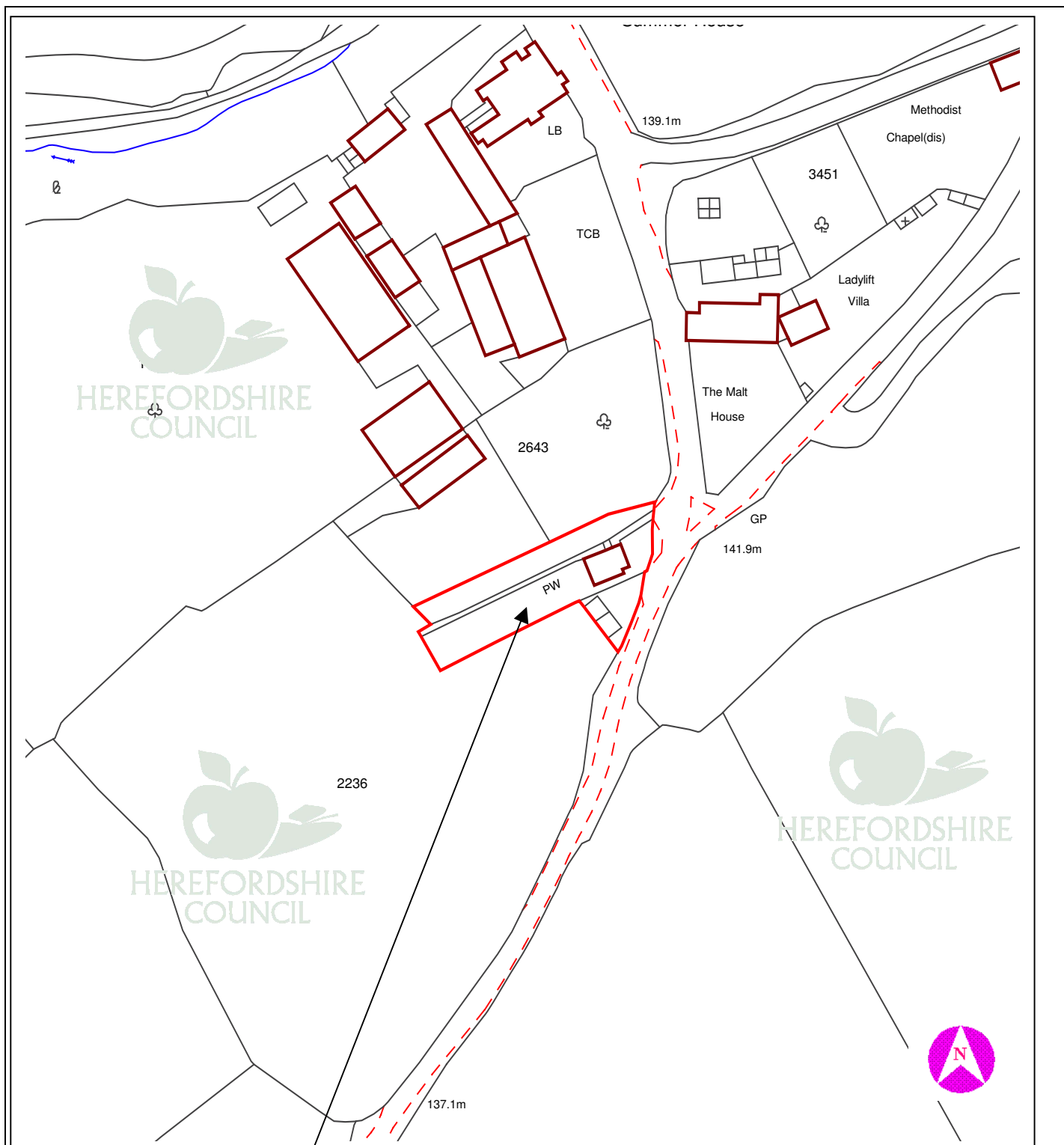
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Friends Meeting House, Almeley Wooton, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR3 6PY

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