

DCNW2005/0890/F - NEW SPORTS HALL, CHANGING ROOMS, CAFETERIA AND LIBRARY AT WEOBLEY HIGH SCHOOL, WEOBLEY, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR4 8ST

For: Herefordshire Council per Property Services, Herefordshire Council, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB

Date Received:

21st March 2005

Expiry Date:

16th May 2005

Local Member: Councillor J Goodwin

Ward: Golden Cross with Weobley

Grid Ref:

40662, 51190

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site lies within the settlement boundary and the Weobley Conservation Area. Residential properties are found to the north and west of the school site, with open countryside to the east and south and the Primary School to the east. The site for the new development would be on the existing/former tennis courts that lie between the main high school buildings and the Primary School to the east.
- 1.2 This application is an amended scheme in the same location to that permitted in 2002 and would provide a new sports hall, changing room, cafeteria and library for the High School. The building would extend 39m to the east of the school building and would accommodate a hall of 629 sq metres, a library of 224 sq metres, 2 store areas, changing rooms, fitness suite, office. The plans also show a future entrance hall and future cafeteria which would form phase 2 of the development (this did not form part of the approved scheme). The sports hall roof would have an eaves height (to east) of 8.3m and ridge height of 12.2m. The store rooms would be located in a single storey lean to section to the east elevation and the roof above the entrance hall and cafeteria would be at a lower level with a maximum ridge height of 7.5m.
- 1.3 The site that the building would be situated on was formally the schools tennis courts. In light of the loss of these courts, new courts were built in accordance with a condition imposed on the 2002 permission. These have now been constructed and are in use.
- 1.4 The scheme also includes cycle parking for 12 no. cycles, 4 disabled spaces and 22 car parking spaces.

2. Policies

2.1 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

CTC 15 – Preservation, Enhancement and Extension of Conservation Areas

2.2 Leominster District Local Plan

- A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
- A2(B) – Settlement Hierarchy
- A13 – Pollution Control
- A21 – Development within Conservation Areas
- A24 – Scale and Character of Development
- A61 – Community, Social and Recreational Facilities

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

- S1 – Sustainable Development
- S2 – Development Requirements
- S11 – Community Facilities and Services
- DR1 - Design
- DR2 – Land Use and Activity
- DR13 – Noise
- HBA6 – New Development within Conservation Areas
- CF5 – New Community Facilities

3. Planning History

- 3.1 NW04/1194/F - Single Storey Extensions - Approved 17th March 2004
- 3.2 NW02/1582/F - Sports Hall and Changing Rooms - Approved 20th November 2002
- 3.3 NW00/1639/F - Double Mobile Classroom - Approved for six years 28th September 2000

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Sport England - query when planning permission was given for the new tennis courts? Was Sport England Consulted? Were they located on the playing field and if so what impact did that have on the layout of the playing field?

I am still not clear whether or not it is intended that the community will be allowed to use this facility. Given the information presently available it is likely that there has been a loss of playing field associated with the development. In addition to being clear about the proposals on the playing field we would seek a community use by the school, to be satisfied whether or not the benefits of the scheme outweigh the loss of playing fields as required to address criteria iv of paragraph 15 of the PPG 17.

So far as I am aware at this stage none of the exceptions in paragraph 15 of PPG17 have been addressed. In order to withdraw our objection we have to be in a position to report to the Government which exception has been addressed and have the information to support the case.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Transportation Manager: No objections subject to provision of secure, covered cycle parking and a green travel plan.

- 4.3 Conservation Manager makes the following comments: No objections, subject to materials and colouring details and details of fencing for parking facilities.
- 4.4 Archaeology: No comments to make on this application.
- 4.5 The Environmental Health Manager recommends conditions relating to the hours of operation during construction and no incineration of materials on site.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Weobley Parish Council: No objections - Need to clarify that parking is for those using the sports hall.
- 5.2 Two letters of objection have been received from the following sources:-
- D C and M Abberley, 24 Burtonwood, Weobley
 - Leonard Morley, 15 Burtonwood, Weobley

The objections can be summarised as follows:-

- Increase in noise levels, especially if used out of school hours and for lettings to private persons.
 - Increase in traffic generation and impact on highway safety and living conditions of nearby residents.
 - Further increase in on street parking and the traffic chaos that the school causes.
- 5.3 One letter was also received from Mr and Mrs Driver in respect of the tennis courts which were approved under the previous application.
- 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 of in this application are:-
- The principle of development
 - Impact on the Conservation Area
 - Provision and loss of facilities in relation to Sport England's concerns and objections
 - Highway Safety and car parking
 - Impact on neighbouring residents
- 6.2 The existing tennis court, upon which it is proposed to erect the sports hall, lies just beyond the Settlement Boundary of Weobley. Therefore the proposal falls to be considered against Policy A2(D) of Leominster District Local Plan. One of the exceptions to the presumption against development within that policy relates to the development under Policy A61 regarding community use or provision of new facilities for communities and schools.
- 6.3 It is also a material consideration that planning permission was previously granted for a sports hall extension, this is a slightly revised proposal that enlarges the overall footprint to include a cafeteria and library with entrance hall, effectively linking the

new building to the main school buildings. The previously approved scheme was a detached sports hall but the principle of developing this site for this purpose has already been accepted.

- 6.4 Policy A21 of the Leominster District Local Plan requires the Authority to consider the impact of the proposal upon the Conservation Area. The proposed building will be taller than the 2 storey elements of the school, however a combination of lower site levels and a condition requiring these levels to be approved will ensure that the building is not taller than the main three storey element of the school facing the road frontage.
- 6.5 Sport England raised a number of concerns, some of which were design related and have been partially improved with the submission of amended plans. They also raise concern in relation to the displacement of the tennis courts. These were constructed over 12 months ago in accordance with Condition 5 of the previous planning approval. The courts were constructed on land to the west of the school and on an area which was not occupied by formal playing pitches, and required the removal of two mobile classrooms and some trees. The siting was agreed with the local planning authority at this time having regard to guidance relating to the loss of playing space. Notwithstanding this, the proposal provides improved facilities for use by pupils and the community on the basis of booking with the school. It is not intended that this facility be a 'sports centre' open to the public on a more general basis.
- 6.6 Paragraph 15 of PPG 17, as revised, advises that "where a robust assessment of need in accordance with this guidance has not been undertaken (as in this case), planning permission for such developments should not be allowed unless:-
- iv) the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field." It is considered that this proposal satisfies the exception above.
- 6.7 The Town and Country Planning (Playing Fields) (England) Direction 1998 requires that where the Sports Council, now Sport England, have objected to a planning application, the local planning authority proposes to grant permission, the local planning authority are required to notify the Secretary of State of that intention so that he may decide whether to intervene or leave the matter for the local planning authority to decide. That direction is reflected in the recommendation below.
- 6.8 It is acknowledged that there is on street parking in the residential streets adjacent to the school which appear to be used during school hours. The development shows the creation of new car parking spaces on site, and there are no objections raised by the Transportation Officer. The use of the sports hall in the evenings (on a bookable basis) is unlikely to cause additional parking issues on roads near to the school as other parking spaces would become available within the site. Notwithstanding this, the site already has permission for a sports hall which could be implemented at any time, this modified proposal would not increase the use of the building. As such the proposal complies with Policy A70 of the Leominster District Local Plan.
- 6.9 In addition it is necessary to consider the impact of the building upon the amenity of local residents in the area. The proposed building is set back approximately 15 metres from the boundary hedge, with the new car parking shown in this area. The nearest dwelling lying a further 25 metres or so to the north of that. It is not considered, therefore, that the building will have an unreasonably detrimental impact

upon the amenity of nearby residents. The building also lies approximately 25 metres from the nearest part of the primary school building, a distance considered to be sufficient to safeguard amenity. In relation to noise and disturbance, the proposed development, details of sound insulation for the building can be requested by condition but given the distances involved and nature of the building, noise incidental to the new building would not impact upon the living conditions of the neighbouring properties any more so than the existing school building.

- 6.10 Some of the Sport England's initial objections have been addressed to their satisfaction and this proposal it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy A61 and other relevant local plan policies, with a wider range of facilities potentially available for wider community use. There are no objections on highway grounds and the sports facility is unlikely to harm the living conditions currently enjoyed by the local residents. As such the proposal would comply with the local plan policies and the proposal is recommended for approval subject to referral to the Secretary of State. A letter has been sent to Sport England in response to its outstanding queries.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Secretary of State for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be notified that the local planning authority are minded to grant planning permission 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 - B01 (Samples of external materials)**

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

- 3 - F48 (Details of slab levels)**

Reason: In order to define the permission and ensure that the development is of a scale and height appropriate to the site.

- 4 - 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.

- 5 - F16 (Restriction of hours during construction)**

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

- 6 - F15 (Scheme of noise insulation)**

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.

Informatives:

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

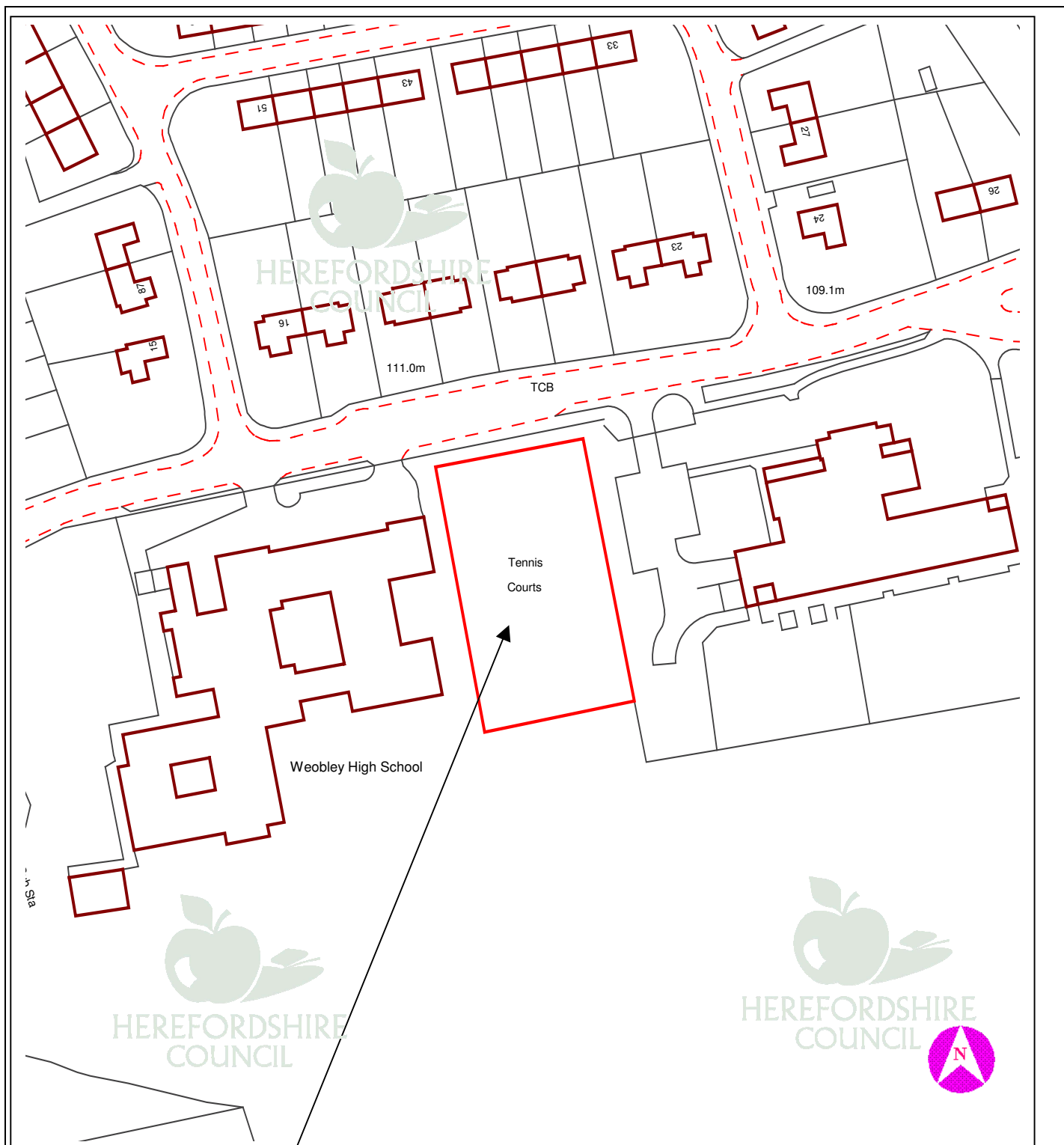
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Weobley High School, Weobley, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 8ST

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