

12 DCSE2006/2329/F - ERECTION OF 3 STOREY OFFICE BLOCK, AMENDED CAR PARKING AND LANDSCAPING. HAIGH ENGINEERING CO LTD, ALTON ROAD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5NG.

For: The Haigh Engineering Co. Ltd. per Geoff Jones Architect, 53 Broad Street, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7DY.

Date Received: 18th July, 2006 Ward: Ross-on-Wye East Grid Ref: 60741, 23997

Expiry Date: 17th October, 2006

Local Members: Councillor Mrs. C.J. Davis and Councillor Mrs. A.E. Gray

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 It is proposed to erect a three-storey office block in the north-west section of this industrial estate which is currently car parking and an open landscaped area. The rectangular building (about 33m x 19m x 11m high) would be of modern design with the upper floors overhanging the narrow ground floor and supported by square section columns. The recessed ground floor structure would be clad in terracotta tiles with colour coated steel sheet wall and roof for the remainder of the building. The building would be set back about 30 m from Alton Road and would be positioned with the ridge parallel to the northern boundary of the site, with the gable end facing Alton Road.
- 1.2 The proposal is a revised scheme following refusal of planning permission (SE2002/3919/F) in April 2003 for a proposal which also included a new access. The reasons for refusal were as follows:
1. The proposed development would generate additional vehicle movements which would exacerbate existing traffic problems along Alton Road, and thereby conflict with Policies T.3 and GD.1 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan.
 2. The proposed vehicular access would be opposite residential properties and the movement of vehicles at the access would cause noise and disturbance which would harm the amenities of the occupiers of those properties. The proposal conflicts therefore with Policies ED.3 and GD.1 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan.
 3. The proposed office building by reason of its design, size and height would be visually overpowering in relation to the residential properties on the north-west side of Alton Road and harm the visual amenities of the area. For these reasons the proposed conflicts with Policies ED.3 and GD.1 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan.

The main change to the scheme is that in the current proposal the building has been turned 90° so that the gable end faces Alton Road rather than the full length of the building. The new access has now been provided following the grant of planning permission (SE2003/2708/F) in December 2003.

2. Policies**2.1 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan**

Policy E12	Industrial Development in Urban Areas
Policy E17	Office Development
Policy CTC1	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC9	Development Criteria
Policy CTC18	Development in Urban Areas

2.2 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy ED3	Employment Proposals within Settlements
Policy ED5	Expansion of Existing Businesses
Policy GD1	General Development Criteria
Policy C5	Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy T4	Highway and Car Parking Standards

2.3 Herefordshire UDP (Deposit Draft)

Policy E6	Expansion of Existing Businesses
Policy E8	Design Standards for Employment Sites
Policy LA1	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

3. Planning History

3.1	SH810876PF	Erection of light industrial starter units	Approved 04.11.81
	SH830222PF	Erection of 7 industrial units in two blocks	Approved 04.05.83
	SH830630PF	Change of use from drawing office and print room to store	Approved 14.09.83
	SH830631PF	Change of use from canteen to store	Approved 14.09.83
	SH850179PF	Erection of 11 industrial units in two blocks	Approved 27.03.85
	SH871542PO	Erection of warehouse	Approved 13.01.88
	SH880919PM	Erection of warehouse	Approved 20.07.88
	SH890393PF	Erection of factory and offices	Approved 25.04.89
	SH910130PF	Erection of portable building for Canteen	Approved 06.03.91
	SE2001/0284/F	Pitched roof to replace flat roof	Approved 08.03.01
	SE2002/1069/F	Erection of 3-storey office block. New access to site. Amended access to site. Re-alignment of road into site. Car parking and landscaping. Demolition of building.	Withdrawn 03.07.03

SE2002/3919/F	3 storey office block and associated works.	Refused 23.4.03
SE2003/0097/F	Office	
SE2003/0611/F	Ventilated secure storage building.	Approved 24.4.03
SE2003/2708/F	Closing existing access; new access; alterations to existing access and car parking.	Approved 8.12.03

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 West Midland Regional Assembly advises that:

Having considered the application based against the criteria for regionally significant planning applications in the latest version of the Development Planning Conformity Protocol, this is not an application which would require the Regional Planning Body to provide an opinion of conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

4.2 Environment Agency objects to the proposed development, as submitted, on the following grounds:

- proposed surface water soakaway within a Zone 1 of a Source Protection Zone
- no desk study with respect to land contamination completed for the site.

4.3 Welsh Water objects to the proposals which would overload the public sewerage system.

Internal Council Advice

4.4 Social and Economic Regeneration Manager has no objection at all to this application.

4.5 Traffic Manager has requested further information regarding existing and proposed parking provision.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant's agent points out that this application follows a refusal in April 2002 for similar though larger scheme, which was supported by the planning department, with no objections from Environment Agency and Welsh Water. The present proposal has the building at right angles to Alton Road as opposed to parallel to it.

5.2 Town Council is concerned about the height of the proposed office block. It will affect residents in Alton Road.

5.3 7 letters have been received expressing strong objections to the proposals. In summary the reasons given are:

- (1) overdevelopment, not sympathetic in scale or character to the local area.

- (2) Far too high and large a mass which would be totally out of character with other buildings on this industrial area - all other buildings are one or two-storey high, not 3-storeys; Ross is market town not industrial high rise area - it would be a blot on landscape.
- (3) Outlook from houses on opposite side of Alton Road would be completely spoiled, colour-coated steel cladding would be visually damaging; intrusive in relation to neighbours.
- (4) Currently a green buffer between Alton Road houses and commercial premises (which is necessary as do not seem to be planning conditions to control noise, disturbance and unsightly storage) - this would be replaced by car parking, which would harm streetscape and visual amenity.
- (5) Detrimental to lives, health, safety and comfort of local residents.
- (6) Loss of privacy - windows in office block look into homes.
- (7) Alton Road is one of busiest in town and traffic is increasing daily, including HGVs to frightening levels - proposal would add to congestion and further prejudice safety.
- (8) At peak times queues of traffic make access to Alton Road houses difficult - can take 5 minutes to enter or leave, this problem would be exacerbated.
- (9) Extra traffic would increase noise, air pollution resulting in more discomfort suffered by local residents.
- (10) Insufficient parking which would lead to on-street parking causing chaos.
- (11) Need for extra office space questioned in view of large development at old Woodville site.
- (12) Soakaways unacceptable for such a large building - water gathers near junction with Gloucester Road.
- (13) Reduce value of houses.

5.4 Advantage West Midlands has submitted non-statutory comments:

- (1) scheme is not at variance with local development plan
- (2) within Rural Regeneration Zone which focuses on employment creation and stability but no indication of the number of new jobs perhaps as merely rationalising existing accommodation
- (3) use is appropriate for its location and would enhance activities of parent company as should have positive spin-offs
- (4) architecturally undistinguished.

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. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The Council's policies encourage compatible and well-designed Class B1 industrial and commercial buildings within this estate. Offices fall within Class B1 so that the proposed development would be compatible with the primary land use.
- 6.2 It is appreciated however, that there is potential conflict with residential properties on the opposite side of Alton Road. Two main issues are raised: firstly noise and disturbance from additional traffic and car parking and secondly, the visual impact of the new building.
- 6.3 The alterations to vehicular access to this industrial estate which were part of the application (SE2002/3919/F) refused in April 2003 have subsequently been granted permission (SE2003/2708/F). Nevertheless some additional noise and disturbance would result from increased traffic generated by the office block and car parking would be formed closer to Alton Road houses. The extra traffic would be a small proportion of total flows along Alton Road, which as well as serving the industrial estate acts as a link between the south and east of the town. The car parking would be at least 13m from Alton Road and there is scope for additional planting. In these circumstances I do not consider that there would be significant additional noise and disturbance.
- 6.4 The visual impact involves the loss of existing green buffer and of wider views and the appearance of the new building. The building is considered to be of interesting and acceptable design. Whilst at nearly 11m high it may be taller than other buildings on the estate it is well set back (about 30m) from the road and would be less overbearing than lower buildings closer to Alton Road (e.g. Kemps). Turning the building 90° compared to the refused proposal should reduce the visual impact when viewed from the street and nearby properties. There is sufficient space for an attractive area of planting between the road and car parking, in my opinion. Views of the hills beyond the estate from some houses in the opposite side of Alton Road may be lost but this would not be grounds to refuse planning permission, in this instance.
- 6.5 Insufficient information has been provided by the applicant regarding existing car parking provision for this industrial estate and additional parking for the new office block. Further information has been sought and will be reported at the Committee meeting.
- 6.6 There is a storm water drain near the application site and Welsh Water has indicated that if storm water is directed to this sewer there would be no objection to the proposal. This would avoid construction of soakaways to which the Environment Agency objects. A desk study of contamination is being undertaken which should allow the Environment Agency to withdraw its objection.

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to Welsh Water and Environment Agency withdrawing their objections, and to submission of drawings showing adequate parking provision, the officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following conditions and any additional 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 B01 (Samples of external materials)

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

3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

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

4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

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

INFORMATIVES:

1 N19 - Avoidance of doubt

2 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

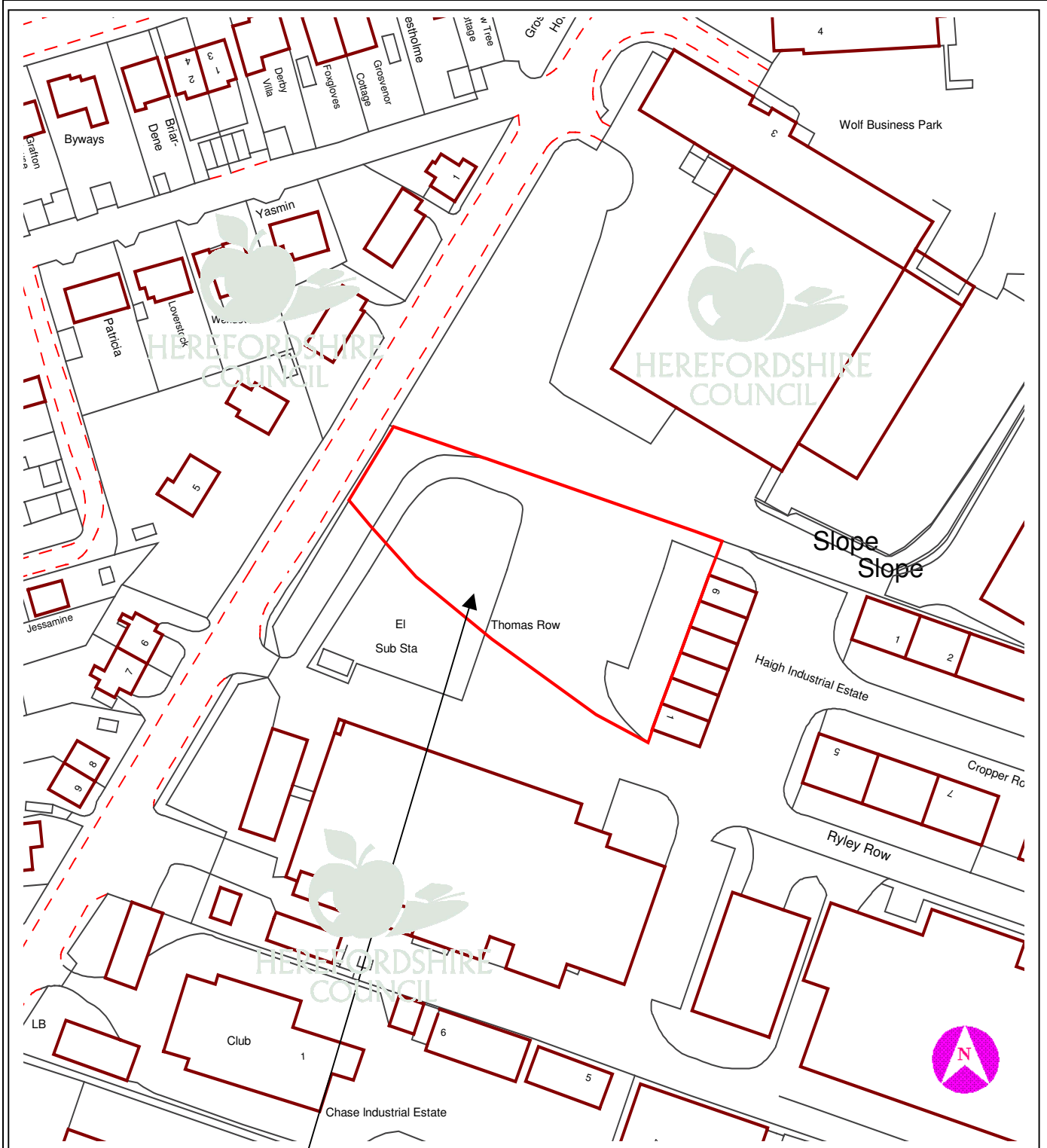
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

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