

Planning Committee: 19 March 2013

Item Number: 7

Application No:W12 / 1517

Town/Parish Council: Bishops Tachbrook
Case Officer: Liam D'Onofrio

Registration Date:12/02/13
Expiry Date:09/04/13

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The Lodge, Oakley Woods Crematorium, Newbold Road, Bishops Tachbrook, Leamington Spa, CV33 9QP

Change of use from residential property to office and display area in connection with the operational use of the Crematorium FOR Warwick District Council

The applicant is Warwick District Council and the scheme cannot therefore be considered under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission, subject to conditions.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought for a change of use of the caretaker's four-bedroom dwellinghouse (C3 Use Class) into offices (B1(a) Use Class) with a customer meeting room, display area and disabled WC at ground floor and offices/WC at first floor.

The existing entrance door and windows fronting the access drive will be altered to provide a disabled entrance and a new pitch roof canopy will be located over the entrance measuring 2.5m deep by 3.5m wide by 3m high.

The use of the building will be in connection with the operational use of the site as a crematorium.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

The application relates to the Mid-Warwickshire Crematorium, which is situated within open countryside south of the M40. The crematorium is surrounded by an area of woodland that is designated as an ancient woodland. The main crematorium building is screened from outside the site by the mature trees. The former caretaker's house subject to this application is also well screened but is located closer to the site entrance adjoining the main access drive. The building relates to a two-storey gable-end detached (former) dwellinghouse.

PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of previous planning applications relating to the Crematorium site. None are relevant to the consideration of the current change of use scheme.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP3 - Protecting Nature Conservation and Geology (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP6 - Directing New Employment (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP7 - Converting Rural Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP13 - Renewable Energy Developments (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP8 - Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- Vehicle Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Document)
- Sustainable Buildings (Supplementary Planning Document - December 2008)
- National Planning Policy Framework

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Bishop's Tachbrook Parish Council: No objection

WCC Ecology: No objection

Natural England: No objection

Forestry Commission: No response received

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust: No response received

The Woodland Trust: No response received

ASSESSMENT

The main considerations in assessing this application are as follows:

- The principle for the change of use;
- Siting and design;
- Neighbours' amenity;
- Landscaping/ecology.

Principle

In rural areas, such as this site, Policy RAP6 'Directing New Employment' does provide further flexibility in supporting a diverse rural economy and states that new employment development will be permitted for the conversion of appropriate rural buildings of substantial and permanent construction where these are small scale, or low intensity or demonstrated to meet local need.

In this case the building is of substantial and permanent construction and the proposed use will relate to a small scale office, which will have an ancillary role to the existing and established Crematorium use on site and the scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in sustainability terms. The office is in an otherwise isolated location and a condition is suggested to ensure that the proposed office use remains an ancillary function to the main Crematorium use.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Siting/design

In terms of impact upon the open countryside and ancient woodland the building is existing and the new use will be accommodated within the existing structure.

The scheme includes fenestration alterations and a forward canopy over the new entrance. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 does support the extension or alteration of a 'building' provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In this case the canopy relates to a minor structure that will be appropriately designed and well-proportioned to the existing building and the scheme is not therefore considered to impact upon the openness or visual amenity of the countryside or Crematorium site.

Neighbours' amenity

Given its isolated position the proposal is not considered to create any significant impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of surrounding properties.

Landscaping/ecology

WCC Ecology and Natural England have raised no objection to the proposals.

The proposed canopy will project towards adjacent mature trees, however the canopy will not require any intrusive foundation works (such as a trench foundation) and will be supported on two posts. Given the separation between the trees and the canopy edge the scheme is not considered to affect the root protection area of the adjacent trees.

Other matters

In terms of the provision of renewables to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Buildings SPD, it is considered that the ancillary office use with three employees operating during office hours, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, is likely to have a similar or lower energy consumption compared to the four-bedroom dwellinghouse and it is not therefore considered reasonable to require renewables for this change of use application.

In terms of parking, the Crematorium site is served by its own car parks, which will also be available for use by the proposed ancillary office. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DP8 of the Local plan.

Summary/Conclusion

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed office use is acceptable in principle and associated alterations will respect the scale, design and character of the original building without harming the general openness or rural character of the countryside/ancient woodland within which the building is situated. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission. **REASON:** To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and approved drawing(s) HPS/CL/03 and HPS/CL/04, and specification contained therein. **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DP1 and DP2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

 - 3 No roofing materials shall be used on the canopy extension hereby permitted other than materials similar in appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the roof of existing building. **REASON:** To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DP1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

 - 4 The office use hereby permitted shall be restricted to that ancillary to the use of the Crematorium. **REASON:** An open office use in this isolated location would not be in accordance with the sustainability objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
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