

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
PD and L Property Ltd. 'A	Four detached dormer bungalows for the use of local residents over the age of 50 - Severn Trent Buildings Site, Alcester Road, Burcot, B60 1PW	Green Belt	11/0328-DK 04.07.2011

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

Councillor R. J. Deeming has requested that this application be considered by the Committee, rather than being determined under delegated powers.

Consultations

Lickey and Blackwell PC Consulted 16.06.2011. No response to date.

WH Consulted 16.05.2011. No response to date.

ENG Consulted 16.05.2011. No response to date.

OHL Consulted 16.05.2011. Response received: 03.06.2011
No objection.

TRANSCO Consulted 16.05.2011. No response to date.

VICSOC Response received: 03.06.2011.

This application relates to the last remaining building of the East Worcestershire Waterworks built in 1882, and was the engine house. This was the first of Bromsgrove's waterworks, and served water to Bromsgrove, Headless Cross (for Redditch), Barnt Green and Finstall. By 1894 Aston Fields, Webheath and Tardebigge were also served water from the four bore holes on this site.

The original buildings were designed by Birmingham architect Charles Allerton Edge (1845-1900), and built by Brazier & Weaver of Bromsgrove; drawings for the buildings are in Birmingham City Archives (MS 1703/86).

The Victorian Society is of the opinion that the engine house is eminently suitable for restoration and dividing into dwellings as previously approved, and cannot agree to its demolition. We therefore object to this application.

Conservation Officer Consulted 16.05.2011. Response received 25.05.2011.
The existing building dates from 1882 and was originally the waterworks for the East Worcestershire Water Company. The adjacent house was originally known as Waterworks Cottage and is still in residential use. Severn Trent still occupy the Engine House on Greenhill which was built in 1924.

I have visited the site, and although a lack of maintenance and proper security is evident, the external shell of the building is sound and requires only repointing, minor brick repairs and more extensive roof repairs. The building has clear architectural interest, and local social importance and should therefore be retained and converted. Even if demolition were necessary, the proposed design of the new bungalows is inferior to that of the existing building and does not respect the context of the surrounding area and established architectural forms. I would therefore recommend refusal of this application as contrary to policy S38 of the current local plan.

EHO

Consulted 16.05.2011. Response received: 06.06.2011.

This site has previously been through the planning application proposal and comments in relation to contaminated land risk assessment were made at those times (09/0440 and 09/0845). I am aware that some site investigation and risk assessment has previously been carried out due to the sites previous use as a former pumping station and depot. A number of potential sources of contamination have previously been identified - these included the presence of tanks, a repair workshop, a spray shop and woodwork shop. Previous investigations required further work to ensure that all potential sources of contamination have been fully assessed. It is noted that not all reports submitted with previous applications have been submitted with this one. However we are aware that further investigation was previously required and this is still the case.

The comments in relation to previous applications and the same conditions should be applied. These comments and recommendations remain unchanged as no additional information has been submitted with this application.

In addition I recommend that the Environment Agency are consulted on this application, if they have not already been, as the site lies on a major aquifer and within 60m of a drinking water abstraction point.

EA

Consulted 16.06.2011. No response to date.

COARCH

Consulted 16.05.2011. Response received: 10.06.2011.

The County and the District has a responsibility to protect, either by preservation or record, cultural remains within its jurisdiction, and this is emphasised by Planning Policy Statement 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment.

Within this PPS, policy HE1: Heritage assets and climate change states that -

"HE1.1 Local planning authorities should identify opportunities to mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change when devising policies and making decisions relating to heritage assets by seeking the

reuse and, where appropriate, the modification of heritage assets so as to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development. Opportunities to adapt heritage assets include enhancing energy efficiency, improving resilience to the effects of a changing climate, allowing greater use of renewable energy and allowing for the sustainable use of water. Keeping heritage assets in use avoids the consumption of building materials and energy and the generation of waste from the construction of replacement buildings."

The application provides no discussion of the impact of the development on the historic environment and there is no survey provided showing the building to be demolished. In the event of the Planning Committee approving the application, then a condition should be applied to require detailed site investigations to be carried out.

Publicity Neighbour notification: 1 letter sent: 16.06.2011.

Site Notice posted: 25.05.2011. Expired 15.06.2011.

No responses received.

The site and its surroundings

This application relates to a parcel of land located to the north side of Alcester Road, close to its junction with Blackwell Road. The site accommodates a former waterworks building. This Italianite style building, dating from 1882, is built of red brick in English bond with ornamental blue brick detailing over segmental arched windows, at dentil-eaves levels and on the gables forming pediments. There are terracotta finials on the roof ridges and raised articulated entrance ranges crowned by Baroque-detailed parapets. There are three separate sections of gabled roof, two being of slate and the inner roof being of asbestos with rooflights. Above the front entrance is a hipped roof and to the rear elevation is a small lean-to extension. To the east boundary is a large brick built agricultural building and to the rear of this are two smaller outbuildings. The majority of land surrounding the buildings is laid to concrete. The northern boundary of the application site is currently unmarked and the existing hardstanding continues onto the adjoining land. To the west, the site neighbours 359 Alcester Road, a two storey detached dwelling and, to the east, an open field and sub-station. The site benefits from a vehicular access point onto Blackwell Road just before it meets Alcester Road. From Alcester Road the site is partly screened by trees/hedgerow. The site is located in a recognised Green Belt.

Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing waterworks and the erection of four detached dormer bungalows for the use of local residents over the age of 50.

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE1, QE3, QE5, QE6, QE7, T2, T7
WCSP	SD.3, SD.4, CTC.1, CTC.5, CTC.5, CTC.12, CTC.13, CTC.19, D.5, D.38, D.39, T.1
BDLP	DS2, DS13, S9, C17, C30, TR11, ES7
DCS2	CP21
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS3, PPS5, PPS9, PPG13, PPS23, Circular 06/05

Relevant Planning History

B/2010/0747	Extension of time for permission 09/0440 - Conversion of existing buildings to form four residential units. Granted 27.10.2010.
B/2009/0440	Proposed additional unit to a previously approved residential scheme to increase the numbers from 3 to 4. Conversion of existing building to form 4 residential units, parking and other works including new access road (Amendment to planning approval B/2004/1171 to increase the number of residential units from 3 to 4 and other alterations).
B/2004/1171	Conversion of existing building to form 3 residential units, parking, garaging & other works inc. new access road. Granted 09.11.2004.
B/2002/0653	Redevelopment of existing depot, pumping station, reservoir, to provide nine dwellings, alterations to existing access - Outline Consent. Withdrawn 12.07.2002.
B/1998/0109	Redevelopment for residential development comprising 4 dwellings. Refused 11.05.1998.

Notes

This is an outline planning application for the demolition of the former waterworks and the erection of four detached dormer bungalows. The application is accompanied by a statement from a registered ecologist and a remediation validation report. Members should note that there is no legal agreement provided to ensure the occupancy of the bungalows is limited to persons over the age of 50 and I consider as a standard market housing scheme.

The site is located within the Green Belt outside of the village envelope of Burcot. The main issues in the determination of this application are:

- (i) whether the proposal amounts to inappropriate development and if so, whether there are very special circumstances to outweigh the harm caused
- (ii) the impact of the proposal on the historic character of the site
- (iii) the ecological impact of the proposal
- (iv) Drainage, highway and contaminated land issues

(i) Green Belt

Members must consider the proposal as an outline application for 4 residential dwellings. The applicant has, however, presented detailed plans in respect of the form, scale and

layout of the proposal and confirmed that the proposal would be in accordance with these details. As such, the harm to openness can be assessed on that basis. One of the dwellings will face Alcester Road and the other three in a linear formation to the west of this unit. Each unit has a floorspace of 206sqm making a total of 825sqm in the scheme. This exceeds the floorspace of the original buildings which stand at approx 770sqm. Policies DS2 and S9 of the BDLP and D39 of the WCSP are relevant to the proposal. Whilst I consider that the conversion of a rural building can amount to appropriate development in the Green Belt, its demolition and replacement is not covered under policy C27. I do not consider that the proposal amounts to the replacement of an existing dwelling since the buildings have never been in use for residential purposes. It fails the tests of policies DS2 and S9 and must be considered as inappropriate development for which very special circumstances must be demonstrated.

The applicant has provided a justification for the proposal in the Design and Access Statement summarised as follows:

- Under supply of housing stock specifically designed for the ageing population
- The site currently has an extant permission for four dwellings
- The site is brownfield
- Reduction in pressure on other Green Belt sites
- Improvement to openness

I consider the demand for housing to serve the needs of older persons to amount to a national issue and not a very special circumstance to override Green Belt harm. There is no numerical evidence provided to substantiate the view of the applicant. I therefore place no weight to the description of the application restricting use to a specific age range only.

The extant permission relates to the retention and conversion of the building and this has been considered acceptable in Green Belt terms. It would not justify the proposal. Whilst there is development on the site, it is questionable whether it could be defined as brownfield in PPS3. As outlined by the figures above, I do not consider that there would be any significant improvement to openness since development would be spread around the site further than would be the case for the conversion of the buildings resulting in a random residential site in the Green Belt.

(ii) Historic Interest

Members should note the comments of the Conservation Officer, County Archaeologist and Victorian Society which are unanimous in objection to the proposal. The reason for permitting a residential conversion was to enable the retention of the character of the building. The case officer in application 09/0440 noted:

'Whilst the building is not listed, I am of the view it is an attractive and interesting example of a late 19th century utilities building. It is of significant local interest and this has been recognised through its recent inclusion in the District's Local List. The reuse of the building will prevent further dilapidation and allow it to be sympathetically repaired'.

The current proposal would defeat the purpose of the previous application and would be contrary to policy S38 of the BDLP and the principles of PPS5 as outlined above.

(iii) Ecology

The consultant ecologist's report concludes that there is some potential for bats and some additional survey work including an emergence survey is required. I would refer to the standing advice of Natural England. Box (xii) of the advice states that in accordance with Bat Survey - Good Practice Guidelines, additional information should be requested from the applicant and the application refused if this is not provided. These matters have been addressed to the applicant. I consider that this requirement is more important now since the proposal will remove the building.

(iv) Drainage, highway and contaminated land issues

Members should note the comments of the Drainage Engineer and the comments of WH are awaited. The site has been a pumping station and depot and survey work has been conducted for the previous applications. There is a remediation validation statement provided. The EA have been consulted because of the proximity of the proposal to a drinking water abstraction point and their views are awaited.

Conclusion

The proposal amounts to new residential development in the Green Belt and as such is inappropriate development with no very special circumstances. It would result in the loss of a building of historic interest and may result in harm to protected species. Permission should be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would cause harm to the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt in this location. No very special circumstances have been put forward or exist that clearly outweigh the harm caused and therefore the proposal is contrary to policies SD.2, D.28, D.38, and D.39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan and policies DS2 and DS13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the provisions of PPG2 (Green Belts).
2. The proposal would result in the loss of a building of local historic interest. Thereby, it would be contrary to policy S38 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the advice of PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment.
3. There is insufficient information to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species and their habitats contrary to policy QE7 of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, policy CTC.13 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan and the advice of PPS9 (Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation) and Circular 06/05.