

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
<b>AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY 'B'</b>	Proposed new workshops and classroom - Avoncroft Arts Centre, Hanbury Road, Bromsgrove, B60 4JS	GB	<b>11/0887-DK</b> 21.11.2011

**RECOMMENDATION:** that permission be **REFUSED**.

#### Consultations

WH	Consulted 19.10.2011. Response received: 31.10.2011. No objection.
Stoke PC	Consulted 19.10.2011. Response received: 15.11.2011. No objections - a worthwhile addition to what is already a valued community resource.
ENG	Consulted 19.10.2011. Response received: 04.11.2011. No objections subject to conditions.
CO	Consulted 19.10.2011. No response received.
EDO	Consulted 19.10.2011. Response received 18.11.2011, from Economic Development and Regeneration (North Worcestershire).

Although the development does not represent a major economic opportunity, it offers interesting scope for craft and creative small scale workshops and education which offers some scope for economic benefit.

It seems to fit very well with localism and the big society. It seems there is a strong local membership, whilst I also heard how the various groups operating from the centre attract visitors to Bromsgrove from further afield.

It is clear that the room bookings are extensive with a full schedule. The Society has a funding opportunity to invest in the new extension.

In Green Belt terms, I understand the normal presumption against inappropriate development, although I note that the proposed development site was modest and largely hidden by existing premises.

From an Economic Development perspective, I would generally be supportive of the principle of this type of development, although I recognise the Green Belt setting.

WRS	Consulted 19.10.2011. No response received.
Publicity	4 letters sent 19.09.2011; expired 09.11.2011 1 letter sent 31.10.2011; expired 21.11.2011 Site Notice posted: 26.10.2011; expired 17.11.2011. No responses received.

### The site and its surroundings

The building to which the application relates is a single storey brick building with a timber tower structure. There are existing corrugated iron structures to the rear and a timber clad extension to the side. The building is currently contains a number of workshops / studios and the building is used for evening classes and public arts performances. The centre has an existing car park. The site adjoins Avoncroft Pre School Nursery and Bromsgrove Pre Preparatory School but it stands as a detached structure in an isolated position within the Green Belt.

### Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of a new extension comprising new workshops and a classroom.

### Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	D.28, D.38, D.39
BDLP	DS1, DS2, DS13, S28, S31
DCS2	CP22
Others	PPG2, PPS4

### Relevant Planning History

P11/0081	Extension of an existing pottery workshop to provide two further artist's workshops and a classroom. Pre Application advice.
08/0691	Works to existing workshop and building to facilitate sub-division into four individual workshops and creation of new wheelchair accessible WC. Granted 18.09.2011.

### Notes

The main issues in the determination of this application are the following:

- (i) whether the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt; and
- (ii) if inappropriate, whether there are any very special circumstances to justify the proposal

### Green Belt

The application site lies within the Green Belt, the extent of which is defined in the BDLP Proposals map and policy DS1. I consider that the main policies which apply to the application are policies D.38 and D.39 of the WCSP, and policies DS2 and S31 of the BDLP which control development in the Green Belt and considers development at educational establishments.

The development, as proposed, would not fulfil any of the criteria for development in the Green Belt as outlined in policy DS2. It is by definition inappropriate in the context of PPG2.

The existing building amounts to 144.5m<sup>2</sup> and the proposal will add 75 m<sup>2</sup>, which is a 51% increase above the original. I note that there is hardstanding in the position of the proposal which will adjoin the wall of Avoncroft Pre-School. I consider that the proposal would cause harm to the openness of the site particularly when viewed from the car park area to the east. My conclusions are that the proposal is inappropriate development which would harm the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt at this location. It is for the applicant to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances in this case which override Green Belt harm.

#### Very Special Circumstances

The applicant has provided a letter and floorplans Ref: B470/1, dated 18.08.1982, which show that buildings have been demolished in the position of the proposal. The plans do not appear to relate to a planning application; it is likely that permission would not have been required for the demolition.

Whilst the existence of the buildings in 1982 is accepted, they are demolished, the site is open and I do not consider that this is a very special circumstance which would justify the proposal. Whilst the facility is a valuable community resource and is operating successfully, this is not a unique circumstance and would not outweigh the harm to openness. No additional issues are raised in the Planning Statement to override this conclusion.

Members should note the representation received above which is from an economic development perspective. Whilst I note policy S28 of the BDLP states that the provision of new or enhanced community facilities and the retention of existing ones will be supported providing there is no conflict with other policies in the Local Plan, I do not consider that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. In terms of policy, there is no significant change to this position in respect of Green Belt development either in Draft Core Strategy 2 or the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This position is consistent with the advice given at Pre Application stage.

Whilst the proposal would not give rise to any issues in terms of highways, drainage or residential amenity, it amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt without very special circumstances and permission should be refused.

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

1. The proposed extension amounts to 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 (2001) and policies DS2 and DS13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (2004) and the provisions of PPG2 (Green Belts).