

BISHOPS CLYST
(Clyst Valley)

05/1358
(OUT)

12 July 2005

Applicant: The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust

Location: Devon County Showground, Westpoint
(Grid Ref: 298395 / 91383)

Proposal: Construction of exhibition hall and museum with ancillary facilities for the display of historic road transport vehicles and artefacts.

Consultations

County Highway Authority
Comments awaited.

Environment Agency
No objections in principle, conditions suggested.

Director of Education, Arts & Libraries

Support the application for planning permission for the centre at Westpoint. The centre clearly has considerable potential both as an educational resource and as a visitor attraction and Westpoint is an ideal site for it. There has been mention of a collection of archives and I have spoken previously to Robert Crawley about this. I understand that the collection is somewhat varied and that it includes much ephemeral material which is suitable for display in the museum. While it is acceptable to use museum documentation principles to catalogue items of this type, collections of correspondence and other records will need to be treated as archives and I would expect the Trust to use the principles of ISAD(G) when compiling catalogues of these. Similarly, while museum storage and display are suitable for a few items, if the Trust intends to make the collection of records one of its activities, it will need, in the longer term, to provide storage for them which conforms to BS 5454:2000 and the National Standard for Record Repositories.

Deputy County Environment Director

The County Council fully supports the principle of creating a visitor attraction which will both broaden the portfolio of visitor facilities in Devon and also place on display vehicles and other artefacts which form part of Devon's transport heritage over the past hundred years. We are also pleased to see that it has been possible to locate the proposal at a site which enjoys good accessibility from the strategic road network.

South West Tourism

Supports the application. We believe it will build on the existing facility, add to both local day visitor attractions and create an additional product for the interest of our more distant visitors.

Devon County Agricultural Association

The DCAA is fully supportive of the planning application and stands ready to respond to any queries concerning this proposal.

Planning History

See body of report.

Representations

1 letter of support has been received.

Summary of Support

1. Stagecoach Devon – supports the preservation of transport heritage in other UK Regions but there has been no museum for this purpose in the West County to date.
2. Stagecoach's service 52A/B passes the Westpoint entrance in each direction every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday and hourly on Sundays thus providing ready access to the proposed museum site by public transport. The ability of visitors to the museum to

experience bus travel through WHOTTs activities will encourage them to consider more regular travel by public transport on a day to day basis.

Parish Council

Bishops Clyst Parish Council – recommends refusal on the following grounds:-

1. This application is against the spirit of the conditions approved by a Government Inspector after a lengthy and expensive public enquiry in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to safeguard the living conditions of nearby residents.
2. No environmental assessment included.
3. Industrial buildings (non agricultural) on a Greenfield site.
4. No plan/drawings of the actual buildings.
5. Will attract more people/vehicles into an area which is already at saturation point, roads are already congested without this added attraction.
6. We would like to see the long term plans for Westpoint to assess how this application fits in with future plans.
7. If the application is granted, we would like conditions attached so that the buildings would only be used as a transport museum and would be demolished if the museum became redundant.

Ward Members

Councillor Peachey – Recommends deferral. The Westpoint site has very defined conditions to protect this site and the surrounding area, these must be adhered to. If this can be approved without compromising the site by setting a precedent then I consider this acceptable. Care must be taken to ensure that if the Trust fails or eventually closes, then the whole structure must be removed at that time from the site and reinstated.

The Site

The site lies within the Westpoint showground site to the north west of the large exhibition hall at the centre of the complex. The Westpoint showground lies to the east of junction 30 on the M5 motorway on the A3052 between Exeter and Sidmouth.

The site is bounded on two sites where existing cut slopes which screens the site from public land to the south or west of the site and to the north the site is separated from the unclassified lane by a copse and to the north west by an existing long term caravan/car/lorry parking facility. The site will not be visible from outside the Westpoint show ground.

There is one tree of any significance within the site which is a mature oak tree and the applicants have proposed that this should be protected from development within an area of 1 ½ times the spread i.e. 18 metres to be safeguarded and no building development permitted within that area. This can be covered by condition. The tree is currently being reviewed by the Council's Arboricultural Officer to assess its suitability for a Tree Preservation Order.

Planning Background

In 1984 the Secretary of State granted outline planning permission for Ivington Farm, as it then was, to be used as a site for the Devon County Showground, together with buildings, roads and use for recreation and related purposes. Conditions 4 – 8 of the 1984 permission exercised strict control over the use of the land with all normal 14 and 28 day user rights on any part of the site removed. The site as a whole could be used for one 6 week period a year for the show for agriculture but for nothing else. Within the site an area was identified, cross hatched on the original outline planning permission within which the various additional activities and the erection of permanent buildings were to be confined. Condition 5(c) listed the supporting activities to be allowed within the cross hatched area. The cross hatched area reflected the physical features of the site as it was in 1984 and a preliminary assessment of the expected changes to be made to

accommodate the show. There were some major physical changes to parts of the site with most of the major infrastructure for the show being provided within a planning permission granted for the exhibition hall.

In 1991 permission was sought to seek relaxation of condition 5(c) of the 1984 permission so as to allow the full use of the buildings and yard as well as the exhibition hall for Classes D1 and D2 of the 1987 Use Classes Order and the use for the exhibition hall only for the sale of food and drink within Class A3. Consent was also sought to allow the use of the hatched area, now known as the purple dashed land for a variety of uses including exhibitions, promotional events and festivals, fairs, athletic meetings and caravan and motor vehicle rallies. Specifically excluded were music festivals, motor racing and timed trials. Permission was granted on 13th May for this amendment of conditions application and the decision notice is attached to this report together with the relevant plans.

A letter submitted with some pre-application correspondence relating to the current application from the solicitor who dealt with the 1991 application on behalf of the Devon County Agricultural Association states the following:-

“In particular we discussed [with EDDC] the reference in the 1984 appeal decision to “supportive activities” and whether or not there should be any ongoing restriction or limitation on additional “non-show” facilities and activities so as to require them to be in some way linked to or supportive of the show and its operation. The outcome was agreement, reflected in the wording of the 1991 planning permission, that it was neither necessary nor appropriate to include any such requirement. The principle was clear, that within the purple dashed line on the identified plan the uses specified in section (c) of the permission including any D1 use were acceptable and permitted subject to the overriding noise condition. There was a further understanding that there would be in no principle objection to any new buildings within the purple dashed line, whereas an in principle objection is likely to be raised in respect of building development outside of it.

“A range of subsequent applications for planning permissions for individual structures and uses of Westpoint have been considered and determined within this framework, including the refusal of permission for a permanent forestry display building originally proposed outside the purple dashed boundary and the granting of permission for such a facility on a revised application site inside the purple dashed boundary”.

The Proposal

The proposal here is an outline application for the construction of an exhibition hall and museum with ancillary facilities for the display of historic road transport vehicles and artefacts. All matters are reserved for further consideration with the exception of road access which already exists onto the A3052, with plans submitted with this application only showing possible phased construction within the site.

The applicants have explained within the supporting documentation associated with this application that its objectives and intentions are that vehicles and artefacts are to be exhibited, maintained, operated and displayed in settings that are wholly appropriate to their operational lives and in particular the creation of settings appropriate to the ages of the exhibitions themselves. For these reasons the Trust has sought to gather together complete buildings and major elements of historic road transport buildings which represent the most appropriate environments in which to display the historic vehicles. The most significant building that the Trust currently holds is the existing steel work frame and roof structure from the former Western National Lara Bridge Bus Depot at Plymouth which covers an area of approximately 1,360 square metres and stands 4.4 metres to eaves. This building would form the first phase of the development. The second key building is the structure from the former Newton Abbot Devon General Bus Depot. This covers 270 square metres and is capable of holding up to 6 standard

size buses. The third element is the construction of a purpose designed archive and research facility providing the necessary controlled environmental conditions of temperature, humidity and light levels necessary to safeguard and maintain the considerable existing archive material. This building would also include public areas, the administrative functions of the Trust, toilets and a café as well as the entrance and exit facilities to the main exhibition hall. The Trust proposes that its design and massing should pay homage to the very distinctive idioms and styles of the public “high street” bus stations and enquiry offices of western and southern national built both before and after the second world war and once present in almost every sizeable town in the south west. It is proposed that this two storey office scale building should be a reinforced concrete structure to provide the necessary archive rated fire resistance with external elevations clad in brick and glass in horizontal bands. On a footprint of 482 square metres the gross area of 964 square metres would be provided.

The fourth element is the provision in the longer term of a further building which will be capable of housing in a secure, dry and well ventilated environment up to 20 of the Trust’s restored vehicles which will be rotated from time to time the vehicles in the main exhibition hall to provide changing displays. These vehicles will also be available for external exhibition on open days, for demonstration runs and for travel to other historic vehicle events and rallies. It is therefore proposed that the overall completed development will contain a gross floor area of approximately 3,200 square metres of which approximately 2,700 square metres is single storey. The whole proposed covered area would be smaller than the main arena exhibition hall already sited within Westpoint.

Based on the information supplied by the applicants which is based on visitor numbers to other attractions in the South West and knowledge of visitor numbers to the Westpoint site for the County Showground and other daytime events, the museum is expected to initially attract some 20,000 visitors per annum some 25% of whom might be expected during the 3 days of the County Show. It is intended that the museum will be open for some 200 days per year resulting in an average daily entry of 75 visitors. This would imply some 30 to 40 cars per day although a significant proportion of these could be visiting the site to attend other events for reference. The entrance/exit from Westpoint is designed to cope with some 80,000 visitors over the 3 days of the County Show.

Planning Policy

Government Guidance

- PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPG21 – Tourism

Devon Structure Plan 2001 – 2016

- Policy ST10 (Exeter Principle Urban Areas)
- Policy T01 (Tourism Development in Resorts)
- Policy T03 (Tourist Development in Rural Areas)

East Devon Local Plan Revised Deposit 1995 – 2011

- Policy TO6 (Provision of Visitor Attractions)

Observations

The 1991 planning permission authorised permanent exhibitions and a range of D1 uses on the relevant part of the site i.e. within purple dashed area and in the main exhibition hall. It is the case therefore that no planning permission would be required for the site proposed as it lies within the purple dashed line boundary for the Trust to hold a permanent outdoor exhibition of

historic vehicles. The only issue therefore to be determined through this application is for the construction of buildings within the Westpoint site. As pointed out above this is an outline application and we do not at this stage have details of the buildings beyond the descriptions provided by the Trust and described above.

It is not possible to see the site proposed for this museum and exhibition hall from outside of the Westpoint site and indeed even within it it is fairly well enclosed and obscured from view. Any buildings on this site will be affectively screened from many views by the large exhibition hall already on the site.

The access is clearly capable of accommodating the number of extra visitors suggested by the applicants and indeed at 75 visitors a day across the opening hours, the access will be under no pressure at all. So although the Parish Council's views are noted about the roads locally being at saturation point this is not borne out by observation.

A further point raised by the Parish Council relating to the long term plans for Westpoint and the need to assess how this application fits in with future plans has merit. The Westpoint site is an important strategic position to the east of Exeter but to date the site owners have not approached the Council with any comprehensive plans or proposals. Thus, this application submitted by the Westcountry Historic Omnibus and Transport Trust and supported by the Devon County Agricultural Association (the site owners) has to be treated on its individual merits. The use as a museum and exhibition centre falls within the use classes permitted on this Westpoint site by the 1991 planning permission and lies within the purple dashed area. As a consequence there can be no objection to buildings for this use and given that the above assessment indicates that the building could not be seen from outside its immediate vicinity this militates against any argument based on adverse impact in landscape terms being substantiated against the erection of the building.

However there are concerns about the types of building that are being proposed on a rural site and therefore whilst the Trust has indicated the types of buildings it wishes to erect the standard outline condition requiring submission of all details (excluding access) will ensure that the Council retains control over these details as the provision of urban and municipal type buildings is not necessarily the most appropriate form of structure on the Westpoint showground site.

Conclusion

The provision of a leisure facility on the Westpoint showground falls within the permitted uses granted in 1991 for the Westpoint site and within the terms of the positive policy TO6 of the Revised Deposit Local Plan which requires that new tourist attractions do not adversely impact upon the surrounding landscape, they are related sensitively in scale and siting to their surroundings, that the locality is capable of accepting increased numbers of visitors, that the site is accessible by a variety of means of transport and that there is no detrimental effect upon visual or residential amenity.

Recommendation APPROVE subject to the following conditions

~~~~~

**Conditions**

1. Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the building, and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority in writing before any development is commenced.  
Reason - The application is in outline with one or more matters reserved.

2. In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect in perpetuity from [the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use].
  - (a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard [3998 (Tree Work)].
  - (b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the local planning authority.
  - (c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.
3. The premises shall be used for an exhibition and museum for the display of historic road transport vehicles and artefacts together with ancillary facilities and for no other use including any other purpose in Class D1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).  
Reason - To protect adjoining occupiers from noise, disturbance.
4. No oils, fuels or chemicals shall be stored on the site unless details of the storage facility, including measures for containing accidental releases to the environment, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and until such a storage facility has been implemented in accordance with the approved details.  
Reason - To protect the environment from pollution.
5. No raw materials, finished or unfinished products, parts, crates, packing materials or waste material shall be stacked or stored on the site at any time except within the buildings or within storage areas approved in writing by the local planning authority.  
Reason - To protect the character and appearance of the area.
6. Details of any floodlighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the use hereby permitted commences and the building is occupied. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
Reason - In the interest of the character and appearance of the locality.
7. The foul drainage shall be connected to the public sewer and shall be kept separate from clean surface and roof water.  
Reason - To avoid pollution of the environment.
8. No development shall take place until details of the surface water disposal system which will be a sustainable drainage system have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before any dwelling on the site is occupied.  
Reason - To avoid pollution of the environment and/or flooding.
9. The level of noise omitted from the buildings hereby permitted shall not exceed the background noise level by more than 3dB expressed as a 15 minutes LAeq between 0800

hours and 2300 hours as measured on the boundaries of the County show site, whilst between 2300 hours and 0800 hours noise omitted from these buildings shall not audible at any point on the boundary of the County show site. The noise omitted shall be expressed as a 15 minute LAeq which shall be measured at the same point during a comparable period when the site is not in use except for agriculture and as a drivers training centre.  
Reason – To protect adjoining occupiers from excessive noise.

List of Background Papers

The file containing all letters, consultations, and documents referred to in the report.