

River Wye adjacent to Greyfriars Bridge

HC/880600/PF/W

suggested that there should be a restriction on external lighting to the barge and any display advertisements.

Neighbours - Representations received from the occupiers of:-

- No. 2 St. Martin Street (copy attached).
- No. 10 Meadowbank Road " "
- No. 35 Greyfriars Avenue " "
- East Friars, Greyfriars Avenue " "
- Hereford Rowing Club " "
- Hereford & District Angling Association " "
- Supporting letter from applicant's agent.

PLANNING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

This application relates to the mooring of a former Dutch bulk carrying barge, of dimension 124 feet long and 17 feet 4 inches wide with a 3 foot displacement, to the river bank immediately west of Greyfriars Bridge along the south side of the River Wye. The barge would be modified to include a deck superstructure and interior conversion to accommodate restaurant usage. In planning terms the proposal involves a change of use of the river bank to provide mooring facilities and associated engineering works to restrain the vessel and also provide an access gantry for customer usage.

The submitted plans indicate that the moorings will take the form of two 3'0"x3'0"x4'6" deep concrete anchor foundations implanted in the bank opposite the forward and backward flanks of the boat. Central between these two limits it is proposed to construct a gangway providing a bridge link between the bank and the deck area.

Whilst the application description includes a proposal to site a foul drainage tank in the river bank, specific details as to the form and construction of such a unit are somewhat vague. The applicant is currently reviewing this aspect of the works and envisages a system whereby a 1½" drain will be laid in the vicinity of the bankside footpath as far west as Luard Walk, whereat it will be linked to the mains system in that area. The waste material, as the Chief Engineer's comments elaborate, would be pumped from the boat into a chamber on the river bank whereat a more powerful pump would propel the material to Luard Walk.

Such a system is required owing to the proposed location of the barge without any road access adjacent which would normally facilitate conventional sludge tanker disposal. The restricted access has also significant implications for servicing and deliveries of goods. The applicant originally indicated he was prepared to trolley incoming goods the 650 yards from Luard Walk along the riverside footpath, although it is now claimed that an agreement has been reached with the proprietors of Wye Bridge Motors for access across their land to enable deliveries to be made from this point.

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River Wye adjacent to Greyfriars BridgeHC/880600/PF/WResponse to consultations

In consulting the relevant interested parties as part of the wider planning consideration of this proposal the comments and advice of the Welsh Water Authority are of paramount importance. As may be learned from their response, the current submission in its brief form does not contain sufficient detail for the WWA to make a recommendation without the benefit of further details required as part of an application for land drainage consent. With the specialist knowledge of the Wye that the Authority possess they consider that the form of mooring restraint proposed would not be suitable to accommodate the widely varying river level and current conditions which occur over the seasons. A more suitable approach would be to use what is known as compensatory moorings. These involve erection of a steel girder structure at either end of the mooring built higher than any projected high flood level so that a floating link between the boat and the restraint can vary in tandem with the river level. This form of self adjustment would then allow the boat to respond to sudden changes in river level which may occur isolating the vessel from the bank thus preventing anyone getting aboard to manually adjust the mooring. As the WWA comment, the aesthetic consideration of such a permanent structure in the Conservation Area would require further assessment. In the absence of the information indicated in their letter the WWA have requested the City Council to defer the application until such time as they are satisfied that their requirements are capable of being met.

The Nature Conservancy Council were concerned that no effluent was disposed into the river and that the bank was not unduly affected by the proposal. As these matters are not inherent in the proposal they thus do not raise any objections to the scheme.

County Engineer & Planning Officer - The County Engineer & Planning Officer's comments relate obviously to the likely implications the development would have on the highway network south of the river. In order to fully assess and quantify potential traffic generation he considers it necessary to receive more detailed information on the operation of the business, so that its impact on the locality can be measured and the suitability of its positioning understood. The request for this additional information will be conveyed to the applicant and the response awaited.

Chief Executive & Town Clerk - The City Council, whilst dealing with the application under its planning responsibilities, also have a further interest in that they own the land to which the applicant wishes to moor the vessel. Consent would, therefore, have to be granted as landlords subject to any conditions seen to be relevant in regulating the development. // Similarly it may be that a licence would be required for the use of the vessel as a pleasure boat.

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City Health & Leisure Officer - The comments of the City Health & Leisure Officer are particularly relevant considering that the boat will be a permanent feature of the riverside and akin to the erection of a building in this location. The actual food hygiene requirements and similarly noise generation are covered under separate legislature controls which would have to be met once the boat is converted. However, the specific details of sewage disposal and various health and safety requirements of the moorings will be discussed with the applicant at a meeting shortly to be arranged.

Neighbours - The responses received from neighbouring occupiers to the proposal were largely adverse focusing on what is considered to be a detrimental impact the use would have on the river bank with potential problems of disturbance, pollution, appearance on the riverside setting, conflict with existing water sports users and vulnerability to breaking loose should flooding occur.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee - The Committee generally welcomed the proposal as a potential asset and added attraction to the points of interest in the city. Concern was, however, held that the appearance of the vessel and its environment would suffer if excessive illumination or advertising were to take place.

Planning issues

In dealing with what is to date a unique form of development in Hereford attention must initially be addressed as to the desirability of permitting the mooring of a very sizeable marine vessel along the riverside scene in Hereford. It may be argued that on a river such as the Wye as far upstream as Hereford such a craft would be alien to established character. Alternatively it may be argued that it would provide an interesting feature which would consolidate the attractiveness of the city and the facilities available to tourists and visitors. In tandem with the issue of its general presence in the sensitive riverside scene the exact positioning is, of course, a critical element. The position indicated on the submitted drawings has been chosen to allow for sufficient depth of water to support the vessel throughout the year, to allow for reasonable access and boarding for customers, to achieve a prominence essential to its operation and to secure a realistic chance of consent to moor from the owners of the bank - in this instance the Hereford City Council.

In order to ensure that all relevant issues were being addressed in the consideration of the proposal it was considered important to liaise with neighbouring Authorities who had dealt with similar proposals so that any beneficial experience may be brought to bear with this submission.

Planning Officers thus visited Worcester where a similar proposal to locate the "Severn Voyager" cafe restaurant had

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been approved under temporary consents since 1981. Whilst the boat was similar to that proposed to be located in Hereford the "Severn Voyager" project has a number of fundamental differences: it is located close to an adjacent highway (Copenhagen Street) thus facilitating ease of servicing and sewage disposal, and also the consent is limited to the months April-October with the boat avoiding the extremes of winter flooding through an alternative mooring at Diglis basin. In granting consent for the development Worcester City Council were anxious to retain control of any future replacement vessels and thus the consent was made specific to the "Severn Voyager". Similarly conditions were attached to the decision notice (copy attached) regulating the servicing aspects of the scheme and also by issuing a temporary consent allowing for a review after a specified period. In terms of controlling the appearance of what is a major structure in a Conservation Area it is not altogether clear whether the Local Planning Authority have the jurisdiction to require details of the final form the vessel will take and effect control over its overall design and appearance. Whilst the application focuses on a change of use of the river bank to provide moorings a similar case in Tewkesbury (although part of a large riverside development) which was refused and subsequently went to appeal included a condition imposed by the Inspector that:-

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- "The superstructure of the permanently moored barge shall be rebuilt above deck level in accordance with a design to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority".

The Chief Planner will research this matter and report verbally to Committee on the legal validity of such conditions in relation to a possible use in the current application. In Worcester such matters were dealt with via the Authority's granting of licence as landlords although it is also possible to deal with such matters via a Section 52 Agreement.

As may be learned from the representations received from the Hereford Rowing Club and the Angling Association, these long-established users of the Wye consider that the presence of a barge restaurant in the position indicated would unduly constrain their members' enjoyment of the river and in the instance of the Rowing Club present a hazard which could threaten the safety of oarsmen. These matters require further investigation and the respective bodies will be contacted to elaborate on their comments.

Summary

In the light of responses received to the consultations despatched during the processing of the planning application, it is considered important that the requirements of the Welsh Water Authority are met in full so that the special circumstances of accommodating a vessel of the type proposed on a river such as the Wye in Hereford are adequately catered

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for. Also, in order to progress the matter without undue lengthy correspondence it is considered relevant that a meeting of all interested parties be held so that the principal issues can be discussed focussing on the technical aspects of the scheme, the aesthetic aspects, and the requirements of other river users affected by the proposal.

CITY SURVEYOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Defer.