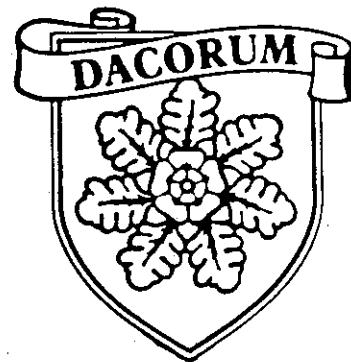


TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Application Ref No. 4/0264/91

Berkhamsted Golf Club
The Common, Berkhamsted
Herts
HP4 2QB

Rickaby Thompson Associates
27 Castle Street
Berkhamsted
Herts
HP4 2DW

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION
=====

Berkhamsted Golf Club, The Common, Berkhamsted,

CONVERSION OF PART OF CLUBHOUSE TO TWO FLATS WITH FRONT EXTENSION

Your application for *full planning permission* dated 26.02.1991 and received on 27.02.1991 has been *REFUSED*, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

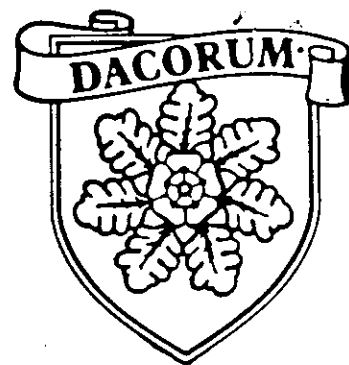
Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 23.05.1991

(ENC Reasons and Notes)

REASONS FOR REFUSAL
OF APPLICATION: 4/0264/91

Date of Decision: 23.05.1991



1. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt on the adopted Dacorum District Plan wherein permission will only be given for use of land, the construction of new buildings, changes of use of existing buildings for agricultural or other essential purposes appropriate to a rural area or small scale facilities for participatory sport or recreation. No such need has been proven and the proposed development is unacceptable in the terms of this policy.
2. The adopted Dacorum District Plan shows the site to be within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty wherein the policy of the local planning authority seeks to preserve the appearance of the area, encourage agriculture and conserve wildlife by the restriction of further development having particular regard to the siting, design and external appearance of buildings. The proposed development is unacceptable in the terms of this policy. The architectural quality of the building is not such that its retention justifies the residential conversion of the whole building and the introduction of dwellings onto this prominent site on Berkhamsted Common would be detrimental to its rural character.



The Planning Inspectorate

C/833/AM/P

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

Room 404	DP	DC	CC	Act	Direct Line	0272-218927
Tolgate House					Switchboard	0272-218811
Houlton Street					Fax No	0272-218769
Bristol BS2 9DJ					GTN	1374

Received 1 JUN 1992

Comments

Mr A E King BA(Hons) BPI
 MRTPI
 24 Lincoln Court
 Charles Street
 BERKHAMSTED
 Herts HP4 3EN

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

T/APP/A1910/A/91/194597/P4

Date:

29 MAY 1992

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
 APPEAL BY BERKHAMSTED GOLF CLUB
 APPLICATION NO: 4/0264/91

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission in respect of an application for the conversion of part of clubhouse to 2 flats with front extension on land at Berkhamsted Golf Course, The Common, Berkhamsted. I held a hearing into the appeal on 22 April 1992.

2. The proposed development arises in connection with a proposal by the golf club to erect a new clubhouse on a nearby site, for which permission has been granted, and to demolish most of the existing clubhouse. The proposed 2 bedroom flats would occupy the ground floor of the 2 storey structure which is to be retained but would not be required for its present use. To enable the conversion to take place, alterations are proposed to the elevations of the retained building. These differ from the scheme of improvements already approved.

3. From my inspection of the appeal site and its surroundings and from the representations made to me in writing and at the hearing, I have formed the view that there are 2 principal issues in this case. The first is whether the proposals fall to be considered as an acceptable form of development, allowed for as an exception to the restrictive green belt policies and the second is whether the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area having regard to the proximity of the appeal site to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. The golf course is situated on Berkhamsted Common a well wooded area of attractive rolling countryside lying between the town of Berkhamsted and the village of Potten End. The clubhouse is set back from the road (The Common) but is

clearly visible. It comprises a building in a mixture of styles, mainly single storey but with a 2 storey structure at the rear (western side). Adjacent to the clubhouse are a pro-shop, the greenkeepers' maintenance accommodation and other small buildings.

5. To the south of the golf clubhouse and its associated buildings are a complex of buildings forming a research and office establishment which include the listed mansion - Berkhamsted Hill. There are a few houses to both the west and south-east of the clubhouse, but these are unrelated to the club.

6. The existing club house and the adjacent buildings were formerly within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB). The adopted local plan and one of the reasons for refusal reflects this designation. However the boundary was amended by the Countryside Commission and since March 1990 the clubhouse and the surrounding area have been excluded. Nevertheless the appeal site is visible from within the present boundary of the CAONB.

7. The permission granted for the proposed new clubhouse, which is to be situated to the north of the present building, requires the removal of most of the existing clubhouse with the exception of the 2 storey portion at the rear. This part contains 2 flats on the first floor which are occupied by club staff, and locker and changing rooms, toilets, etc on the ground floor. The approved plans showed the external treatment to be applied to the retained part but not the proposed internal arrangements or use of the ground floor.

8. The appeal site lies within the approved Metropolitan Green Belt and is therefore subject to the national planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note No 2 (PPG2). This states that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within such areas and that approval should not be given, except in very exceptional circumstances for the construction of new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings other than for agriculture, and forestry, outdoor sport or other uses appropriate to a rural area. Furthermore Planning Policy Guidance Note No 7 (PPG7) which is concerned with the countryside generally advises that new residential development in the countryside away from established settlements should be strictly controlled.

9. Policy 1 of the approved Hertfordshire Structure Plan reflects the national policy and states that within the green belt, except within settlements, or in very special circumstances, permission will not be given for development for purposes other than that required for mineral extraction, agriculture, small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation, or other uses appropriate to a rural area. Similarly Policy 1 of the adopted Dacorum District Plan seeks to restrict development in the green belt, stating that planning permission will only be granted in very special circumstances. The deposited local plan for the district

contains a similar policy (Policy 3) but this does provide for development in some limited circumstances such as where very small scale building is necessary to sustain an acceptable use. These development plans also contain policies to protect the CAONB and the countryside and environment generally.

10. The use of the ground floor of the appeal premises for general residential purposes as proposed in the submitted application, would be, in my opinion, contrary to the general objectives of the national and local policies for the protection of the countryside in general and the green belt in particular. The proposed dwellings would not serve directly the requirements of the rural economy and would not form part of any established settlement. The building is not one which, for reasons of its appearance or interest, it is desirable to retain and reuse for its own sake, in my opinion. The proposed use is not therefore, I consider, appropriate to this location in the green belt.

11. For your clients you have stated that they have considered the proposals in more detail since the application was submitted and that their intention would be for the proposed flats to serve as 'dormie' accommodation. This means that they would provide quarters to enable golfers (adults and juniors) to stay at the club for short periods while attending training courses or participating in events. You suggested that such a use could be considered as ancillary to that of the golf course. Your clients would be prepared to accept a condition on any planning consent limiting the use to 'dormie' accommodation.

12. The current proposal, of course, differs from the information supplied to the local planning authority when the application was submitted but it does not affect the physical details of the scheme. The Council's officers have been made aware of the 'dormie' proposals and do not consider that this can be regarded as a use that is ancillary to the golf club use. Indeed they have suggested that as players could be readily accommodated in hotels and guest houses in neighbouring towns the revised proposal is not a use which complies with Policy 3 of the draft local plan in that this is not one that cannot reasonably be located within settlements. The Council has suggested that the remaining floorspace in the retained building might more appropriately be used for relocation of the pro-shop or for storage in connection with the club.

13. Although, I can fully understand your arguments that 'dormie' type accommodation would be closely linked to the running of the club and the recreational use as a whole, I do not consider that there is sufficient evidence of the need for such accommodation or that if such a need existed that the accommodation could not be provided within the settlements nearby rather than in this rural area. I appreciate that the proposals are of a relatively small scale and that no substantial new building is required but I am not convinced that the effect of repeated temporary occupation of the

proposed 2 bedroom flats would be very different from that of permanent homes.

14. Accordingly, I consider that, despite the special circumstances of this case, in particular the fact that the building is, for other reasons, to remain on the site, that it already contains living accommodation and is close to other buildings, the proposal for 'dormie' accommodation would not be appropriate in this location in the green belt. There are no particular benefits which would result from the proposal, in my opinion, that would outweigh the harm caused by the introduction of further residential accommodation here, to the objectives of the green belt.

15. Turning to the impact of the proposed development on the CAONB and the surroundings generally, I observed that the 2 storey clubhouse structure would be likely to be visible from the side of the main road opposite (The Common) which is the boundary of the CAONB. However, I consider, that the differences in elevational treatment between that approved in connection with the proposed new clubhouse and that of the scheme before me to be insignificant at the distances involved. Nor would the residential use, in the absence of domestic gardens which I understand could be deleted from the scheme, substantially affect the overall appearance of the building seen from either the CAONB or from the immediate vicinity of the building. Having regard to its setting and the fact that the building is to be retained in any case, I conclude, that the proposed development would not cause sufficient harm to the appearance of its surroundings including the CAONB, to warrant rejection on these grounds alone.

16. In reaching my conclusions I have had regard to all other matters put before me at the hearing and referred to in the appeal papers but have found nothing of sufficient weight to override my conclusions on the main issues upon which my decision is based.

17. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

I am Sir
Your obedient Servant



R M BUSS MSc DipTP RIBA MRTPI MBIM
Inspector