



From: David Whitehead, 60 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SQ

Mr. C. Brace, Planning Officer, Herefordshire Council, PO Box 230, Hereford HR1 2ZB

27nd July 2017

Dear Sir,

Planning App. P172130 Home Farm, Pencraig – 3 dwellings

I am writing on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust who have asked me to make the following points relating to this application.

The 'exquisite situation' of Pencraig made it the first viewpoint for Georgian tourist on the Wye Tour. From the plateau that became in c. 1840 the lawns of the Pencraig Hotel the tourists could follow Gilpin's recommendation and take-in the view back to Ross-on-Wye from whence they had just embarked on their picturesque journey. Here where the banks of the Wye began to 'swell....with grand woody banks' it was time to absorb 'the great variety of beautiful perspective views' before one of the climaxes of the journey was reached at Goodrich Castle (*Observations on the River Wye* (1782), pp. 16-17). Later tourists encouraged by Gilpin's interpreter, the Revd T.D. Fosbroke, were urged to notice at Pencraig the mansion of Hill Court, surrounded by its 'very fine park trees'. Pencraig was also included in Fosbroke's 'land tour', taken by those who preferred a wheeled vehicle rather than a boat (*The Wye Tour or Gilpin 'on the Wye'* (4th edition, 1834).

The present development of three large two storey houses is apparently entirely detached from the scenery of the Wye, now an AONB because of its important place in the cultural history of England and Wales. We are left to assume that the development is part of a different 20th century world of modern housing sited inoffensively on the edge of a main thoroughfare. The 20th century has not, from the perspective of the travellers on the main road, added anything of cultural merit to this site and the new houses will join the unplanned marginal landscape. No reason for any fuss.

However, similar developments at high-points adjoining the Wye Valley at Caradoc Court, Sellack and at Belmont, Hereford have shown that it does not take long for the new residents to discover the wonderful views at the bottom of their gardens and a little informal clearance of trees and undergrowth brings ravishing prospects into their bedrooms. Before long off-the-peg Swiss chalets and Wyevale summerhouses are erected to make permanent the temporary contrivances. No retrospective action by the planning authority seems able to counter this informal prospect hunting. Of course for those who come to enjoy the Wye ANOB or perhaps are lucky enough to find themselves within the registered park and garden

at Hill Court the intrusion of modern housing and *a la mode* garden buildings destroys the magic and persuades them to go elsewhere for their landscape experiences next time. Such is the situation at Caradoc Court where the view painted by Thomas Hearne c.1790, at the height of the popularity of the Wye Tour, has been permanently damaged by a misjudgement in the planning process and an estate of modern houses fills the foreground.

The applicant knows full-well that his new houses on a busy main road will offer an opportunity to enjoy a magnificent prospect that will compensate for the drone of the traffic. There seems to be no assessment of the impact the houses will have upon the AONB or upon the registered landscape at Hill Court. This is very remiss and sufficient grounds to refuse permission for the development, as it stands.

We urge the planning authority to reject this application.

Yours faithfully,

David Whitehead on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Hereford and Worcester
Gardens Trust