

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

(To be read in conjunction with and to form part of the
accompanying Outline Planning Application)
for

Proposed erection of additional building at
Pencombe Hall Residential Home for provision of nursing care
to the elderly mentally infirm (EMI) for N A Williams Esq

1. An indisputable need exists in Herefordshire for specialist care for those increasing numbers of people suffering from varying degrees of dementia. That need is underpinned and highlighted by the following stark statistical facts: -
 - Herefordshire has an ageing population. It is the second "*oldest*" County in England.
 - The number of persons over 85 in Herefordshire is expected to rise by 43% by 2011 and 79% by 2020.
 - 1 in 5 people over 80, and between 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 of those over 90 will develop some form of dementia/mental illness.
 - 1 in 7 people presently live to over 90 years of age.
 - Between 750,000-800,000 persons in the United Kingdom currently suffer from dementia.
 - The above figure is set to double within the next 20 years.

2. Herefordshire Council, in partnership with the Herefordshire NHS Primary Care Trust, has very recently published its Joint Commissioning Plan for Health and Social Care Services for Older People 2007-2011.
 - The Report particularly notes "*a shortage of beds for people with mental health problems*".
 - It accepts that figures for provision for dementia, are overstated because many beds are dual registered and in practice used by people without dementia.
 - Unsurprisingly, occupancy levels in all Care Homes is high and it is recognised that the system runs near capacity generally. In addition, there appears to be a specific and chronic shortage of Nursing/EMI places.

3. The need and demand for specialist elderly mental care is therefore evident and will become increasingly overwhelming. One of the Joint Report's specific commissioning intentions is to develop a strategy to increase the provision of EMI/dementia care in consultation with the providers. Another stated aim is to "*improve relationships with private sector providers*". The Report does not spell out any plans of its own to satisfy the demand.

4. The Applicant, Nick Williams, has a particular interest in this type of care and Pencombe Hall already has a high reputation in the field. However, moral, medical, legal and space constraints prevent any further expansion of this facility within the existing buildings. One of the major advantages of locating a new specialist unit at Pencombe Hall is that present and future residents would be able to transfer seamlessly from a residential home providing personal care to one providing full nursing care without enduring the disturbance of moving at a time of greatest need.
5. The existing Residential Care Home at Pencombe Hall has been established for over 20 years. It enjoys an excellent relationship within the local community and is held in high regard by health professionals across the County. The building itself is an attractive former Country House, set in mature grounds close to Pencombe Village, which has a Public House, School, Church and Village Hall. The scheme proposed, albeit as yet only at sketch stage, makes use of falling ground levels and the primary design objective is to provide a landmark structure which will, at the same time, create a domestic feel for residents, and in terms of its scale, relate to and remain subordinate to the main Hall itself. The building will be both disabled and eco-friendly. Few additional traffic movements will be generated since these will be combined with those to the existing Home. Provision of on-site staff accommodation will further reduce journeys. Many additional local employment opportunities will be created.
6. The Community Facilities and Services Chapter of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan recognises the need to support and to seek improvements to local services, particularly in rural areas. It recognises that there has been erosion of local services and facilities in rural areas at the expense of concentration in the towns. One of the main aims of UDP policy is to "*permit the provision of new and improved community facilities which satisfy local needs*".
7. Whilst it is accepted that the site is not in a town, Pencombe is accessible to the main towns of Bromyard, Leominster, Ledbury and Hereford and would most certainly meet criteria 1 and 3 of Policy CS7 (Residential and Nursing Homes) relating to amenity space and environmental impact.
8. It is submitted that the advantages of this proposal are overwhelming. It will: -
 - (a) Make a significant contribution and investment to counter the acknowledged shortfall in this type of care facility both locally and within the County which otherwise is unlikely to occur.
 - (b) Go hand in hand with the established facilities at Pencombe Hall where a reservoir of the necessary skills and experience already exists.
 - (c) Represent a thoughtful and sensitive additional facility which would blend comfortably with the architectural design and grain of Pencombe Hall in a maturely landscaped setting.