

**MCCARTHY AND STONE –
APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS FOR THE ELDERLY,
WHARF STREET, DEVIZES:
APPLICATION No. E/2012/0443/FUL
MEMBER BRIEFING BY THE DIVISIONAL MEMBER**

Colleagues will recall that the application from McCarthy and Stone to build accommodation for over-55s on the Wharf was previously refused. The particular grounds related to inadequate car parking, the threat of complaints about noise nuisance from adjacent businesses once the premises were occupied and to the general massing of the building. At a subsequent appeal, the Inspector agreed with the applicant that the noise issue could be addressed through sympathetic design but rejected the application on the grounds, particularly, of the overbearing nature of the east wing. The car parking problem was not thought to be an issue by the inspector either, although the current plans offer a slight improvement

If you have visited the site, you will be aware that the applicant has now invested a significant amount of effort in investigating the site to confirm the suitability of the ground for an east wing designed to have a lower profile, less overbearing towards the Wharf Theatre building. I believe that the new design has reduced the number of units by one.

The issue of the suitability of the location for such a development has been exercised frequently and the appropriateness of the building on the fringes of the conservation area tested at an appeal hearing. Opinion on these issues in the town is, however, still strongly divided.

I would wish you to listen carefully to any community views which bring any new and vital reason for turning the application down and also to the officer's technical comments which, I understand, will support a recommendation to approve the application.

Should you chose to support such a recommendation, I would be grateful if you would ensure that a condition supporting access to the Lower Wharf, and a route to the Assize Courts is agreed. The applicant was a contributor to the planning brief developed for the Wharf in the last twelve months and is aware of the importance of this provision.

Finally, I have asked that this application, perhaps normally to be decided under delegated officer responsibility, be heard by the committee in order that, given its controversial characteristics, the planning officer may explain in public and in detail the reasons why he is making his recommendation and that community views can, at this stage, still be heard. I hope that you will support this ambition for absolute transparency in determining a still controversial application.

Nigel Carter, Division Member
Devizes North