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## Westonbirt, Nr. Tetbury

### CLIENT

Westonbirt School

### PROJECT NAME

Westonbirt School and Western Walled Garden

### LOCATION

Westonbirt, Nr, Tetbury

### SOLUTIONS IN PLANNING FOR

Planning Permission



### the problem

HPP were initially asked by Westonbirt School to examine potential development sites, both for new or replacement school facilities and those sites which could be sold off on the open market in order to help finance the cost of constructing the former, such as a new school swimming pool and sports hall. To achieve this aim, a Conservation and Development Brief was prepared on behalf of the School. This took account of the various criteria that needed to be met, which included the School's own educational requirements and the various landscape designations and other constraints, for instance potential impact on a Grade I listed building, numerous other listed buildings within the Westonbirt Estate, a conservation area, Grade I historic parkland and the Cotswold's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. All site's identified were eventually marked according to their potential for development.

One of the site's identified for potential open market housing development was the Western Walled Garden. In order to optimise its land value, the School agreed that a planning application be submitted to Cotswold District Council for development of the site.

Two of the main constraints affecting the site's potential development were the various landscape and other designations as well as the growing emphasis in planning policy on restricting development in rural areas. To take account of both these issues, HPP advised the client that a low density scheme should be prepared, and a total of four houses were chosen as being appropriate.

In order to try and achieve an appropriate design that would be supported by English Heritage and the District Council, HPP advised that a design be formulated to reflect the historic character of the site, with consideration given to the type of buildings and materials that historically would have occupied the site as well as their layout.

### the solution

To overcome planning policy constraints, it was important at pre-application meetings and in the supporting information to accompany the application, to ensure that greater emphasis was placed on the adopted Local Plan, rather than national or regional planning policy and the Local Plan review. Even with the adopted Local Plan, the scheme had to be assessed and shown to be consistent with various policy and their criteria. This included, amongst other things, that the site was "within the settlement", which, given its dispersed nature meant having to provide an appraisal of its historic character.

To ensure greater support for the scheme, particularly in light of a focus for development away from smaller rural settlements like Westonbirt, HPP advocated that the scheme was essential to help pay for new facilities (including the School's new swimming pool and sports hall - for which HPP had acted as planning consultants) and conserving some of the historic buildings or structures within the School's ownership. The restoration of the Camellia House (a Grade II\*listed buildings) was chosen to assist in supporting the latter point, and was strongly supported by English Heritage.

The scheme approved was for four open market houses, determined by delegated powers and approved in January 2005. It is now being advertised for sale on the open market.

