

06/2004/039

ROBERT HITCHINS LTD

ERECTION OF 4.NO DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED WORKS, LAND NORTH OF FORMER HOSPITAL BUILDINGS (SITE INCLUDED ON PREVIOUS PLANS AS PROPOSED SITE FOR PUBLIC HOUSE), COTFORD ST LUKE.

16844/27289

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The site is within the new village of Cotford St Luke and has a planning permission for use of the site for licensed premises. This was part a the larger scheme for residential development, shop and the licensed premises referred to. The residential development part of the permission is now under construction. The proposal provides for the erection of 3 terraced houses and one detached coach style apartment with living accommodation on the first floor above garaging on the ground floor. The proposed materials are brick walls and reconstructed slate and concrete tiled roofs. The proposal comprises 2 and 2 & a half storey buildings with accommodation in the dwellings being on three floors.

The applicants indicate that due to the proposal to convert the former St Lukes chapel to a public house, there has been no interest in the site currently reserved for a similar use. They consider that this situation seems unlikely to change as the trend is that more and more pubs in rural locations are closing and being converted to dwellings due to becoming unprofitable.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

PARISH COUNCIL strong objection. The site was agreed to be reserved for community use and this view should be maintained whilst there is a demand for such facilities. There are clearly other potential public uses and demand for this site such as the current interest of the Primary Care Trust in providing a doctor's surgery in the village, but these plans take time to develop - it is essential to retain this land in the meantime. Very little of the initially planned extensive service and retail area for the originally proposed 600 houses has been provided and the village is now approaching 1,000 houses. The loss of this further and potentially last remaining site would severely prejudice the future independent viability of this village. Objections also based on a) change of use from that previously agreed, b) lack of adequate existing facilities for the viability of the village, c) reduction and loss of potential future community facilities, d) disproportionate mix of residential to service/retail provision, e) potential increase in crime and vandalism due to lack of social provision, f) the adverse impact on neighbouring villages and reduction in quality of life due to additional and unacceptable congestion, particularly vehicle congestion and road usage. Every effort should be made to ensure that this site remains available for potential future public use.

COTFORD ST LUKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (CSLCA) previously stated that this land had been categorised for community use and cannot be used for any other purpose, as long as there is a demand for community facilities; there is a demand for this land from the community; CSLCA is in discussions with Taunton Deane Primary Care Trust re the possibility of using this site for a surgery and pharmacy; have also been looking into the possibility of a mixed use facility on this site which has the initial support of the Taunton Deane Police Local Action Team and funding is being looked into; village was given permission with the idea of self sufficiency, employment, shops, school, pub, etc, reducing pressure on local roads - this application is contrary to this as it is the last area of land available for community purposes; since the original permission, public sites have been reduced progressively as the ballroom was given over to housing without adequate replacement; the village will have double the number of residents when completed than originally expected and planned for in the 1995 Guide; for a potential 2,600 residents, public amenity is pitifully less than was allowed for with the original 1,300 residents assumed in the original permission; the developers have made a mockery of the planning department and planning system - enough is enough; if passed will be a snub to residents; another example of a developer who is only interested in profit and not the welfare of the residents of the village; the Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust has asked that the site be retained for community use; Cotford St Luke is a vibrant and buoyant village with a number of dedicated and committed professional residents who are more than happy to fight for facilities where others feel such a need is not justified. It would be a mistake to misjudge the feelings of the villagers and their potential to fight such issues in the future.

LETTER FROM ONE OF WARD MEMBERS object very strongly; Cotford St Luke is an expanding village, likely to finish up with a population of 2,500; it currently has very limited community facilities; this village centre site represents the only suitable remaining opportunity for the provision of a surgery, further retail outlets or even a pub, if the chapel is converted into dwellings; have to question how sustainable Cotford St Luke is as a community with 900 houses, few facilities and fewer employment opportunities; the site ought to be allocated for community, retail or employment use only.

25 LETTERS OF OBJECTION strongly object to any proposal which delays or compromises the building of a surgery, shop and public house at Cotford St Luke; have been made numerous promises since 1999 that the village will have these amenities and this promise has been consistently broken; application should not be considered until the outcome for the petition for a surgery; should be rejected unless it is made conditional upon other land being made available for the public house and medical centre/surgery; there are more than enough houses, concrete and red brick already in the village; should try and keep it as a new village rather than create a mini new town as has happened elsewhere and all the associated problems that could follow, some green open landscaped areas would be far more beneficial and appreciated; should not allow the greed of a building company authorisation to damage the village development; facilities are imperative if the village is to develop a sense of identity; a great shame that any housing has been allowed on what should have been the perfect village centre; the village must be allowed to mature before any more expansion; energy should be directed to completing restoration of the hospital and chapel; until the chapel is converted to a public house, the site should remain available for such use; to allow this application would compound previous mistakes; lack of adequate existing facilities

commensurate with the human right of provision of fundamental facilities by a responsible local authority; disproportionate mix of residential to service/retail provision; potential increase in crime and vandalism due to lack of social provision; adverse impact on neighbouring villages and reduction in quality of life due to additional and unacceptable congestion, particularly vehicle congestion and road usage; with its listed status, the chapel is unlikely to be commercially attractive for conversion to a public house, but rather to be converted into more homes; with no footpath or cycle path to the nearest village pub, the only way to visit a village pub here is to drive; will reduce the village to no more than a housing estate glammed up to be a village; having to use a car to visit facilities in Bishops Lydeard is inconvenient and environmentally unfriendly.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy STR1 of the County Structure Plan contains criteria for sustainable development, including ones that (a) development should develop a pattern of land use and transport which minimises the length of journeys and the need to travel and maximises the potential for the use of public transport, cycling and walking; and (b) give priority to the continued use of previously developed land and buildings. Policy STR5 of the same plan states that development in rural centres and villages should be such as will sustain and enhance their role and will be commensurate with their size and accessibility, and appropriate to their character and physical identity.

Policy WD/HO/3 of the West Deane Local Plan states that within the identified limits of settlements the development of new housing will normally be permitted provided that certain criteria are met. WD/TV/3 of the same plan refers to the Development Guide and states that its contents will be used to assess any proposal. The Development Guide indicated provision for a public house site.

Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit includes general requirements for new developments. One of these requirements is that the accessibility of the development by public transport, cycling and pedestrian networks would be consistent with its likely trip generation and minimising the need to use the car. Policy H1 states that housing development will be permitted within defined limits of settlements provided certain criteria are met. Policy S2 of the same plan provides guidelines for the design of new developments.

ASSESSMENT

Although there is an outstanding planning permission for a public house/restaurant use in the former chapel, there is by no means any certainty that that proposal will proceed. The outline planning permission reserves a site for a public house at Cotford St Luke and I consider that it would be inappropriate to release the current site for residential development in the circumstances. Interest has been expressed in the provision of a doctor's surgery in Cotford St Luke and I consider that the current site may be appropriate for such a use.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the reasons that the site has an extant planning permission for the provision of licensed premises, which is one of the requirements of the outline planning permission for the new village development at Cotford St. Luke. No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that there is no longer a demand for licensed premises or other commercial use in the community interest on the site. The proposed development would therefore be likely to preclude the provision of further facilities for the community, which was a requirement of the Tone Vale Development Guide and the outline planning permission for the comprehensive development of the new village. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policy WD/TB/3 of the West Deane Local Plan, the Tone Vale Development Guide, the requirements of the conditions of outline planning permission no 06/1994/018 and will clearly affect the successful implementation of Policy EC7a of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit insofar as it relates to Cotford St. Luke.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: 356461 MR J HAMER

NOTES: