

MR AND MRS DILL

ERECTION OF TWO STOREY EXTENSION, PORCH AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT THE BOTHEY, HESTERCOMBE, CHEDDON FITZPAINE AS AMENDED BY AGENTS LETTER AND PLANS RECEIVED 1ST OCTOBER 2001, 17TH JUNE, 2002 AND AMPLIFIED BY AGENT'S LETTER AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK TOP APPRAISAL RECEIVED 5TH FEBRUARY, 2001.

24470/28000

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The Bothey is situated within a Grade I registered landscape (parks and garden) at Hestercombe, as well as being sited within a Conservation Area. The property is adjacent to a Grade II Listed Lutyens walled garden. The rear wall of the house forms part of the boundary between the Bothey and the walled garden, and as such the rear wall is listed.

It is proposed to erect a 2 storey extension to the side of the property. The main body of the proposed extension runs parallel to the walled garden and measures 11.7 m x 5.6 m x 7.2 m to the ridge. The proposal also comprises a 2 storey front projection, measuring 5.4 m x 4.9 m x 6.9 m to the ridge. The proposal is partially sited on an area of land currently occupied by outbuildings, which are to be demolished. The south, west and north elevations are to have lime rendered and lime washed walls to match the existing house and the east (rear) elevation will be brick to match the listed wall. The roof is to be tiled to match the existing property. It is also proposed to erect a porch and to carry out some external alterations to the building.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

ENGLISH HERITAGE formal views on amended scheme awaited. Initial views imply that the amended scheme is acceptable. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST the proposal affects a 19th century building within a Grade I Nationally Important Garden. The property is within a Conservation Area as the garden walls are listed. The scheme will introduce development into the garden not in keeping with its special historic interest. The extension will double in size the Bothey, visually damaging its appearance resulting in an adverse effect on a planned kitchen garden. It is likely to disturb buried evidence of the garden's history. The proposal by reason of its size, design and nature will be detrimental to the setting and context and buried remains of the garden contrary to development plan Policy and Government Guidance. GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY Hestercombe is a site of national importance signified by its inclusion on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and as such merits the highest degree of protection. The walled gardens to which this application relates are integral to the historic landscape. The development involves substantial demolition of parts of the historic garden, demolition and rebuilding in an altered form of parts of the listed garden walls as well as 3 buildings in the complex and the remains of the vine house. The historic interest and character of the area will be compromised. We are concerned that

the proposal will lead to the subdivision of the 18th Century walled garden and to further piecemeal erosion of a major component of the Grade I gardens. Adaptive re-use of kitchen gardens can be their only future in some cases, but that is not the case here in one of the top hundred gardens in the country and one subject to a restoration project. This is not some abandoned, unregistered remote site where such proposals regrettably have to be accepted. Consent should be refused on the grounds of the impact on the Grade I registered gardens.

CONSERVATION OFFICER the amended scheme is now acceptable, subject to conditions.

PARISH COUNCIL most of the items which compromised the apparent shortcomings of the earlier refused application have now been addressed and hopefully a way forward will be found for approval to be granted. It must be possible to reach agreement regarding local plan policy, as development such as that proposed would enhance the appearance of the area. The repeated intervention by Hestercombe Gardens Trust relating to the adjacent landscape becomes ever more untenable. The proposed development would not be visible from the gardens to which the public have access. We are concerned that the factor of 'setting' can be interpreted in a subjective manner, and could be used in a 'catch - all' way.

FOUR LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received on the following grounds: the application increases the size of the existing cottage and involves demolition of buildings/walls of architectural and horticultural interest. The walls are in an area that has a direct bearing on a nationally important garden; the proposal includes the intrusive breaching of the 18th Century wall in a number of places and a doubling of size of the cottage; the proposal destroys the spacial relationship of this important group of buildings and will lead to a loss of the historic interest of the site; the building has not been inhabited for a number of years, possibly 30; the walled gardens cannot be treated as separate from the historic landscape, they are an integral part of the whole site; it is difficult to understand why such a modern development could be proposed to pierce a listed and unaltered wall; it involves the demolition of a stable and workshop; English Garden design and its development is unique and at Hestercombe we have in one place 3 different stages of that design and development. The fact that one can walk from one to the other, through the centuries, with few changes from the modern world delights the thousands of visitors; there are many devoted to the ideal of continuing the restoration of the garden to their former glory. The listings are in place to help retain the gardens. Its original features should not be altered; the importance of this assemblage of gardens and buildings lies in their complete and unaltered state; the development is intrusive and out of scale; it allows for 8 new openings in an original and unbreached 18th Century Wall. The walls are separately listed and are within Grade I registered landscape and a Conservation Area. In other areas of the historic landscape buildings have been treated a Grade II*, and this should be the case in this instance; the proposed development of the walled gardens is as unacceptable as would be a comparable development in the formal gardens. It will inevitably lead to a subdivision of the 18th Century walled garden and further applications for development. A uniquely important garden assemblage will be destroyed.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review - Policy 10 (Historic landscapes) - the proposal is considered to meet the criteria of the policy which requires proposals to take account of their impact on the character of the landscape. Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy S2 (design) - the design of the proposal is considered to be acceptable. Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy EN15 (Conservation Areas) - it is considered to meet the requirements of the policy as the Conservation Area will not be adversely affected. Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy H11 (Household extensions) - the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of the policy. Although not subservient the proposal is considered acceptable as it is of an appropriate design and will not harm the amenity of any other dwellings.

ASSESSMENT

The amended scheme is the result of lengthy negotiations between the applicant/agent, this Authority's Conservation Officer and English Heritage. It is considered that the scheme as it now stands will not have a significantly detrimental impact on the Grade I registered landscape, the listed walled garden or the character of the Conservation Area. Although large, the form and design of the extension are considered to be appropriate and the proposal will not harm the residential amenity of any other dwellings. Therefore, the proposal is thought to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the satisfactory views of English Heritage the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of materials, repairs, details of render, landscaping, details of turning space and parking area, GDO rights removed for ancillary buildings. Note re relevant listed building consent.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: 356468 MR A GRAVES

NOTES: