

12/2004/004

QUANTIC PROPERTIES (AXMINSTER) LTD

ERECTION OF HOUSE AND GARAGE, FORMATION OF ACCESS TOGETHER WITH NEW GARAGE AND ACCESS TO EXISTING HOUSE AT MEADOWS EDGE, CORFE AS AMENDED BY DRAWINGS 0341/10 REV B AND 11 REV B ATTACHED TO AGENTS LETTER DATED 27TH JULY,2004

23175/19532

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

An outline application for the erection of a dwelling on the site was refused under delegated powers in January 2003 for the following reasons:- "The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied on the basis of the information submitted that a dwelling could be located on the site without causing demonstrable harm to the character of the Corfe Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EN15 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit."

Two subsequent full applications have also been refused for similar reasons, the latter is currently the subject of a written representations appeal. This current application has been submitted following protracted negotiations with the applicants and their agent. It comprises a dwelling of simple design using traditional buildings with a catslide roof with a dormer to the rear. Two copper beech trees on the site frontage have recently been felled. However, the proposal does not impact upon the oak tree to the rear of the site which is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY my comments dated 17 February 2004 on planning application no 4/12/2004/001 equally apply. You will be aware from previous applications that refusal was recommended on highway grounds for the following reason:- The proposed development would be located where it would be remote for adequate services, employment, education, public transport, etc., and will therefore increase the need for the journeys to be made by private vehicles which is non-sustainable and in conflict with advice given in PPG13 and RPG10 and the provisions of Policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. WESSEX WATER the development is located within a foul sewered area. It will be necessary for the developer to agree a point of connection onto the system for the satisfactory disposal of foul flows generated by the proposal. This can be agreed at the detailed design stage. The developer has proposed to dispose of surface water to 'mains'. There are no public surface water sewers in the vicinity. No surface water should be discharged to the public foul sewers. Alternative arrangements for surface water drainage should be investigated. It is advised that your Council should be satisfied with any arrangement for the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the proposal. According to our records, there is a public water main close to the site boundary. Please find enclosed a copy of our supply records indicating the approximate position of the apparatus. Wessex Water normally requires a minimum three metre

easement width on either side of its apparatus, for the purpose of maintenance and repair. Diversion or protection works may need to be agreed. It is further recommended that a condition or informative is placed on any consent to require the developer to protect the integrity of Wessex systems and agree prior to the commencement of works on site, any arrangements for the protection of infrastructure crossing the site. We advise that this should be agreed as early as possible and certainly before the developer submits to your Council any Building Regulations application. The developer must agree in writing prior to the commencement of works on site, any arrangements for the protection of our infrastructure crossing water supply, there are water mains within the vicinity of the proposal. Again, connection can be agreed at the design stage. It is recommended that the development should agree with Wessex Water, prior to the commencement of any works on site, a connection onto Wessex Water infrastructure.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposed dwelling is a good distance from the Tree Preservation Order oak in the rear garden and unlikely to affect it although some of its amenity from the main road will be lost. However it may need tree management to maintain its health longer term. In order to maintain the character of the Conservation Area I think the front road boundary treatment will be very important. I suggest a chert wall with shrub and small tree planting behind it. The two beech trees felled will need to be replaced with more appropriate tree species. I recommend the services pole is undergrounded. CONSERVATION OFFICER the current scheme is much improved on the former and encompasses design elements appropriate to the character of the Conservation Area which were lacking in the earlier design. There are however four main issues which, in my opinion, still let the proposal down in terms of the building making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The orientation of properties within the Conservation Area is strongly north to south or east to west, i.e. the properties directly face or are at right angles to the street. In this proposal, whilst essentially north to south orientated, it is in fact set at an angle, thus belying one of the essential characteristics of the Conservation Area. Whilst dormers are not a common characteristic, they do exist in the Conservation Area but, where they do, the outer face is in the same plane as the main wall and does not project forward as in this design or on that identified at Photo 6 of the submission. Whilst the applicant's agent has been advised to consider the approach of a traditional building which has evolved (hence the dropped windows to provide doors and the catslide to the rear), the dormer position and its use in the overall design is clearly a giveaway. In addition, because of its position in the roof, it is viewed as a dominant feature particularly on side elevations. Whilst the garage can be viewed as an addition from the street, this is clearly not the perception from the side or rear elevations. Given the cottage design approach advocated, the ridge height should be no higher than Meadows Edge. In summary, whilst this scheme is much improved (and better justified) in terms of its appropriateness to the character of the Corfe Conservation Area, the above issues in my opinion require addressing. I therefore cannot support the application proposals as they stand.

PARISH COUNCIL the Councillors looked at many aspects of this application and in particular, addressed the basic questions (1) Does the proposed dwelling preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area?; (2) Does the proposal overcome the reasons given for the refusal of the previous applications? The Councillors were unanimous in that they strongly objected to this plan for the following reasons:- (A) Effect on the Conservation area. Whilst the exterior appearance of the house design has been somewhat improved from the previous applications, the proposed house

remains far too large, too tall and dominating over the surrounding buildings, and much too close to the Old Forge. Further the proposal to set it at an angle creates an added difference to the existing houses. The proposed house is thus far too large for this site. Further, concern continues to be expressed that the conservation area would lose another of its gaps between houses. These gaps have been identified as one of the positive points of the Corfe Conservation Area, which should be preserved. Thus it is in no way considered as enhancing the character of the conservation area. (B) Risks to road safety in the village, considerable concern was expressed over the intention to have an additional access onto B 3170. The road is very narrow at this point, and traffic flow is fast even though there is a 40 mph limit, so that an additional access would be dangerous. (C) Effect on street scene. The unfortunate felling of 2 medium sized copper beech trees, and other works by the builder has already affected the street scene in the Conservation Area, and this Council opposes the plans by the builder to make cuts to the ancient oak so that he can fit an overlarge house onto this small plot. Indeed the proposed work on the tree and on the site could endanger the amenity and the survival of this ancient oak tree. (D) Other effects. Concerns have been expressed that the plan to install access drives to the new and existing houses, plus proposals for terraces would result in a significant increase in surface water run-off from the site. This would then run onto the road and create a risk of flooding further down the road and increase risk to road users. Further, the existing ancient sewerage system may not be able to accommodate the increased loading from such a large new house. Based on these concerns the Councillors came to the conclusion that this plan neither preserves nor enhances the character of the) conservation area, and therefore it does not overcome the reasons given for refusal of the previous applications. The Councillors unanimously supported the proposal that this planning application should be refused.

36 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received on the following grounds:- highway danger; will detract from existing house; loss of copper beech trees makes site open to road; trees should be replaced; building should be brought forward; site not large enough; building will dominate; garaging should be shared; will detract from Conservation Area due to scale; location and design; design is hybrid of many examples of local vernacular; impact on drainage; no need; flood risk; inadequate visibility; overdevelopment; new housing should be restricted to affordable houses only.

POLICY CONTEXT

Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy H1 Housing development will be permitted within defined limits of settlements, provided that: (A) there is safe and convenient access by or on foot to facilities and employment. In the case of proposals of a significant scale, bus or walking access to a town centre or rural centre will be required, taking account of any off-site works proposed in accordance with criteria (B), (B) necessary provision is made for off-site public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities and highway improvements to cater safely for the expected number of trips generated by the development and minimise the proportion of car trips; (C) traffic calming, pedestrian, cycle and bus measures are incorporated where necessary to give priority to safe and convenient access and circulation by means other than the car; (E) the layout allows people with impaired mobility or a disability safe and convenient access and movement to and between dwellings by careful positioning of potential obstructions, ramps, dropped kerbs, textured surfaces and reserved car parking; (G) small scale schemes in existing residential areas will increase the development density

of these areas without individually or cumulatively eroding their character or residential amenity; (H) a coherent approach to the overall design is adopted, including layout, landscaping, building designs, materials, open spaces and circulation routes, to create locally distinctive developments well related to their surroundings; and (I) existing and proposed dwellings will enjoy adequate privacy and sunlight. Policy EN15 Development within or affecting a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it would preserve or enhance the appearance or character of the Conservation Area.

ASSESSMENT

The Highway Authority has not raised any technical reasons why the proposal should not be allowed and it will not cause demonstrable harm to the amenities of any nearby residents. The site is large enough to accommodate a dwelling in principle. The key issue therefore is whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Corfe Conservation Area in line with Policy EN15. Any such judgement is inevitably to a degree a subjective one. A number of the concerns of the Conservation Officer have been met. However, the suitability of the rear dormer remains a concern. In light of the fact that it is tucked away at the back of the building it is concluded that a recommendation of refusal on these grounds alone could not be justified. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of Policy EN15.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to further observations of the Landscape Officer and Conservation Officer the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, drive materials, mortar, landscaping, tree protection, walls and fences, service trenches, access, surfacing, access gradient, gates, visibility splays, garage use only, meter boxes, timber windows, no extensions, surface water details. Notes re drainage, highway water, compliance and landscaping.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal is acceptable in highway safety and neighbour amenity terms and therefore accords with Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy H1. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal presumes the character of the Corfe Conservation Area and therefore accords with the requirements of Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy EN15.

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

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NOTES:

