

CREAM RESIDENTIAL CARE

DEMOLITION OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLING CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM RESIDENTIAL (C3) TO RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTION (C2) AND ERECTION OF A 6 BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES AT 6 BRIDGWATER ROAD, TAUNTON (RESUBMISSION OF 38/10/0343)

Grid Reference: 324830.124944

Full Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval

The proposed care home is considered to be in a location where sustainable transport methods are available and would not result in detriment to highway safety. It has been designed to reflect the style and design of other properties along Bridgwater Road and whilst it would change the appearance of the street scene, would not result in detriment to its character. Although the proposal would change the nature of the site, it is not deemed to result in material detriment to the residential amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties. As such, the proposal is in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements) and S2 (Design).

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A4) Location plan
(A3) DrNo CCBRII-PP04 Proposed block plan
(A3) DrNo CCBRII-PP03 Rev A Proposal site plan
(A1) DrNo CCBR-S01 Survey as existing
(A1) DrNo CCBRII-PP02 Rev A Proposal, elevations and sections
(A1) DrNo CCBRII- PP01 Proposal

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out and thereafter retained as such, in accordance with the approved details as above, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the existing building in accordance with Policy S2 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

4. Before the development hereby approved is occupied, the area allocated for the storage of refuse and cycles, as shown on the submitted site plan shall be made available for this purpose, in accordance with details that shall have been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and shall thereafter remain available and not be used for any purpose, other than for the storage of refuse and cycles in connection with the development hereby permitted. The cycle storage shall be fully lockable.

Reason: To ensure that adequate cycle and bin storage is provided, in order to promote sustainable travel and prevent harm to the street scene or neighbouring amenities, in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies M4 and S1 (b), (d) and (e).

5.
 - (i) Before any part of the permitted development is commenced, a landscaping scheme, which shall include details of the species, siting and numbers to be planted (including planting to the front boundary), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - (ii) The scheme shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development, or as otherwise extended with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
 - (iii) For a period of five years after the completion of each landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or the appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the local character and distinctiveness of the area in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S2.

6. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the position and design of the wall and fence to be erected on the front boundary. The agreed boundary treatment shall be completed before the building is occupied and thereafter maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S2.

7. Before the care home is occupied a properly consolidated and surfaced access shall be constructed (not loose stone or gravel), details of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and relevant guidance in PPG13.

8. Provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway, details of which shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent surface water being deposited into the highway, in the interests of highway safety and neighbouring amenities, in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1(D) and (E).

9. The area allocated for parking and turning on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and relevant guidance in PPG13.

Notes for compliance

1. Soakaways should be constructed in accordance with British Research Digest 365 (September 1991).
2. It will be necessary, if required, for the developer to agree points of connection with Wessex Water, for water supply and the satisfactory disposal of surface and foul flows.
3. The developer should be aware of the importance of checking with Wessex Water to ascertain whether there may be any uncharted sewers or water mains within (or very near to) the site. If any such apparatus exists, applicants should plot the exact position on the design site layout to assess the implications. Please note that the grant of planning permission does not, where apparatus will be affected, change Wessex Water's ability to seek agreement as to the carrying out of diversionary and/or conditioned protection works at the applicant's expense or, in default of such agreement, the right to prevent the carrying out of any such development proposals as may affect its apparatus.
4. The alteration of the access and/or minor works will involve construction works within the existing highway limits. These works must be agreed in

advance with the Highway Service Manager, Taunton Deane Area Highway Officer, Burton Place, Taunton Tel Num: 0845 3459155. He will be able to advise upon and issue the relevant licences, necessary under the Highways Act 1980.

PROPOSAL

6 Bridgwater Road is currently occupied by a bungalow set between two two-storey properties, with a detached double garage to the rear and trees along the rear boundary. The property is set back from and on a higher level than the road. A footway runs to the front separated from the road by a grassed area, in which trees are planted. The street scene is characterised by a mix of bungalows and two-storey properties, including some large properties, No.2 for example.

The surrounding properties are largely residential. Planning permission was granted in October 1984 for the change of use of a nearby property, No.2 to a care home for the elderly. A further application was approved in July 1993 to allow residential use for physically handicapped adults. This care home is still operating.

An application for planning permission for the demolition of the residential dwelling and change of use of the land from residential to a residential institution and erection of 6 bedroom residential care home for young adults with multiple disabilities was received earlier this year. This application was withdrawn prior to a decision.

This application now seeks planning permission for a revised scheme. This would include the erection of a part two-storey building to provide 6 en-suite bedrooms with a large single storey element to the rear to provide a rear lobby, large communal living space, kitchen and staff office. A courtyard area is proposed for amenity space and an area of garden with an allocated bin storage area towards the rear of the plot. To the front, it is proposed to provide 6 car parking spaces, a cycle storage area and reposition the vehicular access in the centre of the plot. Supporting information submitted indicates that the development would accommodate young adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The application is accompanied by a Travel Plan.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

CLLR SLATTERY & CLLR BROOKS object on the grounds of:

- Detrimental impact on street scene due to size, scale and bulk.
- Overdevelopment of the site by virtue of design, appearance and layout.
- Change in height and building line would affect neighbours daylight and privacy, exacerbated by gradient.
- Narrow access creates problems for access/egress of large vehicles, manoeuvring of such vehicles may block road, exacerbating traffic congestion. Part of safer route to schools passes property. Increase in volume of traffic, levels of deliveries, parking, obstruction of drives, emergency and service vehicle access and refuse collection could all compromise highway safety.
- Raise concern that transport statement does not state how it will be policed.

- Noise and disturbance from increased levels of activity, including number of residents, staff and visitors, and associated increased vehicular activity including ambulances at all times of day and night, out of character with predominantly quiet residential area.
- Noise levels likely to be significantly greater than that usually associated with large family, resulting in unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to adjacent properties.
- Unsuitable location for such a proposal
- Proposed building would cause damage to trees within property.
- Proposed car park would be detrimental to street scene.
- Whether drainage/sewage system would be able to meet increased demands of large commercial operation and additional run-off from hardstanding for parking.
- Large scale of building and hardstanding, replacing gardens, and gradient, would increase likelihood of flooding to neighbouring properties.
- Detrimental impact on residential amenities of adjacent and nearby residential properties.
- Need to consider whether impact of activity associated with proposal and existing activity of site as dwelling would be significantly greater and be detrimental to neighbour amenity. Of the opinion that due to number/times of staff shift changes, levels of professional/personal visitors and potential for emergencies, vehicular and pedestrian activity would be significantly higher than single family household.

Other matters raised:

- Demolition of residential dwelling to accommodate care home should require change of use application.
- Request application considered by Planning Committee.

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - Firstly in terms of vehicle movements at present the existing dwelling could potentially generate approximately 8-10 vehicle movements per day. It is likely that this proposal would see an increase in vehicle movements. However the patterns of these movements would be different. During pre application discussions the applicant envisaged that 50% of the staff will either cycle or utilise public transport to access the site. In light of these discussions it was advised that a Travel Plan should be submitted as part of the planning application.

Under the previous planning application amendments were required by the Travel Plan Co-ordinator in regards to the submitted Travel Plan. As a consequence an amended Travel Plan was submitted as part of this proposal.

Unfortunately due to time constraints the Travel Plan Co-ordinator has not been able to assess the Travel Plan at the present time. As such I would recommend that if planning permission were granted a suitable Travel Plan condition is attached.

In regards to the parking provision for the site the Local Transport Plan requires that parking is provided on the ratio of 1 space per 4 bedrooms and 1 per 2 staff. The application form indicates that there will be a total of 23 staff which would normally equate to 11 spaces. However there would only be a total of 8 members of staff on site at any one time. In light of this the proposal would need to provide a maximum of 5 spaces.

The existing access will be realigned to the centre of the site and widened to approximately 4.5m. This will allow for two way vehicle flow to and from the site. This will need to be properly consolidated and surfaced with suitable surface water drainage provided. It is noted that the realignment of the access would result in the loss of a tree and part of the grass verge. As I suggested at pre application the Area Highway Office would need to be contacted to ascertain whether these works would be acceptable. I am satisfied that at the point where the access joins Bridgwater Road suitable visibility can be provided in either direction. Raise no objection, suggest conditions.

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION, CITYGATE - No comments received to date

COMMUNITY CONTRACTS, COUNTY HALL - This service will require support and resources from primary and secondary health services for residents of Somerset and residents from out of county – majority of whom will be placed by other authorities.

Representations

At the time of writing, 28 letters of objection (2 letters received from same household) have been received from local residents on the grounds of:

- Development is too large, proposal will extend footprint by more than 100%, changing ratio of building to garden. Proposal represents 'garden grabbing'
- Cramped appearance within site, forming a discordant and unduly assertive feature, poorly related and out of character with existing and surrounding dwellings, causing harm to appearance of area and street scene, especially dramatic change in levels.
- Pattern of houses along Bridgwater Road ensure gaps between buildings are sufficient to retain privacy, light and prevent adverse impact.
- Car park to front would be an eye-sore, out of character with street.
- Adequacy of proposed parking increasing pressure on grass verge/on-street parking, increased traffic levels and congestion on an already busy road. Staff from care home at No.2 already park on road in space required by local residents. No turning space to allow cars to drive out, resulting in reversing out across footpath much used by school children.
- Delivery/service vehicles would have difficulty in manoeuvring in limited space to front so could have to be unloaded on the main road. This is evident at No.2.
- Lack of vehicular access to sides and rear would create problems for emergency and rescue services in the event of a fire
- Use of premises will result in overdevelopment and intensification of use detrimental to residential character of area. Existing care homes in area, further care homes could change nature of street.
- Inappropriate location and size of commercial business is impossible to overcome.
- Potential noise generated from future occupants, staff, visitors, traffic and deliveries would have adverse impact on amenity of adjacent occupiers and give rise to unacceptable level of disturbance, due to noise of vehicular and pedestrian activity, especially at unsociable hours. Application does not demonstrate that there is sufficient space around building to minimise this impact.
- Intensification as a result of second care home, creating undesirable precedent, leading to reduction in residential character.

- Turning lovely bungalow into large commercial building.
- Commercial property in a residential area.
- Appearance of extension and potential overshadowing of adjacent properties.
- Loss of privacy and residential amenity arising from a perception of being continually overlooked and blocking of light, will impact on enjoyment of neighbours use of their gardens.
- There are many residential institutions/homes in Bridgwater Road, at least 9 in Hamilton Road, Bridgwater Road and Illminster Road. Inappropriate to create such concentrations, should be a more dispersed provision for complex disability.
- The cumulative effect of an additional institution on Bridgwater Road near Halcon Corner would present an unacceptable risk to pedestrians and motorists.
- Bungalow has stood for 80 or so years, blends in with surroundings. 6 bedroom massive building proposed will look out of character with the area.
- Massive building will lead to visual impact and loss of light to living room at No.8, land higher on that side of boundary.
- Concerns regarding points in travel plan: 50% staff may cycle/walk to work but safe cycle routes not in place near No.6; public transport services are withdrawn at late hours or weekends.
- Presume type of development would be totally contrary to the local plan for our area.
- Loss of tree to the front.
- Loss of amenities to occupiers of No.4, who already have a care home for young adults with multiple disabilities directly to the north, the residents of which cause a lot of disturbance (shouting, swearing, footballs being kicked into garden and retrieved without permission), further care home could result in same disturbing noises; Community charge ratings band of No.4 lowered due to problems of No.2; proposed building would be much closer to No.4 than existing property and two storey element would have major overbearing impact, depriving light to bathroom and lounge window. Concerns that the occupiers could have a care home either side of them, eroding amenities.

Other matters raised including:

- Government believes that power should rest where it makes the most difference – in hands of people and communities.
- Sustainable Communities Act gives people the power to shape the future of their lives and communities.
- Query provision of fire escapes.
- Concerns regarding points in Supporting Statement: improving peoples quality of life – queries whether this includes present residents; making suitable land available – queries whether this should be by demolishing existing attractive residences; queries whether future use of premises might include persons with drug addictions or behavioural problems.
- Devaluation of properties in the vicinity.
- Disturbance cause by building work, noise, dust, mess and grass verge ruined.
- Crazy to demolish bungalow.
- Size of proposed building and garden is far too limited to provide reasonable living space.
- Three bedrooms proposed on first floor is not consistent with the international practice of accommodating disabled residents on the ground floor of newly built facilities.

Letter received from the applicants, Cream Residential Care:

- Concerned to read content of objections.

- 30 years of experience of providing residential care to a high standard.
- Excellent reputation for providing sensitive and nurturing approach.
- Longrun House has integrated well within the neighbourhood and we have not experienced complaints from community.
- Need in locality for additional residential care for people with severe and profound disabilities.
- 6 Bridgwater Road provides ideal setting for such residential care due to position on main road and close proximity to public transport and community facilities.
- Use is compatible with other mixed residential and business land uses in the locality
- Young persons in our care are encouraged to be good neighbours.
- Proposed residents pose no threat to the community.
- Conducted a pre-planning consultation exercise and invited local residents and councillors to visit Longrun house, disappointed that no-one accepted invitation.
- Proposed building sensitively designed to provide an attractive environment.
- With only 6 residents, levels of comings and goings would not be dissimilar to what would be expected from a large family dwelling.
- PPS1 recognises need for inclusive development to accommodate social cohesion and inclusion, thereby creating equal opportunities and LPA should take into account needs of disability.
- The proposed care home will provide additional employment in locality.

PLANNING POLICIES

T1 - TDBCLP - Extent of Taunton,
 STR4 - Development in Towns,
 STR2 - Towns,
 S1 - TDBCLP - General Requirements,
 S2 - TDBCLP - Design,
 PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues in the consideration of this application are the principle of the development; the design and impact on the street scene; the impact on highway safety; and the impact on the amenities and living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Principle

The site is located within Taunton, within easy reach of public transport, along with other services and facilities and cycle storage is provided. It is, therefore, a location in which planning policy generally supports the provision of new care homes, subject to meeting other planning criteria.

There is evidence of other care homes in close proximity to the site and there is no specific policy within Taunton Deane Local Plan pertaining to care homes and their concentration.

Design and impact on the street scene

The street scene along Bridgwater Road is characterised by a mix of properties, with evidence of both hipped roofs and gabled roofs. Whilst the existing bungalow on the site is of hipped roof design, No.4 has a gabled roof and No.8 a hipped roof. The dwelling has been designed taking into account the style of surrounding properties and the prominent front gable reflects that evident on the adjacent property, No.4. Although a reasonably large building, there is evidence of large properties elsewhere in the street, as evident at No.2. Whilst the proposed property is two-storey, it has been designed with the front and rear projections being on a lower eaves and ridge height to reduce the bulk and mass. It is acknowledged that the property is larger than the existing bungalow, however it is important to note that the level of the site is proposed to be reduced. As such, the ridge height of the dwelling will in fact only be 1.5m higher than the ridge of the existing bungalow. This reduction in ground level would reduce the impact of the two-storey property.

The proposed building would be built on a slightly different building line than that of the existing bungalow. However, this is a marginal deviation, which in view of the shape of the property on the adjacent plot, is not considered to harm the appearance of the street scene. Whilst the proposed building is large in comparison to the existing bungalow, it has been set in from the sides of the plot, reducing any cramped appearance. This is furthermore assisted by there being a significant gap between the proposed property and the adjacent dwelling, No.8.

Concerns have been raised regarding the proposed car parking area to the front. This is similar to the existing situation at No.2, hence there is evidence of this in close proximity. Furthermore, as the land level would be reduced, with planting to the front of the car parking, it would appear less prominent in the street scene.

Impact on highway safety

Concerns have been raised regarding the level of car parking. The County Highways Authority have been consulted on this application and are of the opinion that the level of car parking is adequate for the proposal. The layout of the site and space within it would enable vehicles to enter the site in forward gear and reverse into the parking spaces, hence not requiring vehicles to reverse out on to the busy road.

Whilst it is likely that there would be an increase in vehicle movements, the patterns of these movements would be different and it is envisaged that 50% of staff will travel to the site by methods other than the private car. The Travel Plan is currently being assessed by the County Highways Authority and this matter will be updated at the committee meeting.

The County Highways Authority are satisfied that the visibility at the re-aligned access is capable of accommodating traffic from the proposed use and that the local highway network has sufficient capacity. Accordingly, the impact on the local highway network is considered to be appropriate

Impact upon neighbouring amenities

The proposed building has been set in from the boundaries with neighbouring properties. There are no windows proposed above ground level in either direction and as such, there would be no direct overlooking. Although the bungalow would be replaced by a two storey building, this has been designed with a minimal gable

facing adjacent properties and the rear projections on a lower eaves and ridge level. Whilst the proposal would change the outlook from No.8, the building would be over 12 metres away from the closest windows at this property, being a lounge window with bedroom window above. This is considered a sufficient distance to avoid an unacceptable loss of light and it is important to note that there are other windows serving the lounge. The two storey element would lie adjacent to the parking area of No.8 and not the main amenity space and being set in from the boundary, is not considered to result in an overbearing impact. Although there is a large extension to the rear, this is single storey with a hipped roof on the rear to reduce impact. As it would lie adjacent to the existing garage at No.8, it is not deemed to cause unacceptable harm on the amenities of that property.

Whilst it is accepted that the two storey property would come closer to the property at No.4, it is important to note the layout at No.4. There is a small window in the side of the main dwelling and a bathroom window in the single storey element to the rear, both facing into the site. It is understood from the site visit that the small window is a secondary window serving the front hallway; and the bathroom is not a habitable room. As such, the two storey building is not considered to result in a material loss of light to any habitable room. A single storey element protrudes within the grounds of No.4 and along the boundary with No.6 for approximately 12 metres and as such, will screen a large proportion of the proposed two-storey property. Whilst some views of the property would be available above this single storey extension, the proposed property is not considered to result in an overbearing impact. Whilst the single storey element proposed to the rear would extend further, this is single storey with a low eaves level and the roof hipped. Furthermore this does not protrude beyond the existing garage at No.6 and as such is not considered to result in a significant increased impact.

In terms of comings and goings of vehicles, it is important to note that the car parking being to the front, will minimise the impact upon neighbouring properties as there will be no option for vehicles to access the rear, which would result in vehicles passing in close proximity to neighbouring properties, as is the existing situation with the driveway running alongside No.4.

In the case of noise and disturbance, it is generally customary to regard these issues as a matter for the managers of the care home. It follows that, generally, a well managed facility should not cause significant noise and disturbance and consequent detriment to the amenities of nearby residents. The Care Quality Commission, as an independent regulator of health and social care, are the regulating body of a home offering this type of care. The Commission require individual managers to demonstrate that they are suitable to run the service; can manage risk and ensure essential standards of safety are maintained; and that they have suitably qualified, skilled and knowledgeable staff.

Other matters

Concerns have also been raised about whether the existing sewage disposal would be able to cope with the additional surface water as a result of the increased hardstanding and building. As the surface water will be directed to soakaways, in addition to the mains sewer, this is considered to be adequate.

Objections have also been made on the basis of the devaluation of neighbouring properties and the disturbance to residents during construction. These matters are

not matters that can be considered as part of the planning process and as such, limited weight can be attributed to them.

Conclusion

The property is considered to be of a suitable design that would not result in detriment to the appearance of the surrounding area and would not impact unreasonably upon the highway network.

The use of the property as a care home is not considered to result in material harm to neighbouring properties that would outweigh the need for such accommodation for young adults with multiple disabilities and it is important to note that the points raised regarding noise and disturbance would be attributable to the management of the premises, and as such would be a matter for the regulatory body.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988.

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