

20/2006/005

MR & MRS M WALSH

ERECTION OF EXTENSION OVER EXISTING GARAGE TO FORM TREATMENT FACILITY AT WILLOWS WATCH, FITZROY, NORTON FITZWARREN

319411/128055

FULL

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought to convert and enlarge an existing garage to provide a treatment facility. The applicants are registered Osteopaths and are seeking to set up a home-based practice. This would involve raising the ridge height from 4.5 m to 5.9 m. The extension would feature timber clad walls and roof tiles to match those of the existing garage and dwelling. The building would provide a treatment room, entrance porch, store and single garage at ground floor with an additional treatment room, w.c, lobby with a ramped entrance at first floor. A significant amount of glazing would be added to the west elevation.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY recommend the application be refused for the following reason:- The site is located outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has very limited public transport services. The development, if approved, will increase the reliance on the private motor car and comprises unsustainable development which is contrary to advice contained within PPG13 and the provisions of Policy STR1 of the Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. In addition the lane to the site by reason of its restricted width, poor alignment and sub-standard junction with the A358, Penelm Hill is considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development.

PARISH COUNCIL supports the proposal.

POLICY CONTEXT

RPG10 (Regional Planning Guidance for the South West), 2001. The RPG now forms part of the legal development plan, now referred to as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

PPG4 (Industrial, Commercial Development & Small Firms)

Somerset & Exmoor Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR2 (Towns), STR4 (Development in Towns) and Policy 48 (Access and Parking)

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), M1 & M3 (Transport, Access and Circulation Requirements of New Development).

ASSESSMENT

The pertinent issues in the assessment of this application relate to the design of the proposal, impact upon residential amenity of adjoining occupiers and highway and sustainability implications.

Character and appearance of the area - The site is located in open countryside and designated Landscape Character Area. As such special consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area. PPS7 states inter alia that all development in rural areas should be well designed..., in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness. The existing garage is positioned to the front of the host dwelling and abuts the highway. Despite its prominent position the garage takes the form of a traditional pitched roof building and does not harm the character of appearance of the area. However, it is considered the design and proposed alterations to convert the garage, including the raising of the ridge, would have a harmful impact upon the rural character and visual appearance of the area.

Impact upon residential amenity - It is considered that by reason of the separation distances between the proposed converted garage and adjoining occupiers the development would not give rise to any unreasonable loss of residential amenity.

Highways and Sustainability - PPG13 states the objective within rural areas should be to ensure services are primarily sited at the most accessible locations in the local area. In addition the guidance endorses that new health facilities should be planned to maximise accessibility by non-car modes of transport. It is acknowledged that the proposed use would be of a modest scale, however, patients would be reliant solely on the car to attend and as such would be contrary to the provisions of PPG13 and STR1 & STR6 of the Structure Plan which seeks to reduce a growth in the need to travel and maximise the potential for the use of public transport, cycling and walking. In addition there are highway safety concerns to the existing highway network to the application site. The existing access lane by reason of its restricted width, poor alignment and sub-standard junction with the A358, Penelm Hill is considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development.

Conclusion - To conclude, the proposed development is considered to be located in a unsustainable location contrary to the advice contained within PPG3 and the provisions of structure plan and local plan policies. Furthermore, it is considered the proposed design would have a harmful impact upon the rural character and appearance of the area and as such it is recommended the application be refused.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons 1. The site is located outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has very limited public transport services. The development would increase the reliance on the private motor car and comprises unsustainable development. In addition the lane to the site by reason of

its restricted width, poor alignment and sub-standard junction with the A358, Penelm Hill is considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development. As such the proposal would be contrary to advice contained within PPG13 and the provisions of Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR1 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies M1 & M3. 2. The proposal by reason of its design, size and prominent position would appear an intrusive form of development detrimental to the rural character and visual appearance of the area. As such the proposal is contrary to Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1, STR6 & Policy 5 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, and EN12.

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