

10/2005/008

MR D COCKCROFT

**ERECTION OF TWO HOLIDAY CHALETS AT PAYE PLANTATION, STAPLEY
(REVISED)**

18627/13366

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

Planning permission was granted in November 2004 for the erection of two holiday chalets with associated drainage, access track and parking, in Paye Plantation. The site is located in an area of former conifer plantation and is surrounded by native shrub/woodland and moorgrass and rush pasture, the later of which is a key habitat in the National Vegetation Classification. This application would be for the same number of chalets but in a revised location to prevent disturbance and damage to significant ecological features. Chalet 1 was located 18 m away from the existing access track, 30 m from the adjacent road and 45 m away from the nearest dwelling, Stapley Mill. In this proposal Chalet 1 would be 15 m away from the existing access track, 14 m from the adjacent road and 30m away from the nearest dwelling, Stapley Mill. Chalet 2 was located 61 m away from the existing access track, 70 m from the adjacent road and 81 m away from the nearest dwelling, Stapley Mill. In this proposal Chalet 2 would be 60 m away from the existing access track, 64 m from the adjacent road and 76 m away from the nearest dwelling. There would be planting between chalet 1 and 2 to reduce visibility between units and this would also reduce the impact of chalet 2 on the road and dwelling to the west and north of the site. A drainage swale (20 x 20 m) was proposed adjacent to the road. In this proposal the swale has been relocated. Its northern most tip would be within 10 m of the road but instead of running along the road it would now stretch southwards away from the road. The previous reedbed has now been reduced in size and moved approximately 5 m to the west. Finally the access track has been realigned and reduced in overall length from 115 m to 95 m.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY raise no objection subject to visibility splays and surfacing of the access. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST no objection. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY endorses the proposed surface water strategy and raises no objection subject to the provision of the swale and permeable stone track-ways being conditioned, views awaited.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposals have some local landscape impact but with careful management and enhancement of the boundary planting it should be possible to integrate the proposals into the local landscape. SPECIES OFFICER has been involved in negotiations over the siting views on proposals awaited. TOURISM OFFICER

comments on previous application: support the application, there is a current demand for more self-catering accommodation in this area. This accommodation should be independently inspected to ensure a high quality/standard of accommodation. Views on current application:- there is a demand for 5 bedroom self-catering accommodation in the Taunton Deane area therefore I would have no problem in supporting this application as other similar accommodation elsewhere in the Taunton Deane area has 5 bedrooms and is successful in letting out the rooms for tourism purposes. As with my initial support for the original application we recommend that the accommodation must be inspected independently to ensure a good quality product for visitors to the area. DRAINAGE OFFICER the Environment Agency should agree to the details.

PARISH COUNCIL raise objection - the working drawings for the chalet show an increase from three to five bedrooms, a 67% increase that would lead to increased traffic and congestion along narrow lanes causing increased pollution as well; the chalets have been turned approximately 45 degrees with no justification; unit 1 has moved considerable closer to Stapley Mill potentially increasing noise for the occupants; the access track and hard-standing areas have been expanded presumably for the increased traffic; there is no evidence of how the ecology will be improved in fact the increased traffic will probably have the opposite effect.

5 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- the additional accommodation would allow for a maximum of 20 people to accommodate the site at any time this is not small and un-obtrusive, a requirement for the policy for chalets within the Blackdown Hills AONB; the dictionary definition of a chalet is small dwelling, 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms on two floors is not small scale; there are few dwellings in the village of Stapley with 5 bedrooms and this is too many; the proposed increase in bedrooms almost doubles the capacity of the units which will not be small scale, modest or unobtrusive and will create additional light pollution, extra traffic, disturbance to wildlife; additional waste and demand for additional facilities; The upper floors would not be accessible by disabled persons; there could be up to 10 cars on the site at any one time causing pollution, noise and disturbance and likely to result in cars parking along the adjacent narrow country lanes; the number of residents would be out of proportion to the hamlet of Stapley; the developers are trying to maximise the level of accommodation having considered that additional chalets would be resisted; it is understood that there are sufficient holiday lets in the area with spare capacity; the proposals appear to represent the start of more significant plans to develop within an environmentally sensitive area and encroach upon the local habitat by stealth.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset And Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review policies STR6 (development in the open countryside), Policy 3 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), Policy 23 (Tourism development in the open countryside) and Policy 49 (Transport Requirements for new developments).

Taunton Deane Local Plan policies S1 (General requirements), S8 (Development outside of settlements), EC24 Static caravan sites and holiday chalet developments will only be permitted where the proposal: (A) would not harm the landscape and would be

adequately screened; (B) provides for access and turning by transporter lorries; (C) has good access to the main road network; and (D) is not situated in a floodplain or an area at high risk of flooding. Within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty only small-scale, unobtrusive developments will be permitted. EN10 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), EN5 (Protected Species), M4 (Residential parking).

ASSESSMENT

Planning permission granted in 1994 was for two 3 bedroomed chalets. This proposal would introduce a partial 1st floor providing an additional 2 bedrooms and a bathroom with new windows in the gable and a velux in the roof. Whilst this would increase the potential occupation of the chalets to 5 bedrooms the Tourism Officer perceives a needs for 5 bedroom accommodation in this area. The proposal is still for two holiday chalet units but these have been relocated to a site closer to the existing residential property, Stapley Mill. Chalet 1 would now be 30 m from Stapley Mill. The orientation of the unit would ensure that the front elevations, with large areas of glazing, would be facing south, away from Stapley Mill. The windows facing the existing dwelling would be on the rear and consist of two and three casements on the ground floor with a two casement window in the gable of the first floor. The proposal indicates that additional scrub, between Chalet 1 and Stapley Mill would be retained (and may be reinforced with additional planting within a landscaping scheme provided this is compatible with the dormice habitat). Chalet 2 has also moved closer to Stapley Mill but I consider that the distance would be too great to have a significant impact on Stapley Mill, indeed I consider that the proposed planting between units 1 and 2 would serve to lessen the visual impact of the dwelling from that previously permitted.

The relocation has been a result of negotiations between this Authority's species Officer and the applicants wildlife consultant and is based on the results of detailed wildlife survey work undertaken in March this year. Taking into account the swale and reed beds the relocation will reduce the spread of the site and the impact on the surrounding wildlife habitat. The landscape Officer has advised that whilst the proposals will have some impact on the local landscape, careful management and enhancement of the boundary area would allow the development to be integrated into the landscape of the area. I accept the potential increase occupation of the chalets would be likely to result in more activity and noise from the units but I do not consider that this would be significantly greater than the existing permission. Proposal considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, holiday accommodation only, landscaping scheme, details of the swale construction, its management and retention, details of the access and track construction, additional wildlife survey if work does not commence within 1 year, parking, management plan to enhance, conserve and monitor the mire and scrub areas, no site clearance or works between 1st March and 31st October, no additional windows. Notes re County Highway to be notified prior to the commencement of works to the highway, access track should

be permeable whilst retaining a bound surface, water and energy conservation, landscaping scheme for the enhancement of the existing boundary area with the road.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal represents small scale, unobtrusive holiday chalet development in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies EC24 and EN10

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: