

THE ASHGROVE CARE CO LTD

**ERECTION OF TWO STOREY EXTENSION, AND ALTERATIONS TO ACCESS AT ORCHARD PORTMAN NURSING HOME, ORCHARD PORTMAN, TAUNTON (REVISED SCHEME).**

2460/21820

FULL PERMISSION

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**PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for a substantial two storey extension to the north side of the existing nursing home to provide an additional 18 bedrooms and associated accommodation. The extension is two storeys in height and will link into the existing building. Materials are to be rendered walls with artificial slate to match existing. This application is an amended scheme to a permission granted by the committee on 1 August 2001 for a larger 26 bedroom extension.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY raise the issues of:- the site is located outside the development boundaries of Taunton, in an area accessed by unlit, narrow rural lanes, with no public transport provision; it is unlikely that any journeys will be made to the site other than by private motor car; existing access suffers from severely restricted visibility and the approach roads leading to the site are substandard in terms of width and alignment; junction between the road and the Staple Fitzpaine Road also suffers from poor visibility, with a history of accidents on the approach road to the site. Therefore refusal is recommended due to the reasons of: the site is situated outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has limited transport mode choices. The development would foster a growth in the need to travel, contrary to advice in PPG13, RPG10 and Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review; the increase in use made of the sub-standard junction of the approach road with the Staple Fitzpaine Road would be prejudicial to road safety; the approach roads by reason of their restricted width and poor alignment are considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development. In the event of permission being granted it is recommended that conditions be applied with regards to 40 m visibility on either side of the access, proper consolidation and surfacing of the widened access, and provision of the disposal of surface water. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY as far as we are aware there are limited or no archaeological implications to this proposal and we therefore have no objections on archaeological grounds. WESSEX WATER the developer should agree with Wessex Water, prior to commencement of any works on site, a connection onto Wessex Water infrastructure.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER extension is quite large but should sit in the proposed location quite well. Partly screened from the south and west by existing building and to the east by the existing belt of evergreens. Extension will be viewed from the road to the north and the properties on this road. New landscaping is required along this boundary,

especially as the building of the extension will result in the felling of several ash saplings, an elder, hazel and an established Berberis hedge.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

The policies that were considered when assessing this application included: Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review policies STR1 and STR6. Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policies S1 (General Requirements), S8 (Design) and H18 (Residential Care Homes). Policy STR1 of the Structure Plan states that "development should develop a pattern of land use and transport which minimises the length of journeys and the need to travel and maximise the potential for the use of public transport, cycling and walking." Policy STR6 states that "development outside towns, rural centres and villages [should not] foster growth in the need to travel." H18 of the TDLP Revised Deposit indicates that residential care homes will be permitted within walking distance of a range of community facilities provided that they are within the limits of a settlement and they involve the conversion of a building which meets the criteria in policy H9. It goes on to state in the explanatory text that nursing homes, where the level of care is significantly greater, and the residents independence consequently less, do not have the same locational requirements.

## **ASSESSMENT**

A planning permission was granted in August 2001 for a larger extension to this nursing home, with the same access as proposed in this application. The design and appearance of the extension is considered to be acceptable in relation to the existing building and its surrounding landscape. Although the nursing home is set in the open countryside and there are no local community facilities within the area, due to the care element the extension is considered not to conflict with policy H18. The extension will be visible from the road and dwellings to the north so it is recommended that landscaping and hedgerow planting be carried along the northern boundary of the site to screen the extension. The agent has indicated that there will be 5 additional staff needed per shift to care for the increased number of residents. This is estimated to increase the traffic flow to the site during the normal day to 10 vehicles. The extension and the addition of 18 bedrooms will lead to an increase in traffic generation to the site. Given the existing use of the site and the previous permission it is not considered that the increase in traffic is significant enough as to warrant a refusal of the application on highways grounds alone. The need to improve the access to the site by creating visibility splays needs to be weighted against the impact they will have on the visual appearance of this country lane, and the loss of hedgerow along the road. It is considered that the loss of the hedgerow along the road for the whole width of the site would have a detrimental affect on the visual appearance of the area. Although the visibility splays shown on the plan do not meet with County Highways recommended standards they are considered an acceptable balance between improving the existing access and the protection of the visual appearance of this rural country lane.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions of time limit, materials, landscaping of the northern boundary, visibility splays. Notes re health and safety, Wessex Water, fire safety measures, landscape officer, native hedgerow and surface water.

**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: