

MISCELLANEOUS ITEM

38/09/0359

KNIGHTSTONE

ERECTION OF 18 AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS WORKS, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING ON LAND AT 49 WORDSWORTH DRIVE, TAUNTON

BACKGROUND

The above application was considered by Members at Committee on 20th January 2010 and was granted subject to Section 106 agreement to secure leisure and recreation contributions and the decision was issued on 16th August 2010.

Condition 6 of the approval stated that:

The existing trees and hedge along the southern boundary of the site shall be retained and shall not be lopped, topped or removed without the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation of the local character and distinctiveness of the area and to safeguard amenity in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan policy S2.

An application has subsequently been submitted to address the requirements of condition 6. This follows a tree survey of the trees on the southern boundary which concludes that the trees are in poor structural condition and have a limited remaining life expectancy of less than 10 years. The applicant's intention is therefore to remove the trees/hedge concerned and replace with semi mature trees so as to provide a more instant effect which would in turn be visually attractive, enhance the development and surrounding buildings and provide all year round visual interest. This would avoid a health and safety issue with the existing trees. The new trees would also provide long term screening benefits as the life of the new trees will extend far beyond the short life expectancy of those existing.

A revised plan has been sought following neighbour consultations and the lack of evergreen species as part of the replacement planting. The Landscape Officer has advised on the revised planting scheme and is satisfied with the proposals which include Holly, Hornbeam and Scots Pine.

REPRESENTATIONS

The neighbours on land to the south in Parmin Close have been re-notified and there have been 3 letters of objection on the grounds of some windows

are closer than 20m and some of the trees are deciduous and would not provide a satisfactory screen during the winter months.

ASSESSMENT

The conclusion of the tree survey in terms of the structural condition and life expectancy of the trees is accepted by the Landscape Officer. The replacement of the trees therefore has to be considered in terms of whether it is better done now rather than later. Carrying the works out now will impact on the existing adjoining residents to the south in the short term. However, while there has been discussion over developing the site to the south there is no timescale for this and no action now could impact on the residents of the new flats given the safety issue of the existing trees. It is therefore considered that the replacement of the boundary trees now would be a better option.

The existing boundary is totally evergreen and the objections received are on the basis that the replacement trees are not of the same evergreen species and could give rise to overlooking issues in the winter time. The non evergreen is the hornbeam and this does retain leaves through the winter. On this basis it is considered that the impact on the communal space of the flats and the amenity of these properties to the south is an acceptable one.

RECOMMENDATION

The revised planting details to replace trees on the boundary in compliance with condition 6 be agreed.

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

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