

38/2006/068

C S WILLIAMS ( TAUNTON ) LTD

**ERECTION OF THREE STOREY BUILDING CONSISTING OF 14 NO. FLATS AT UPPER HIGH STREET, TAUNTON**

322680/124211

FULL

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**PROPOSAL**

The proposal is to erect a three storey building comprising 14 flats on this site at Upper High Street. There has been previous permission on this site for six dwellings in 2001 which involved a building of similar dimensions to that now proposed. The terrace design is proposed to be built in brick and slate to reflect the character of the majority of nearby traditional properties. This disused site is located between an office building and retail unit on the corner of High Street. To the rear lies the Government offices at Brendon House and the rear of 33 High Street. There is limited amenity space to the rear however the site is across the road from Vivary Park. The development includes bin and cycle storage designed into the building and 14 one bedroomed flats.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the location is a town centre site and therefore a development with no car parking is acceptable in principle. However I would expect secure, sheltered and easily use cycle parking for 14 cycles to be provided. The building is shown abutting the highway of Upper High Street and no doors should open over the highway and no windows within a height of 2.4 m above the footway level should open over the highway. I note the site currently contains a litter bin, Post Office cabinet and Traffic signal cabinet. The traffic signal cabinet has been in place for some time. To date it appears this matter has not been resolved. The construction of the development would result in the nearby puffin crossing becoming inoperative. Therefore until such time that agreement is reached over the relocation of the cabinet, together with agreement on timescale and costs it would be premature to grant planning permission. Consequently I recommend refusal for the following reason:- The layout of the proposed development would prejudice the continued use of the nearby puffin crossing. You should consult the Post Office and a licence would be required to re-site the litter bin on the highway.

2 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- 3 storey modern block opposite buildings of historic and architectural significance would be in poor taste and fly in the face of thoughtful planning; busy road and disturbance during construction, proximity to crossing and an accident waiting to happen; the adjacent buildings are two storey so erecting a 3 storey building here would be visually intrusive and out of keeping; given the interest in accentuating and preserving what remains of the town centre's historic features a proposal such as this merits firm rejection.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

RPG 10 – Regional Planning Guidance for the South West Policy EN3 – The Historic Environment, Policy EN4 – Quality in the Built Environment , Policy HO5 – Previously Developed Land and Buildings.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1- Sustainable Development, STR4 – Development in Towns, POLICY 11 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential, POLICY 14 – Archaeological Strategies, POLICY 33 – Provision for Housing, POLICY 49 – Transport Requirements of New Developments.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 – Design, H2 – Housing within Classified Settlements, C4 – Open Space Requirements, M4 – Residential Parking Requirements, EN23 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The site is currently vacant land last used for the display of advertisement hoardings. The site had been identified for residential use in the draft Local Plan and permission for 6 dwellings was granted permission in February 2001 (ref. 38/2000/131). The size and scale of the current development is similar to that previously approved which was considered suitable in relation to the adjacent buildings and those in the nearby Conservation Area.

It is not considered that the proposal requires car parking given its town centre location and the Highway Authority require adequate cycle parking which is to be provided within the ground floor of the building. Concern has been raised in relation to the control for the nearby signal crossing and it is considered a Grampian type condition be imposed in respect of alternative provision prior to construction.

The design of the building is considered acceptable and in keeping with the area as well as being of almost identical design to the previous permission. It is a high density but is of design that subject to conditions should blend in and enhance the character of the area. It is not considered that the proposal will cause a detrimental impact on the neighbouring properties in terms of light loss and amenity to warrant refusal. In many ways the development for flats rather than 6 three storey dwellings is more appropriate given the character of the area and the very limited amenity space available around the building. It may be seen as more incongruous for large dwellings to have no real private garden areas as opposed small one bed flats.

The site is in an area of high archaeological interest and a programme of works condition is considered necessary. The development is the use of a brownfield site in close proximity to the town centre facilities and it is considered that the scheme will lead to an improved view along one of the main roads in the town centre. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Subject to a Section 106 Agreement relating to provision of off-site play and recreation provision and no further representations raising new issues by 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, window design, window recess, cycle and bin storage, no development until alternative crossing control provided, archaeological programme of works, sample panel, door design, guttering, meter boxes, no further windows, combined aerial system, obscure glazing to east gable. Notes re Health & Safety, building over sewer, contact Wessex Water and County Archaeologist.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed development is considered acceptable and not to conflict with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, H2, C4 and EN23.

If the Section 106 Agreement is not completed by 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to REFUSE permission as contrary to Taunton Deane Local Pan Policy C4 or GRANT permission subject to an additional condition requiring the Section 106 agreement to be completed prior to commencement of the development.

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356398 MR G CLIFFORD**

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