

13/2005/004

W H G WARMINGTON ESQ

CHANGE OF USE OF VARIOUS BARNs TO INCLUDE CAFE/RESTAURANT, RETAIL, COMMUNITY HALL TO INCLUDE EXHIBITIONS, CONFERENCES, WEDDING RECEPTIONS AND CINEMA CLUB; MUSEUM/DISPLAYS OF WORKS OF ART AND OFFICE/CRAFT WORKSHOPS/A1 RETAIL, AT BARNs AT MANOR FARM, COTHELSTONE.

18253/31708

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to change the use of the existing barns to a range of uses, together with additional car parking to serve the new uses. The proposal includes the formation of a car parking area for 112 cars and raised beds for vegetables on the paddock on land opposite the redundant farm buildings. There is an existing access to the paddock and it is proposed to remove the existing hedgerow and some trees to allow for increased visibility.

Permission was granted in December 2001 for conversion of outbuildings to Offices and Community Hall and alteration to access, which include many of the buildings being used as offices with car parking for 36 vehicles amongst the buildings.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the site is on an unrestricted section of Cothelstone Road, there are no footpaths, the roads leading to the site are substandard in width and alignment; visibility splays would need to be 4.5 m x 120 m, those shown are substandard, a significant increase in numbers of vehicles using the road, suggest refusal on basis of sustainability and unsuitable access. If permission is recommended suggest conditions. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST no objections. WESSEX WATER no details of method of drainage and water supply, these to be addressed. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER recommends standards which will be discussed at Building Regulation's stage/British Standards. ENGLISH NATURE want to see the favourable conservation status for the local bat population, a mitigation plan will need to be prepared, concerned at the lack of emergence surveys. SOMERSET ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS CENTRE County wildlife sites around the application site.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER concerned at loss of existing hedgerow and trees, to meet highway requirements, impact of large car park on the rural landscape. May be possible to overcome, but a landscape scheme has not been submitted, so consider the car parking will have a detrimental impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (EN10) and landscape character of the area EN12. WILDLIFE OFFICER will need to develop

the site in respect of the bats, needs a condition of permission. A comprehensive landscape plan should take into account the presence of bats. DRAINAGE OFFICER no details on surface water or sewerage treatment works, these needed prior to consent. Environment Agency approval needed for consent to discharge. RIGHTS OF WAY no observations to make. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER support.

PARISH COUNCIL supports the application. However, the proposals indicate that substantial vehicular movements will be generated, not only throughout the working day but also evenings and week-ends, with the majority of traffic flowing through Bishops Lydeard. With the current and inherent restriction of parked vehicles along the narrow thoroughfare it is essential that the two authorities, SCC & TDBC should be aware of such consequences and assist alleviate the potential congestion through the allocation of adequate financial resources for the provision of improved parking facilities, preferably off-highway, and associated infrastructure development.

POLICY CONTEXT

Structure Plan - Transport requirements of new Development.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 General requirements, S2 Design, S7 developments outside settlements, EC6 Conversion of Rural Buildings, EC19 Farm Shops, EN3 Local Wildlife and Geological Interests, EN4 Wildlife in buildings to be converted or demolished, EN5 Protected Species, EN6 Protection of Trees, Woodlands Orchards and Hedgerows, EN10 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, EN12 Landscape Character Areas, EN17 Listed Buildings.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal for the alterations and change of use of buildings is acceptable in principle. However, there are important issues to be considered which relate to bats and the proposed car parking area. In respect of the protected species within the barns, English Nature is not satisfied that the information gathered is sufficient to give a considered view. The formation of the car parking area in the open field opposite the site is unacceptable and is considered to be incompatible with the sites location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal would also result in loss of hedgerow and trees with no landscape scheme to mitigate such a change. County Highways Authority has also advised refusal on the poor access, significant increase in traffic/sustainability and the inadequate visibility splays. The visibility splays shown on the plans are substandard, and thus to meet the highway's requirements, there would be even more impact on the rural character of the area. Thus it is considered that

although there is merit in the proposals in Listed Building terms, the potential adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and traffic generation outweighs such benefit.

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, if approved, will increase the reliance on the private motor car and foster a growth in the need to travel, contrary to advice given in PPG.13 and Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. (2) The approach roads, by reason of their restricted width and poor alignment are considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access for the additional volume of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development. (3) The proposed development would adversely affect the flows and safety of traffic as the site frontage is inadequate for the provision of adequate visibility splays in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Authority. Furthermore the required visibility splays would result in the loss of a hedgerow and trees to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area and street scene at this point. As such the proposal is contrary to Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, EN6 and EN12. (4) The site lies within The Quantocks Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it is considered that the proposal; for the car parking area, is contrary to policy EN10 of Taunton Deane Local Plan by reason of adverse visual impact. (5) The information submitted in respect of the wildlife survey is deficient in respect of summer emergence and swarming survey work, and without this information, there is insufficient information on which to base a considered decision in respect of the use of the barns by bats contrary to Policies EN3, EN4 and EN5 of Taunton Deane Local Plan. Note re you are advised to contact Officers in the Landscape Section of the Planning Department to discuss the wildlife/landscape reasons for refusal to ascertain whether the reasons for refusal can be overcome.

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: