

38/2006/078

GADD HOMES LIMITED

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF 14 APARTMENTS, INCLUDING NEW BUILD AND CONVERSION OF EXISTING DWELLING, WOODSTOCK HOUSE, 91 STAPLEGROVE ROAD, TAUNTON AS AMENDED BY LETTER DATED 10TH MARCH, 2006 WITH PLAN NOS. A2001 121 PL003B, 004B, 005B, 006B, 007B, 008B & 009B

322061/125203

FULL

PROPOSAL

The current proposal is for the conversion of the existing building, its extension and a new building to create 14 flats at Woodstock House, a former care home. This is a resubmission following the withdrawal of a previous application that involved the demolition of the existing building. The current application retains the existing house and converts it to 3 flats with the removal of the end section of the Woodstock Road elevation. The new build extension to the south follows the same ridgeline as Woodstock House and the profile of the new building on Woodstock Road has been re-designed as a half-hip to reduce the silhouette. The proposal is intended to respond to the scale, massing and architecture of the surrounding area and is reduced in profile by the utilisation of the roof void for the second store accommodation. The aim is to create a linear built form that relates to the surrounding semi-detached properties which in the main have a consistent Victorian and early twentieth century architectural style of brick elevations under duo-pitch slated roofs, with contrasting brick and stone detailing to break up the mass of the elevations. 14 parking spaces are provided as is cycle and bin storage with a gated entrance to a courtyard.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST no objections on archaeological grounds. WESSEX WATER the site is located in a sewered area with foul and surface water sewers. It is proposed to dispose of surface water to mains. It should be noted that the surface water should not be discharged to the foul sewer. Points of connection can be agreed at detailed design stage. Diversion or protection works may need to be agreed for the public combined sewer crossing the site. A condition or informative should be placed on any consent to protect the integrity of Wessex systems.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER my main concerns are the impact on the setting and amenity of the Tulip tree and impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Subject to protection of the tree during construction it should be possible to meet the requirements of BS5837, however I am concerned that it is a large growing tree that will cause concern to future residents. Given that I think a longer term management plan, eg. to limit its height, may be acceptable. The proposed development allows little opportunity for larger growing trees which are a characteristic of the conservation area. We require recommendations for the management of the tulip

tree longer term to maintain its existing height given the limited space. CONSERVATION OFFICER I have now considered the current application proposals, in the light of the history for the site and would offer the following comments: 1. Retention of the majority of Woodstock House is to be welcomed. 2. Demolition of single storey extensions, deemed acceptable. 3. Demolition of ½ of 2 storey off shoot onto Woodstock Road, deemed inappropriate. 4. New block facing Woodstock Road, excessive in scale/bulk, with inappropriate window proportions generally, incorporating dormers, hips and a shallow pitched “gable”, all of which are not characteristic of the CA. A new structure in this location, in principle acceptable but needs to be 2 storey, in order to respect adjacent buildings, be appropriate in the streets cene and provide a “step down”, between Nos. 3 - 5 Woodstock Road and Woodstock House. 5. I have very real concerns about the proposed extension to Woodstock House, facing Staplegrove Road. Not only is the structure large, it seeks to echo the original, rather than being subservient and in so doing, fills the gap in the street scene and is over powering in the context of it’s neighbour .In addition, Woodstock House, has quality detailing, which will never be re created, due to building regulations and modern, accepted methods of construction. Therefore any extension, no matter how carefully planned, in terms of materials, detailing etc. will always be seen as less than satisfactory, particularly if so prominent, as that proposed. In summary, I consider the proposals to be over development of the site, incorporating new buildings of excessive scale and inappropriate detailing, such that the proposal does not preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area but more importantly, would cause harm if approved. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER in accordance with the Local Plan Policy C4 provision for play and active recreation must be made. The site is within easy walking distance of French Weir Park for which a development plan has been developed with the local community which will increase and improve the play facilities within this vital open space. I would request a contribution of £1750 for each two bed + dwelling, a total of £21,000 towards children’s play. In addition to the contribution towards children’s play and in accordance with policy C4 a playing field contribution of £777 per dwelling, totalling £10,878 should be sought. This contribution is to be used to address the playing field needs in Taunton. I would also request in accordance with policy C6, which recognises the importance of sports centres in the population, that a built sports facility contribution of £8,700 to be used to address the needs of built sports facilities in Taunton. All of the Council’s built sports facilities and playing fields have a ‘town wide’ catchment.

10 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- development too great; 3 storey building excessive in height; not sympathetic to the street scene and will dominate existing homes; inadequate parking for 14 flats and visitors; will put existing residents’ parking zone under pressure; parking problem because of overdevelopment; disturbance during construction; traffic increase will put risk on junction with Staplegrove Road; insufficient landscaping; there is an overbuild of two bedroom flats; it will create an impossible parking situation in surrounding roads; it will not reduce parking; it will not enhance the conservation area and does not conform to the Local Plan or Parking Strategy as there is a potential for 56 cars to park in road; the junction has restricted views in both directions and the Increase in traffic could be a recipe for disaster; loss of light from new 3 storey building, too close to No.3 and will make maintenance difficult; this building is built close to pavement edge and does not comply with EN14 to preserve

or enhance the appearance or character of the conservation area; the approval of 3 residential units for the active elderly should not be replaced by current proposal.

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 9 – The Built Historic Environment, 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, EN6 – Protection of Trees, EN14 – Conservation Areas.

ASSESSMENT

The main considerations with the proposal are the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the conservation area, the design, the parking provision, highway safety, the amenity impact and the provision for off site play and open space.

The provision of 14 flats requires a contribution towards off site play and open space provision in compliance with policy C4 of the Local Plan. In accordance with standard provisions this equates to £777 per one bed unit and £2562 per two bed unit. This gives a total of £32,298 in line with policy. There is no requirement in policy terms for the provision of built sports facilities as part of new development and this cannot be considered as reasonable in relation to the proposal. Should Members consider the development to be acceptable then a Section 106 Agreement would be required to ensure that the required contribution was made.

The proposed new building projects 11 m in depth and approximately 1.5 m to the rear of number 3 Woodstock Road with a 2 m separation distance between the buildings on the western side. To the south the extension projects 11 m so that it lies 1 - 1.6 m off the southern boundary. The impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties given the orientation of the building and window positions is one that is considered acceptable in terms of light and overlooking. The amenity of the tree on the main road frontage is also considered important and the Landscape Officer has considered this carefully. The applicant considers that this tree can be retained as part of the scheme, however management of the tree longer term needs to be specified to ensure its height is maintained. A condition in relation to protection and future management would be required if other issues were considered acceptable.

The formal comments of the Highway Authority are awaited at the time of writing this report. The development makes provision for 14 off road parking spaces within the

site as well as cycle parking. This is considered to comply with the Local Plan policy M4 which allows for a maximum of 1.5 spaces per unit. In this instance the site lies just outside the central area and is considered in reasonable distance from the town centre. The proposal involves a reduction in the boundary wall at the front of Woodstock House and this should be conditioned as part of any approval granted on this site as should any necessary splay for any new access to Woodstock Road.

The proposal provides for 14 flats on this site by extending the built form to cover almost the whole of the frontages to both the west and south of the site. The character of the area involves a mix of properties but the larger detached ones are characterised by spacious settings particularly on corner sites. The Authority has informally resisted development to both sides of this property previously, although it has allowed a detached two storey building to the west for the active elderly. The current proposal provides a much larger new building on the western side which does not step down in terms of the street scene. The building has dormers half set into the roof which is not characteristic of the area and the hips and shallow pitched gables are considered out of keeping with the character of the conservation area. On the southern side the extension is not subservient and fills in the gap in the street frontage that is considered important by the Conservation Officer.

It is recognised that the Guidance from government in PPG3 and RPG10 seeks to make the best use of brownfield land and this is reflected in Local Plan policies, however such development must not be at the expense of both good design (as required by PPS1) and the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is considered to be an overdevelopment of the site incorporating new buildings of excessive scale that do not preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area but more importantly would cause harm if approved.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for reasons of the scale of the new built form is considered to be excessive and if allowed would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1(D), S2(A), H2(E)&(F) and EN14 and of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 9 and the scale and design of the new building to the west existing house would be out of keeping with the Conservation Area contrary to its character and Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1(D), S2(A), H2(F) and EN14 and Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 9.

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: