

38/2007/258

MR H F GUEST

CHANGE OF USE OF BUILDING TO DENTAL SURGERY AND LABORATORY AND ERECTION OF TWO STOREY EXTENSION AT 4 MOUNTFIELDS ROAD, TAUNTON AS AMENDED BY AGENTS LETTERS DATED 19TH JUNE, 2007 AND 11TH JULY, 2007 WITH ACCOMPANYING PLANS

323735/123456

FULL

PROPOSAL

No. 4 Mountfields Road is a semi-detached property which fronts Mountfields Road close to the west of the junction with South Road. The property is mainly two storey with a single storey flat roofed extension at the rear, and the premises are used as an existing newsagents/stationery shop and small kitchen at ground floor level, with 3 bedrooms and bathroom above.

It is proposed to demolish the single storey part at the rear(which projects 8.8 m behind the two storey house), and the projecting part of the ground floor kitchen at the side, and to erect a new two storey extension at the rear (extending 10.25 m). The extension would have a width of 4 m for most of its length, and a ridge height of some 8.5 m. (The existing dwelling has a height of 9 m.) The use of the whole building will then be changed to a dental surgery on both floors. This will include a reception area, 2 surgeries, 3 offices and ancillary facilities.

Materials for the proposed extension will be clay double roman tiles for the roof and white painted rendered walls, all to match the existing.

The area at the front of the property is surfaced and currently used for vehicle parking (approximately 3 spaces). The area alongside the building will be used for staff parking.

The agent states that the present dental premises are subject to a compulsory purchase order by Somerset County Council for a road widening scheme (Third Way) at Bridge Street, and there is therefore an overriding need to locate to suitable alternative premises. He considers that the loss of the present shop business will have little impact considering that there is a one-stop shop and a post office selling the same products within 50 yards. The shop owner has had the property on the market for over a year and has received no offers for the business. He was therefore going to shut the shop anyway. The paper round will be maintained by the current owner but from a different location. With regard to parking, the design has provided for at least 4 staff parking spaces at the side of the property and 3 spaces for patients in front of the property. Appointments to the surgery are timed and there can be 2 patients waiting, so 3 spaces are ample. Deliveries are by standard sprinter van at a frequency of about 1 per week. The rate of vehicle movement would be less than observed for the shop.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the proposal would provide extra parking at the side. Whilst this is end on it would not be suitable for visitors but would be a facility for persons working at the site. The existing car parking at the front would remain. It is unlikely that the proposed change would result in extra vehicular traffic to the site and given the location and proximity to public transport the proposed car parking provision is considered adequate. Consequently there is no highway objection.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND NATURE RESERVES OFFICER there is anecdotal evidence of bats in the area and the existing building does provide access under the eaves for crevice dwelling bats, such as pipistrelles, to roost. The site is close to tributaries of the Tone (Local Wildlife Site) as well as established gardens with good tree cover - both features that bats will use for hunting and navigation. Conclude, therefore, that it is reasonable to request a bat survey at this site to determine if bats will be affected by the proposals for a two storey extension. This is the optimum time for bat surveys and information should be submitted and considered as part of the determination process (PPS9). The existing tree is a conifer. It has been crown raised, leaving opportunities for bats to roost in the ends of broken branches. Recommend that an ecological consultant would be able to advise further when a bat survey is done. PLANNING POLICY no objection in principle. This property lies within the defined Mountfields local centre. Policy T25 seeks to retain and enhance the vitality and viability of local centres. Whilst the proposal results in a loss of a retail unit(newsagent), another property in the local centre also functions as a newsagent. In this instance, it would be hard to argue the proposal would adversely affect the viability and vitality of the centre and a dentists/health use would be a complementary facility to enhance the function of this centre.

LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM WARD MEMBER raising the following issues:- consider that the existing shop is central to the community of the local area, providing the obvious service of the shop, and that of a place to meet and socialise for local people, especially the elderly; the loss of the shop would alter the balance of this essential local shopping area and be detrimental to its survival; also has serious concerns about the amount of parking that this application would cause; the current shop has a lot of local trade, on foot, with car traffic at peak times; a dentist surgery would cause many more traffic movements all day, with a need for cars to be parked for prolonged periods; there would also be staff parking to be considered.

8 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- would not like to see the loss of the local shop - it is an important part of the local community selling local farm produce in addition to being a very friendly and comprehensive newsagent and would be greatly missed; concerned about the increase in traffic which a dental surgery will cause; congestion is made worse by the heavy duty traffic from Cutcliffe farm and the tractor business operating from there; also believe that Mountfields road is intended to be used as a cycle path from South Road to the footpath across the green wedge; concerned about the extra parking requirement. Local roads are all used daily to capacity for local shopping, Richard Huish students and town centre commuters; the plans show 5 spaces for the practice, but a successful practice would require more; any plan that will increase the

amount of parking in this vicinity should be regarded as unsuitable and against the best interests of local residents and existing businesses; concerned about the size of the proposed extension which would be inappropriate on such a small area of land; the extension would have a huge impact and be extremely overpowering to the next door property, and result in considerable loss of light and overlook the adjacent private gardens; suggest that the eaves and ridge levels are reduced in height to coincide with the eaves level on the adjoining veterinary practice as shown on the north west elevation.

POLICY CONTEXT

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies EC11 - (Local Service Provision within Taunton and Wellington), T25 - (Vitality and Viability of Defined Local Shopping Centres), S1 and S2 (General Requirements and Design), and EN4 and EN5 - (Wildlife and Protected Species).

ASSESSMENT

The main issues are the loss of the existing shop and replacement with a dental surgery.

The site is outside the Central Area but within an identified Local Shopping Centre (Mountfields Road). Policy T25 states that local shopping provision serves to complement facilities within the town centre by satisfying local day-to-day needs, and to minimise travel requirements. A local centre is defined as a small grouping of local facilities usually comprising a newsagent's, a general grocery store, a sub-post office and, occasionally, a pharmacy, a hairdresser and other small shops of local nature. Some local centres also contain a larger food store. Policy T25 will permit the change of use of existing local centre units to enable the introduction of a range of non-Class A1 uses, provided that they do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the local centre concerned. The other uses in the Mountfields Road local centre include a hairdresser, sub-post office, a butcher's shop, a one-stop shop, a car sales premises, and M.O.T. garage and a veterinary surgery. As there will still be a general store catering for daily needs, it is not considered that the retention of this shop is vital. Furthermore, a dental surgery is an acceptable use in a local centre.

The dental surgery will operate on an appointments system and the site can accommodate both patients and staff car parking.

The proposed extension will be on the rear of the property and will have no impact on the street scene. The other half of the pair (the veterinary surgery) has had a large, recent extension at the rear and will not be affected by this proposal. The main impact will be on the adjacent properties to the west and the north. The side wall of the extension is 2.6 m from the boundary and a two storey building will have a greater impact than the present flat-roofed single storey building, but it is not considered that it would dominate these properties to an unacceptable degree and the 2 windows at first floor level in the side elevation which serve a toilet and a landing can be obscure glazed. With regard to the dwelling to the north, the rear elevation of the two storey extension will be 7.8 m from the rear boundary. As

submitted, the plans showed 2 large windows serving the surgeries, which would overlook the private garden behind. The windows have been reduced in size and the first floor window will be obscure glazed with a fixed lower light. The Wildlife Officer has advised that a Bat Survey is required before planning permission is granted. This is currently being undertaken, and the results are awaited.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the submission of a satisfactory bat survey the Development Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, obscure glazing, parking, landscaping.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- It is considered that the proposed change of use will not have an unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of the local centre, and that the proposed extension will not give rise to an unacceptable visual and neighbour impact. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies EC11, T25, S1, S2, EN4 and EN5.

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: