

27/2005/019

MR A P HELLIER

FORMATION OF ACCESS AND REVISED SITING OF WORKSHOP TO THAT APPROVED BY APPLICATION 27/2002/018 AT LAND ADJACENT TO TAURUS MOTORS, HILLCOMMON, TAUNTON

14783/26087

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises the formation of vehicular access from the B3227 to land to the east of Taurus Motors that has a current but unimplemented permission reference 27/2002/018, for a workshop, parking area with access derived from within the Taurus Motors site. This application therefore seeks a separate access that consequently requires the repositioning of the workshop.

This proposal follows the withdrawal of application 27/2005/016 for a similar proposal that proposed access closer to the existing access at Taurus Motors. The proposed access is now some 50m away from the existing access in order to overcome the County Highway objection that the accesses would conflict as they were too close to each other. The County Highway Authority also objected to application 27/2005/016 as the proposal sought access from a County Route, i.e. the B3227, which is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset & Exmoor Structure Plan. Access from the B3227, a County Route is still proposed by this application.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the revised access will open the site considerably and there appears to be limited mitigation to offset the impacts. The landscape proposals are very sketchy at the side and rear of the property. Given the scale of the development and requirement for considerable mitigation I consider a formal landscape scheme should be produced to meet the above concerns.

COUNTY HIGHWAYS I refer you to my previous comments relating to application 27/2005/016 that equally apply to this application. These objections are as follows; that intensification of accesses and direct access to a County Route contrary to Policy 49 of the Structure Plan that would be prejudicial to highway safety and the proposed visibility splays are also insufficient.

PARISH COUNCIL no objections.

ONE LETTER OF OBJECTION has been received raising the following issues:- ripping out of established hedgerow to form new access where there is a perfectly useable access already; many plans have been put forward over the years, how long will it take for the planting of a new hedge to be established; previous plans were for residential

purposes; if these plans are accepted this would inevitably lead to the building of a new dwelling; the application forms state that no trees are to be felled however there are elder and hazel trees in the hedge; the forms also state that this proposal is not related to any other and that the scheme does not form part of a larger scheme but this is untrue; where is existing storage for waste oil etc as stated on the forms; this is a rural area and should be protected; is the existing premises registered with the Environment Agency for storage of waste oil and materials?

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor Structure Plan states that access should not be derived directly from a County Route for road safety reasons that is consistent with national planning advice on this matter set out in PPG13: Transport.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S1, general requirements, states that the appearance and character of any affected landscape, settlement, building or street scene should not be harmed as a result of the development. Policy S2, design, reiterates the importance of reinforcing the local character and distinctiveness of the area, including the landscape setting of the site and street scene. Policy EN6, Protection of trees and hedgerows, states that proposals that harm hedgerows of value to the area's landscape and character will not be permitted unless adequate provision is made for cover to compromise this loss.

ASSESSMENT

As mentioned in the earlier comments from the County Highway Authority the proposal is in direct conflict with Policy 49 of the Structure Plan as it derives access from a County Route. There is no overriding reason why the proposal should be granted contrary to Policy 49 and the access would appear to be prejudicial to highway safety due to the close proximity of the existing access.

The proposal also involves the loss of a section of hedgerow for visibility splay requirements that will substantially reduce the existing landscape mitigation for the site provided by the roadside hedgerow. This revised proposal requires an even greater amount of hedge to be removed to that previously applied for due to the extended visibility plays. The existing hedgerow currently abuts the highway that is a characteristic along this northern boundary to the B3227 along this stretch of road throughout Hillcommon. The latter would be replaced by a highly engineered street scene due to the required visibility splays and grassed areas some 15 m further back than the existing hedge. The loss of the hedge would therefore be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal incorporates 4.5 m x 60 m visibility splays however the Highway Authority would require 4.5 m x 90 m splays that would have an even greater detrimental affect (taken from previous County Highway Response). The Highway Authority has maintained their view that the proposal would result in the intensification of accesses along this length of the B3227 despite the increased distance

between the proposed and existing accesses. The proximity of the two accesses will therefore appear to create potential inconvenience and hazards to vehicular traffic.

Regarding the objections received, an application for residential permission has been refused on the site, (ref 27/2004/010) however the principle of the workshop has already been accepted by application 27/2002/018. Application 27/2002/018 for the workshop sought access from the existing access which was deemed acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED on the grounds that the proposed access and required visibility splay would result in the removal of a substantial section of hedgerow and formation of a highly engineered development to the detriment of the area's landscape, character, street scene and visual amenity and as such would be contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2 and EN12 and that the proposal seeks to derive direct access from a county route and no overriding special need has been substantiated for the proposed development on this specific site. As such the proposal is contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S1 and Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49.

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

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