

31/2006/021LB

THE PROPRIETORS OF RUISHTON COURT NURSING HOME

**ERECTION OF TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO PROVIDE 24 ADDITIONAL BEDS AT RUISHTON COURT NURSING HOME, HENLADE, RUISHTON (AMENDED DESCRIPTION)**

326134/124462

FULL

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**PROPOSAL**

The application site is located outside settlement limits for Taunton and is located directly to the south of the A358 from which vehicular access is also gained. The site is bound by open countryside to the east, south and west and by the A358 to the north.

The site consists of a relatively large, late Victorian, Grade 2 Listed country mansion with associated coach house set within relatively spacious grounds consisting of domestic curtilage, and adjoining paddocks. The building is currently used as a nursing home containing 30 beds.

The proposal involves the erection of a two storey extension to the rear of the Listed Building to provide 24 additional beds, a living room and dining room and the erection of 20 single storey close care homes which are detached from the Listed Building.

The proposed extension is located to the rear of the listed building and comprises of an L shaped two storey element linked to the listed building which steps down through a one and a half storey element to a single storey L shaped link. The extension projects a total of 32.5 m from the rear elevation of the listed building before turning through 90 degrees in an south westerly direction. Viewed from the south east (looking at the rear of the Listed Building) the extension measures 29.0 m in width (two storey element) with the addition of the single storey link measuring 7.5 m.

In terms of height the extension is stepped down from the existing listed building measuring 8.6 m to the ridge. The proposed materials re stated on the plans to match the existing (plain clay tiles, red bricks, timber windows and timber doors).

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

CONSERVATION OFFICER this proposal has not been appropriately justified and it is difficult for me to see how the impact this proposal would have on the listed building and its setting could possibly be justified in the terms required by PPG15. The character of this building is neatly defined as a moderately sized country mansion with gardens in a setting of fields/paddocks. The gardens and setting are here an essential component of the designed 'package' and with the house collectively define the character of the site. The identity of the site is still intact if use

itself has changed, though radical expansion of institutional use will have a devastating impact. The proposal will see the house marginalized and subordinated in a context approaching that of a themed holiday camp. In terms of size and massing the 'extension' (in effect a separate building) competes with the house while appearing a shrunken pastiche diluting the quality of its context. Architecturally speaking there is no logical historical foundation for this scheme. It fills a large chunk of the grounds and leads to sacrifice of an interesting (neglected) greenhouse. The close care units relate even less to context than the extension further destroying the grounds of the house and divorcing it from its broader landscape context.

PARISH COUNCIL object to the application; concern was expressed over additional traffic onto the A358, the proximity of the proposed park and ride and the size of the development.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

PPG15- The Historic Built Environment. Paragraph 3.3 of PPG15 states:- "While the listing of a building should not be seen as a bar to all future change, the starting point for the exercise of listed building control is the statutory requirement on local planning authorities to "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses" (S.16 Planning (LBCA) Act 1990). This reflects the great importance to society of protecting listed buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable and insensitive alteration and should be the prime consideration for authorities in determining an application for consent."

RPG10 now called the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and forms part of the adopted Development Plan. The South West Regional Assembly is currently preparing a revised RSS which is currently within its formal consultation period. The following policy are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:- Policy EN3- The Historic Environment.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. This document was adopted in April 2000 and thus predates the inclusion of the RSS as part of the Development Plan Documents and recent Government Guidance. The following policies however, remain relevant for this application:- Policy 9- The Built Historic Environment.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S1 - General Principles, S2 – Design, EN16 - Listed Buildings, EN17 - Changes to Listed Buildings.

Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan sets out general requirements for new developments. Policy S2 requires development to be of a good design. Policies EN16 and EN17 state that development that would harm a listed building, its setting or any features will not be permitted, in addition any extensions must be sufficiently limited in scale so as not to dominate the original building or adversely affect its appearance.

## **ASSESSMENT**

It is considered that the size of the proposed extension is excessive and will have a significant adverse impact on the character and setting of the listed building. The Conservation Officer objects to the scheme on the basis that the extension will compete with the existing listed building and that the 'shrunken pastiche' design of the extension will further dilute the quality of the listed building and its context.

As such the proposal would fail to meet the tests of the Local Plan Policies S1(D), S2(A) EN16 and EN17 and the advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be REFUSED for the reason that the proposed extension by reason of its design, form, style and excessive size and bulk will have an unacceptable dominating impact on the original listed building and will cause demonstrable harm to the character, age, appearance and setting of the listed building contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1(D), S2(A), EN17(A,C,D), EN16 and the advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356468 MR M HICKS**

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