

38/2004/244

STRONG VOX

ERECTION OF 37 DWELLINGS ON SITE OF FORMER SOUTH WEST EGG PACKERS FACTORY, ROMAN ROAD, TAUNTON AS AMENDED BY DRAWINGS ATTACHED TO AGENTS LETTER DATED 8TH JULY, 2004 AND AS AMPLIFIED BY AGENTS LETTER DATED 27TH JULY, 2004

24108/25006

OUTLINE APPLICATION

PROPOSAL

The site is located at the junction of Roman Road and Creechbarrow Road, adjacent to the Lidl food store. The site area covers 0.33 ha upon which there are currently buildings with a floorspace of 992 sq. m. Outline permission for residential development was refused in June 2002 for the following reason: "The proposal results in the loss of an important employment site. In light of a shortage of other available employment sites it is concluded that this loss outweighs any benefits resulting from a residential use. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EC6 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft". The current application is a full proposal for a high density residential scheme with terraces of dwelling around the site frontage, with a courtyard to the rear. Along the boundary with the Lidl store a three-storey apartment block is shown. This has been reduced from four-storey as originally submitted. Parking space is shown at a level of one space per dwelling. The applicant has submitted information from the selling agent suggesting a lack of sales interest for employment uses in the period leading up to the site's sale in March 2004.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY ARCHEOLOGIST no objection. WESSEX WATER the development is located within a sewered area, with both foul and surface water sewers available. The developer has proposed to dispose of surface water to an existing surface water sewer. In order to ascertain if there is sufficient capacity in the sewerage system, detailed flow calculations/discharge rates will need to be supplied by the developer. Attenuation of surface water flows may be required subject to flow calculations. Surface water should not be discharged to the foul sewers. It will be necessary for the developer to agree points of connection onto our systems, for the satisfactory disposal of foul flows and surface water flows generated by the proposal. The connection point can be agreed at the detailed design stage. Turning to water supply, there are water mains in the vicinity of the proposal. Again, connection points can be agreed at the design stage to accommodate an arrangement for the satisfactory supply of water. It is recommended that the developer should agree with Wessex Water, prior to the commencement of any works on site, a point of connection onto Wessex systems. POLICE ARCHITECTURAL LIAISON OFFICER I have studied the above planning application and would raise the following concerns:- I appreciate the reasons for the proposed gated entrance. However, unless the gates are electrically operated and controlled either remotely or by coded/swipe card operation I have concerns over personal safety of those persons using the entrance. In reality, I believe that if it is necessary to get out of the vehicle to

open and close the gates, they will remain open at all times. The proposed planting within the development should be completed giving consideration to not preventing natural surveillance of the parking areas, entrances and footpaths. I also have some concerns regarding the rear parking area. There appears to be very limited opportunity for natural surveillance from plots 9,10 or the end elevation of the apartment block.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposals provide little or no landscape amenity to their surroundings and would be very stark especially with the brick boundary wall. There is scope for landscape softening but it would be difficult to have any significant effect without reducing the number of units. PLANNING POLICY the site is a former employment use in a primarily residential area. Policy EC6 would apply, resisting the loss of employment land, unless the proposals outweigh the disadvantages. On the basis that viability of employment retention on this site has been thoroughly tested and unlikely to be secured, a residential use would be sustainable in this location, being in proximity to local shops and bus routes into the nearby town centre and local employment opportunities. The scale of the proposal would warrant the provision of affordable housing (under policy HI 2) and play provision (policy C4).

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH no objection. HOUSING OFFICER would support a residential development on this site. We would require 30% of total numbers. This is a prime site on the edge of a local authority housing estate and close to local amenities and bus route. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER whilst we would normally expect on site provision with a development of this size, we will agree to an off site contribution for local improvements to recreational facilities. Our recent green spaces investigation has shown Hamilton Gault Park to require much need improvement. We would therefore request a contribution of £806.00 per each of the 22 x 1 bed dwellings and £2,056.00 per each of the 22 x 2 bed dwellings, giving a total off site contribution of £62,964.00 in line with Local Plan Policy.

A letter has been received from the Manager of the adjacent Six Acres Resource Centre raising the following concerns: height of apartment block, density, impact on road safety, inadequate parking. (These comment were received before submission of the drawings reducing the height of the apartment block). A letter has been received from Exmoor Plastics Ltd objecting to the proposal on the grounds that they wished to purchase the site in October 2003 but were thwarted in their attempts by the selling agent who advised that it was already under offer and attach evidence to that effect. The claim that they have been seeking land for employment use, which they could purchase throughout Taunton Deane since September 2003. There is none suitable other than this site.

POLICY CONTEXT

Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy H1 - Housing development will be permitted within defined limits of settlements, provided that: (A) there is safe and convenient access by or on foot to facilities and employment. In the case of proposals of a significant scale, bus or walking access to a town centre or rural centre will be required, taking account of any off-site works proposed in accordance with criteria (B); (B) necessary provision is made for off-site public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities and highway improvements to cater safely for the expected number of trips generated by the development and minimise the proportion of car trips; (C) traffic calming, pedestrian, cycle and bus measures are incorporated where necessary to give

priority to safe and convenient access and circulation by means other than the car; (E) the layout allows people with impaired mobility or a disability safe and convenient access and movement to and between dwellings by careful positioning of potential obstructions, ramps, dropped kerbs, textured surfaces and reserved car parking; (G) small scale schemes in existing residential areas will increase the development density of these areas without individually or cumulatively eroding their character or residential amenity; (H) a coherent approach to the overall design is adopted, including layout, landscaping, building designs, materials, open spaces and circulation routes, to create locally distinctive developments well related to their surroundings; and (I) existing and proposed dwellings will enjoy adequate privacy and sunlight. Policy EC6 - Proposals which lead to the loss of existing or identified business, industrial or warehousing land to other uses, including retailing, will not be permitted unless the overall benefit of the proposal outweighs the disadvantages of the loss of employment or potential employment on the site.

ASSESSMENT

The site is located within the urban area, where in accordance with Policy H1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan there is normally a presumption in favour of the principle residential development. The scheme proposed is a high density urban scheme and whilst the opportunities for landscaping are limited, the urban design approach chosen comprising terraces wrapping around the site frontage is considered an appropriate one. Three-storey development is also considered acceptable away from the road frontage. The applicant has confirmed that the gated access will be electronically controlled which overcomes concerns raised by the Police Architectural Liaison Officer. The determining factor in this case is therefore the application of Policy EC6. The applicants claim that they marketed the site over an extended period and did not receive a viable offer for employment uses. However, this conflicts directly with the representations received from the local company who state that they wished to purchase the site, but their efforts were thwarted. In refusing the earlier application one decision notice contained a note suggesting that if the applicant could provide convincing evidence of lack of interest, the local planning authority may be willing to reconsider its decision. The evidence now available clearly demonstrated that the site was effectively taken off the market in October 2003 before being sold to a residential developer in March 2004. The only evidence as to whether there is potential interest in the site for employment use at the present time is therefore that provided by Exmoor Plastics. Their evidence supports the Council's view that there is a desperate shortage of this type of employment land in Taunton and that this site should remain available for employment use. The conclusion must therefore be that the overall benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the disadvantages of the loss of potential employment on the site. and that permission should therefore be refused in accordance with Policy EC6.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the reason that the proposal results in the loss of an important employment site. In light of a shortage of other available employment sites it is concluded that this loss outweighs any benefits resulting from a residential use. The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied on the basis of the information submitted that the site could not now be a successfully marketed for employment use. The proposal is therefore contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy EC6.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: 356464 MR T BURTON

NOTES: