

38/2004/441

BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY

**DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF TWO AND TWO AND A HALF STOREY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (10 X 2 BEDROOMED FLATS) AT BRITISH RED CROSS CENTRE, WILTON STREET, TAUNTON.**

22297/24037

FULL PERMISSION

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**PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing single storey buildings that form the offices of the British Red Cross Society and the erection of a block of flats providing 10 two bedroom flats. The site is elevated above Wilton Street with an existing access approximately midway along the site frontage. The proposal would be for a two and three storey development (the third storey being partially within the roof of the building) fronting onto Wilton Street with a lower (two storey) off shoot to the rear. The main block would be 10 m wide with the rear block only 6 m wide and constructed with brick walls and natural slate roof. The site access would be repositioned further to the south of the site to provide a greater distance from the existing junction of Wilton Street with Vivary Road. The new access would go through an arch in the ground floor of the building and lead to 10 parking spaces to be provided to the rear.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY COUNTY no objection in principle to the proposed development. In detail, however, the site has a restricted frontage with its access at present centrally located thereby benefiting from visibility equally across the plot frontage. The proposed development seeks to move the access towards the left-hand end of the plot when viewed from the road, this will cut down visibility in the more important direction. Visibility is also masked by parked cars. Consequently, I would suggest that the Applicants look again at the proposal and see if there is any possibility of maintaining access at its current central location which in my view is far better than that proposed. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST no objections. WESSEX WATER no objection, a public sewer is close to this site, mains water and foul water drains are available. There are no separate surface water drains available and the applicant should investigate alternative methods of disposal i.e. soakaways. AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY views awaited.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to a suitable landscaping scheme the proposal can be integrated into the local street scene. CONSERVATION OFFICER views awaited. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER a noise condition during construction is suggested Monday to Friday 08.00 - 18.00, Saturday 08.00 - 13.00. All other times no noisy working. LEISURE AND RECREATION OFFICER contributions to local recreational facilities should be made.

4 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- overdevelopment of the site; out of keeping with the area; the existing facilities are

needed for local organisations to use (such as the Bridge Club) and there are no other facilities in the area; too high as elevated ground level and three storeys above; 10 parking spaces are insufficient and on street parking is already in high demand; the gardens at 2 and 2a Wilton Street will be totally overlooked and the height of the development site will make this worse; the development should be at street level in keeping with the adjacent dwellings and character of the area.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review The following policies are considered to be specially relevant:- STR1, STR2, STR4 and Policy 49. Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit The following policies are considered to be relevant :- Policy S1 criteria (A), (D), and (E). Policy S2 Development must be of a good design. Its scale, density, height, massing, layout, landscaping, colour, materials and access arrangements will be assessed to ensure that the proposal will, where reasonable and feasible: (A) reinforce the local character and distinctiveness of the area, including the landscape setting of the site and any settlement, street scene and building involved; (G) include facilities to encourage recycling. Policy H1 Housing development will be permitted within defined limits of settlements, provided that: (A) there is safe and convenient access by bus 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; (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 H4a .

## **ASSESSMENT**

The site is located within the settlement limit of Taunton where the development plan supports residential development. In considering the details of any such proposals the Taunton Local Plan requires new development to respect the character and form of existing areas . The proposed scheme is located within an existing residential area characterised by individual dwelling houses rather than flats and this has resulted in a street scene characterised by buildings with a smaller size and form than that proposed. I am concerned that the proposal's bulkier form, with the resultant expanse of shallow pitched roof, would detract from and dominate the character of the area. I am also concerned that the proposed three storey element, fronting Wilton Street, would be taller than the existing dwellings and out of character with the area and that the design

would produce an unbalanced front elevation. In addition the flats would be located within close proximity with 9 Wilton Street, providing only 15 m window to window distance and I consider that this would be detrimental to the residential amenity of the occupants. The northern elevation of the flats would be only 8 m from the side garden of 2a Wilton Street and I am concerned that the existing scheme would also have a detrimental impact on that property. I have requested additional information from and a meeting with the agent to discuss the matter further but in the absence of either I conclude that the proposal would be unacceptable.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be REFUSED for the reasons of lack of information, poor design with a mass and form out of keeping with and detrimental to the area, detrimental impact on the residential amenity of adjacent occupants, unacceptable surface water drainage details.

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356467 MRS J MOORE**

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