

38/2006/316

SUMMERFIELD DEVELOPMENTS LTD

**ERECTION OF 22 NO. 1 BEDROOMED FLATS, CYCLE AND BIN STORES AT NOS. 5 & 7 COMPASS HILL, TAUNTON AS AMPLIFIED BY LETTER DATED 15TH AUGUST, 2006 AND DRAWING NO. 05.32.22 AND LETTER DATED 24TH AUGUST, 2006 AND DRAWING NO. 05/32/15C**

322251/124277

RESERVED MATTERS

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## **PROPOSAL**

The application is a detailed submission of reserved matters for 22 one bedroomed flats following the granting of outline permission in March this year. The site is in a town centre location where no parking provision is proposed and service access is proposed in line with the previous outline. There are a number of 3 storey developments in the area and the proposal has a similar ridge height to the existing dwellings on the site. The form of the development follows the alignment of Compass Hill with a link at first and second floor level and turns the corner on the northern side of the site to avoid an unsatisfactory juxtaposition of the forms between existing and proposed properties. The scheme follows the refusal of proposal for 24 flats and has been revised to lower the element of the building at the rear adjacent to Dovetail Court to two storey.

## **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY I refer to my colleague's letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> October in connection with application 38/2005/356 and my letter of 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 in connection with application 38/2006/113. I would advise that these comments apply equally to the current application i.e. Planning Officer will be aware of my comments made on the previous application 38/05/227 when I raised no objection in principle to a proposal for a vehicle access free development. This was so that there should be no significant increase in traffic movements on and off the highway at a point where traffic volumes are high and excess manoeuvring would create significant highway hazards. This proved controversial as it would have meant vehicles parking on the highway to load and unload, possibly causing greater problems. The application has since been withdrawn. Meetings have taken place with the developer and the present proposal has evolved which proposes a delivery only access, strictly controlled to prevent long term parking and misuse. Whilst this will generate additional traffic movements onto Compass Hill, they will be few, and it is considered that if in all other respects the development is appropriate in this location, then it would be unreasonable to raise a highway objection to the development, subject to suitable conditions being attached to any consent which may be granted to secure the widening of Compass Hill to allow additional manoeuvring space and lane width through the narrowest area such as those shown on Drawing No. 05/32/02. The construction of dwellings on this site will also be a complicated issue and traffic management must be undertaken with immense care. The developer will therefore be required to enter into a Section 278 or Section 106 Agreement with the Highway

Authority to secure the design, construction and funding of the road widening and replacement of the roadside footway together with an agreed traffic management programme that works both for the highway alterations and the construction of the development on site in so far as that affects the public highway. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST there are limited or no implications to this proposal and we therefore have no objections on archaeological grounds. WESSEX WATER: The development is located in a foul sewer area. It will be necessary for the developer to agree a point of connection at detailed design stage. The developer has proposed to dispose of water to 'existing surface water sewer'. As there are no existing public/separate surface water sewers in the vicinity it is advised the developer investigate alternative methods for satisfactory surface water disposal, e.g. soakaways. Surface water should not be discharged to the foul sewer. Your Council should be satisfied with any suitable arrangement. There may be a sewer crossing the site that by virtue of its age could be deemed a public sewer. Wessex is currently reviewing available data on these sewers. Public sewerage apparatus is covered by statutory easement and no new building works will normally be allowed within a minimum of 3 m. It should be noted that there is a private combined sewer crossing the site, although this is not Wessex Water responsibility. The developer should agree a point of connection prior to commencement on site. TAUNTON CIVIC SOCIETY given the design follows the lead given in the decision letter conveying the refusal and reduces the height of the building adjacent to Dovetail Court we expect this application to succeed. We are pleased to see the overall massing of the block has been somewhat reduced. The Conservation Officer's response to the previous application was quite a strong objection to the stylistic elements and to the materials used, and we realise we should have also objected to this latter aspect. We see no justification to the objectionable use of timber cladding for the top floor of the three storey parts of the building and consider this would be completely out of place. While we accept the argument that render will lighten the inner courtyard face of the buildings we do not see why it is desirable for the Compass Hill face. There we would prefer it to conform to the general finish of the existing buildings and those on the corner of Park Street i.e.. brickwork. (we would not agree that the buildings on Cann Street constitute an argument for render finish on Compass Hill – they are quite clearly a separate entity). It is arguable that the roofing material should be natural slate as at least over a period of time blue fibre cement slates will not match that of any older buildings in the vicinity. Our view is that if a substantial variation of the finish could be obtained this would be a much more acceptable building.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER there is scope for additional tree planting within the site. I suggest ginkgo biloba or more exotic species rather than betula pendula. Details of the shrub planting need to be more precise with numbers and sizes of plants. All shrub beds should be prepared to at least 500 mm deep and bark mulched to 100 mm depth.

16 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- access onto Compass Hill, chaos on main road, danger to traffic and risk of accidents, access should be pedestrian only; flats without parking should not be allowed, residents will need parking; will increase dangerous traffic load and congestion at peak times, in light of this and development opposite it should be refused; health and safety risks to road users, pedestrians and cyclists, road safety must be prime consideration; pressure on dated sewer and drainage system;

overlooking; loss of light; privacy and amenity; loss of local greenery; bin stores will attract rats and pests; where will the refuse lorry park?; insufficient cycle parking; increase in noise; increase in crime and disorder unless build follows advice of the Police; increase in pollution, flats too close to building and will put pressure on retaining wall.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

RPG10 – Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, Policy EN4 – Quality in the Built Environment, Policy HO5 – Previously Developed Land and Buildings.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 – Sustainable Development, STR4 – Development in Towns, Policy 9 – The Built Historic Environment, Policy 33 – Provision For Housing, Policy 39 – Transport and Development, Policy 48 – Access and Parking, Policy 49 – Transport Requirements of New Developments.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 – Design, H2 – Housing within Classified Settlements, H4 – Self-Contained Accommodation, M4 – Residential Parking Requirements, EN6 – Protection of Trees, Woodlands, Orchards and Hedgerows, EN14 – Conservation Areas.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The proposal is for a two and three story development to provide 22 one bedroomed flats on this site that lies within the central area of Taunton that previously has had outline permission. The main consideration with the current scheme is the design, materials and impact on the adjoining properties.

The proposal has been designed as a terrace of two and three storey development progressing down Cann Street and returning across the north of the site to provide an enclosed courtyard area. The proposed plan has two storeys at the Cann Street end of the Compass Hill frontage stepping up to three storey. The rear of the site backing onto Dovetail Court has also been amended from the previous refusal back to two storey and this is not considered to have a significant adverse impact on neighbours in Dovetail Court. The new building is set 10m away from the existing flats to the north with windows, a reduction in 1 m over the existing situation, while the northern two storey section is just over 2 m from the boundary at the closest point. To the south the building lies 2 - 2.5 m from the boundary with Cann Street properties and varies from 7 to 10 m from the rear of the dwellings while being set down into the site. The proposed windows on the east and southeast gable ends and the stairwells are to be fixed and obscure glazed and the window to plot 18 facing north east is to be obscure glazed and limited opening. The development will have an impact on adjoining properties but the design and conditions are considered to provide an acceptable development.

The hipped roof design is considered to be in keeping with the character of the area and the materials are intended to be brickwork and render. The applicant has been asked to revise the roof materials to provide natural slate not fibre cement and confirmation of this is awaited. The mass of the building is large as it steps down the

hill, however this is broken up by the design with the entrance feature and materials with the mix of render and brick. The material change with natural slate addresses a concern of the Civic Society. Terraced properties are characteristic of the area and on balance the impact of the development is considered to be an acceptable one.

The issue of access and parking has been raised by objectors. The site was considered at outline stage to be one within the town's central area and suitable for a car free development. The Highway Authority agreed that a service access was to be provided in conjunction with a marginal widening of the road and the access and frontage was designed on this basis. The access now proposed is in line with this outline approval. Both bicycle storage and bin storage is provided within the site. Provision of access controls over nearby private car parks is suggested by an objector as part of any approval. However, this cannot be conditioned on a reserved matters application and in any case is not considered reasonable. If the applicant was willing to provide this, then this would have to be considered as a private matter between the parties concerned subject to any necessary planning permission. The foul drainage proposed is considered acceptable by Wessex Water and existing services running through the site would need to be protected by the developer.

In summary the design is considered one that makes best use of a brownfield site in this town centre location. It provides 22 one bedroomed units in a terraced design with associated bin and cycle storage. The impact of the proposal upon adjacent properties is considered to be to an acceptable one and the application is therefore recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of materials, fixed and obscure glazing of eastern side elevations, north east window to plot 18 to be obscure glazed and limited opening, windows recessed. Notes re compliance with outline conditions, meeting secure by design and attention drawn to Section 106 Agreement relating to the site.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:-** The proposal is considered to be an appropriate redevelopment and to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan policies S1, S2 and H2 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356398 MR G CLIFFORD**

NOTES:

