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RAGLAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ERECTION OF TWO STOREY BUILDING TO INCORPORATE 2 NO. ONE BEDROOM UNITS AND 2 NO. TWO BEDROOM UNITS AT LAND ADJACENT TO HUMPHREYS ROAD, WELLINGTON

314481/121013

FULL

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of a two storey building to provide 2 No. one bedroom units and 2 No. two bedroom units. The application site consists of part of an existing communal amenity and garage court area on land adjacent to Humphreys Road, within the settlement limits of Wellington. The site is well related to the facilities and services of Wellington Town Centre. The application site is currently owned by the Council's Housing Department and the land would be transferred to Raglan Housing Association to provide affordable housing for a nominal fee.

A Design and Access statement accompanies the application. The development would take the form of a contemporary design style and proposes to incorporate sustainable measures in its construction and design, including measures such as the orientation of the main glazing elements. The development would take the form of a single two storey block with a mid link section to break up the bulk of the building, providing the internal staircase to the two bedroom units which would be positioned at first floor level and also utilises the roof space to provide the second bedroom. The building features a traditional pitched roof. The proposed materials are to be a combination of cedar cladding and render. Roofs are to be tiled. The scheme provides for six parking spaces.

A previous similar application earlier this year was withdrawn prior to determination.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objection in principle. Access to the parking area will be via the existing garage court access, from/onto Humphreys Road. Vehicular and pedestrian visibility where the private access meets the public highway is satisfactory due to the width of the grass verge and adjoining footway. It is not clear as to where bin storage will be located. Wheelie bin storage should be located not more than 9.0 m and non-wheelie bins not more than 25.0 m from the public highway on which the refuse vehicles utilise as part of their collections. Given that adequate parking is provided utilising an existing access, I would not wish to raise a highway objection. Should the Local Planning Officer consider it a reasonable request and in the interests of sustainable transport objectives it is recommended that a covered cycle facility be provided within the site. WESSEX WATER the development is located within a foul sewer area and the developer will need to agree points of connection. It should be noted that there is a private sewer crossing

the site, although this is not Wessex Waters responsibility. The developer has not disclosed on how they propose to dispose of surface water flow. As there are no existing public/separate surface water sewers in the vicinity of the site, it is advised that the developer investigate alternative methods for the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site (e.g. soakaways). Surface water should not be discharged to the foul sewer. With respect to water supply, there are water mains within the vicinity and connection can be agreed at the design stage.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to suitable landscaping it should be possible to integrate the proposals into the local landscape. HOUSING OFFICER supports the application. These flats are to be developed on Housing land and will go some way towards the provision of homes for those in need in Wellington. All these homes will be for Affordable Housing and therefore I reiterate my support. LEISURE SERVICES OFFICER the loss of amenity space is regrettable but it appears this will be compensated for within the development with a landscape scheme. The land is not recreational public open space therefore no compensation is required.

TOWN COUNCIL the views of the Town Council have been deferred. Members will be updated of any further response received by the Town Council.

5 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- development would be against the wishes of the local community and the public consultations that have taken place; loss of play area not compensated for by the proposed enhancement of the remaining small area; there would be likely to be additional children from this development and the loss of the play area would see children play on the roads which would have increased traffic, create social problems and increase risk of accidents; design and access statement paints a false picture; tarmac area in front of the garages is used by children; proposal is more three storey than two and higher than existing dwellings; building would be alien in its setting; loss of daylight to properties (including No. 43); loss of privacy; building on top of existing sewer pipes which Wessex Water state is not their responsibility; who is responsible for this sewer pipe?; concern over excavations during construction work on boundary wall; why are you ignoring the previous petitions with regard to this site; additional development will put pressure on existing services and may result to blocking of drains; Council only interested as the development would mean they would no longer be responsible for the upkeep of the area, remove four names off the housing list and receive £1 into the bargain.

POLICY CONTEXT

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) , PPS3 (Housing), PPG13 (Transport).

Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR4 (Development in Towns), Policy 33 (Provision of Housing), Policy 35 (Affordable Housing), Policy 48 (Access and Parking).

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), H2 (Housing in Settlements), H9 (Affordable Housing Within General Market Housing), H10 (Indicative Targets For Affordable Housing), M4 (Residential Parking Requirements), C4 (Open Space Requirements).

ASSESSMENT

It is considered the main issues for determination relate to the provision of affordable housing; impact upon the character and appearance of the locality; impact upon residential amenity; loss of amenity land and highway safety.

As previously mentioned, the site is currently under the ownership of the Council's Housing Department. The proposed application is submitted on behalf of Raglan Housing Association as perspective purchasers. The Taunton Deane Local Plan defines affordable housing as housing that is provided, with subsidy, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes. The Borough Council is strongly committed to the provision of affordable housing as a corporate priority. The Local Plan policies reflect this commitment by seeking to meet as much of the housing need as feasible through the planning role. The Housing Officer supports the proposal, which would help to provide an additional four units of affordable housing.

The character of the area is of two storey residential properties. The properties in the immediate locality to the site are positioned around the existing amenity space, which is predominantly hard surfaced and not considered to be of high quality in its design and appearance. The proposed development is considered to be of an innovative design which whilst not identical in its appearance with adjacent properties, is of a compatible scale and form. The proposed materials would add visual interest and provide a well designed contemporary form of development.

The concerns of local residents in respect of privacy and loss of amenity are noted. However, it is considered that given the proposed siting of the building and the existing separation distances between elevations the proposal would not give rise to any undue loss of privacy, or appear out of character with the residential layout of the area in an urban setting. It is accepted that the development would have an impact upon the dwelling to the south east. There is a distance of 1.1 m between the respective side elevations and the proposed dwelling would project beyond the existing building line. However, on balance it is considered that by reason of the proposed development being positioned at an oblique angle and stepped in from the boundary of No. 13 and by reason of its orientation the proposal would not give rise to any overshadowing or loss of light or result in such a loss of outlook as to harmful or unduly impinge upon the residential amenity of its occupiers as to substantiate the refusal of the scheme. In addition there are no side windows in the flank wall of the existing property at No.13. However, it is recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure the windows on the side elevation at first floor level are obscure and retained as such. With regard to the development to the north, the proposal would be side on and there would be a distance of 9.0 m between the rear elevation of No. 43 and the proposed side elevation of the application dwelling. Whilst the proposal would have an impact upon existing residents it is considered that the proposal on balance would not constitute any undue loss of privacy or outlook as to substantiate a refusal of the scheme on these grounds.

As part of the overall scheme the development seeks to redesign the remaining amenity space to provide an improved design layout to include seating and additional landscaping features to provide a more defined and enclosed space. In addition the proposed units of accommodation will allow passive overlooking of the amenity space to increase security. The loss of part of the amenity area must be balanced against the provision of affordable housing on this site and the redesign of this space to provide a sense of place.

To conclude, careful consideration has been given to the nature of the site, amenities of local residents and the character and appearance of the area. The development of this site within settlement limits is promoted by national guidance and the development plan commensurate with environmental considerations. Whilst any loss of amenity land is regrettable, it is considered the proposed scheme would provide much needed affordable housing, adding to the mix of development in the locality, and as such considerable weight has been given to this objective. In addition it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable and would provide a positive design response to its context and would upgrade the remaining amenity land to provide a softer and improved quality of public space.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, drainage, parking spaces, materials, meter boxes, details of walls/fences, removal of PD rights for extensions only, obscure glazing, remove PD rights for windows, details of lighting, details of cycle/bin storage and landscaping.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed development is considered to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, H2, M4, H9, H10 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.

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NOTES: