

33/2006/002

MR AND MRS I EVANS

ERECTION OF 6 UNITS OF HOLIDAY LET ACCOMMODATION AND ASSOCIATED STABLING ON LAND ADJACENT TO THE GREYHOUND INN, STAPLE FITZPAINE

326457/118410

FULL

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to erect 6 self-contained 2 bedroomed units of holiday accommodation on land to the rear of the Greyhound Inn. The accommodation will be in two blocks, one a two storey pair of semis of permanent construction and the other a single storey block. Ten dedicated parking spaces are proposed within a defined hardstanding area separated off from the public house. The accommodation is intended to serve demands of the racing and polo fraternity in the area.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the proposed development site is remote from any urban area and therefore distant from adequate services and facilities and public transport services are infrequent. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice. It must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether the use of the site and/or any other overriding planning need, outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car. In detail, the site is accessed from a classified unnumbered highway, and will utilise an existing access, which will be altered to continue to serve the public house and the traffic resulting from the proposed development. Visibility at the point of the existing access is currently restricted by roadside trees and hedges and in the interests of highway safety for all road users, it is imperative that adequate visibility is provided to serve the development being proposed and the increase in traffic resulting from the use. I would therefore seek the inclusion of visibility splays based on co-ordinates of 2 m back and parallel along the frontage to the west and 2 m x 90 m to the east. Unless the improvements outlined above can be made, (this should be demonstrated on a amended plan), I would recommend that this application is refused on highway grounds for the following reason:- The increased use of the existing substandard access, which does not incorporate the necessary visibility splays, such as would result from the proposed development, would be prejudicial to road safety. As a consequence, the proposed development would be contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY the proposed development, according to the latest Environment Agency mapping, is partly located in Flood Zone 3. The Agency was initially concerned that the erection of holiday units and stabling on the south bank would obstruct flood flows across the site and potentially worsen the flood risk situation. The flood map suggests that the majority of flooding occurs on the south bank in the vicinity of the

proposed development. However, a recent site visit has demonstrated that the north bank is lower and would therefore flood preferentially. This is supported by historical evidence, and there have been works undertaken on the north bank to improve the flooding situation. For this reason, the validity of the data used to determine the flood map extent at this location should be called into question. Although flooding could still occur on the south bank, it is unlikely to be to the extent shown on the current Environment Agency flood map. Therefore, flooding should not pose a significant risk to the occupants of the holiday let accommodation. The units located nearer to the watercourse are two storey, with the sleeping accommodation on the first floor, and access is on the landward side. Therefore, the Agency has no objections to the proposed development, subject to the application of conditions.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the site is generally well screened from the road by an existing mature hedge, however my concern is that the proposed holiday units are located within the canopy spread of the trees. To make a detailed assessment of the impact a tree survey showing the position, size and species of trees should be supplied. Given the above it may be better to interchange the holiday accommodation with the stable block to the north. It is not possible to tell from the drawings how close the proposals are to the stream to the north but the stream provides an important wildlife corridor with TPO'd trees that should be protected and if possible enhanced. As suggested within the application there is scope for hedge and tree planting to integrate the proposals into the surrounding landscape, conservation area and edge of the AONB location. CONSERVATION OFFICER the conservation boundary misses the curtilage of the listed building and while the site lies outside the boundary there is no real edge by which to separate it. Given that the village is so small the boundary can be considered fairly arbitrary. The evaluation in the design statement has no functional basis (no examples of traditional stables have been examined). There is also no assessment of the structure of the village which would help to harmonise development. Thus an odd selection of buildings is proposed to stand in an expanse of hard landscaping. The pub car park already represents a large blot which will merge with parking and roads proposed in the new scheme but for a thin hedge, entirely superficial when viewed from most angles. Looking at the planning history of the site a short length of hedgerow has been removed along the road and an access inserted for which permission was refused in 1992 and not subsequently granted. I concur with past opinion that access to any development is best made through the existing pub car park. I don't see the development here complimenting either the conservation area or the listed building adjacent. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER we support this application as it seeks to add value to the development of holiday let accommodation through its linkage with stabling facilities and its proximity to the Greyhound pub. DRAINAGE OFFICER I note that surface water is to be discharged to soakaways. These should be constructed in accordance with BRD 365(Sept 1991) and made a condition of any approval. I note that a private sewage treatment plant is to be installed to deal with foul sewage. The EA should be consulted as their consent to discharge will be required.

PARISH COUNCIL is concerned at the volume and size of heavy traffic the development will generate in the location which is close to a difficult junction. The proposal is inconsistent with policy EC23 and the Council is concerned approval

would set a precedent. The Council is not satisfied that proper arrangements are in place to deal with the waste from the stables.

9 LETTERS OF OBJECTION (+2 anonymous) have been received raising the following issues:- racing and polo fraternities will not use site more than existing as racecourse stables need security staff and visiting polo players would not stable horses overnight, there are insufficient safe rides for holiday users and there are already numerous stables in the area; no storage space for equestrian supplies and waste is not addressed; there is insufficient land for 20 horses; no external lighting is included and this would impact on the immediate area; a Director of the Racecourse advises that the stabling proposed is unnecessary; holiday use should be linked to the pub; the design will impact on visual amenity; the site is not in an area for development and the proposals go against policy EC23; vehicles approach New Road junction at speed and any additional traffic generated by the proposal would increase the risk of accident; no horsebox parking shown; may affect existing livery businesses in the area and no need for new stables; noise and pollution will disturb nearby elderly residents; HGV and buses use the route through the village; an unauthorised access and gate has been erected to the car park; green site should not be built on; a previous appeal for a touring caravan park was dismissed here; the land could change hands in the future; the scheme will not enhance the character and appearance of the area or residential amenity and will urbanise the area.

4 LETTERS OF SUPPORT have been received on basis it will support local business; it would encourage leisure in the Blackdowns; it would not create additional traffic and design would be in keeping with the surroundings.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 – Sustainable Development, STR6 – Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages, POLICY 5 – Landscape Character, POLICY 9 – The Built Historic Environment, POLICY 23 – Tourism Development in the Countryside, POLICY 49 – Transport Requirements of New Development, POLICY 60 – Floodplain Protection.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 – Design, S7 – Outside Settlements, EC7 – Rural Employment Proposals, EC15 – Associated Settlements, EC23 – Tourist Accommodation, EC24 – Holiday Chalets, EN12 – Landscape Character Areas, EN14 – Conservation Areas, EN16 – Listed Buildings, EN28 – Development and Flood Risk.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal for holiday units has to be considered in light of its rural location, the scale of the use, the impact on the landscape and character of the area, the highway impact and the flood risk.

The site lies to the rear of the public house car park in Staple Fitzpaine, which is not an identified village in the Local Plan. The proposed development is therefore in the

countryside adjacent to the boundary with a conservation area and approximately 26 m from the rear of the listed building.

The design and layout of the site is such that the buildings are self-contained units which are physically separated from the pub. This implies that the use is not connected directly with the pub and would enable separation as a free standing business. The buildings proposed are of permanent construction with stone walls, timber cladding and tiled roofs. While the materials are characteristic of the area the single and two storey buildings are a mix not characteristic of the area. The development will be in close proximity to the rear of the listed building and the area is currently characterised by open views across fields away from the built upon area. This open area will be lost due to the development and this is considered to detract from the setting of the character of the conservation area and the listed building.

Policy EC15 looks to secure shopping and service facilities in settlements and villages. The current proposal however is not in a defined settlement and is not considered an extension of the existing use. There is no link in terms of the layout or in the applicants design statement linking the proposed accommodation to the public house use. Without such a linkage there would be no long term benefit to the pub and allowing the use here would allow a separate self-contained business use in the countryside.

The provision of permanent build tourist accommodation is restricted in policy EC23 to being within classified settlements. The current proposal is contrary to this policy in that the site is not within a classified settlement. In this location should the proposed holiday use fail then there would be 6 self contained units of accommodation for which there would then be pressure for permanent accommodation. The viability of the use has been called into question by a number of objectors and in light of this evidence, one being a racecourse director, the suitability of permanent build holiday accommodation here must be questioned.

Policy EC7 of the Local Plan does allow for small scale buildings outside settlement limits for uses such as tourism which would result in rural employment. The proposal for self-contained holiday units would not necessarily result in significant employment and this has to be balanced against other issues. In this case the Highway Authority has raised objection in terms of the access which has very poor visibility in an easterly direction. This objection would mean the proposal was contrary to policy EC7(C).

The Environment Agency have raised no objection in this application subject to conditions to protect the area in terms of the surface water run off and flood risk. This would involve re-siting the stables buildings, restricting their use, conditioning floor levels and surface water drainage disposal.

In summary the provision of permanent new build holiday accommodation here in this rural location is considered to be contrary to policy in terms of development in the countryside, its impact on the setting of the listed building and conservation area and also its adverse highway safety impact. The economic benefit of the proposal is not considered to outweigh these issues and the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the reasons of development in countryside contrary to policies S7, EC23 and EC7(C), detrimental to the setting of the listed building and conservation area, Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies EN14 and EN16 and Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 9 and detrimental to highway safety, Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49.

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: