

38/2005/448

MR & MRS O'BRIEN

**CHANGE OF USE FROM C1 (GUEST HOUSE) TO C2 (RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTION)  
AT ORCHARD HOUSE, MIDDLEWAY, TAUNTON**

22360/23886

FULL PERMISSION

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**PROPOSAL**

Planning permission was granted in 1993 for the use of Orchard House as a guesthouse. This proposal is for the change of use of the guesthouse to a care home. Parking is available to the south served by an existing access off Middleway. The proposed use would create a family centre where prospective parents and parents and their young children would be accommodated for up to 3 months. During this time they would benefit from 24 hour supervision and will be coached in necessary parenting skills for day-to-day living. The children will be under school age. 4 members of staff would be on site at any one time working a shift arrangement. A maximum of 7 parking spaces are proposed for use by staff and visiting health care professionals.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objection subject to conditions.

31 LETTERS OF OBJECTION raising the following issues:- (points a - r are on standard letter) (a) Will change overall fabric of Village Neighbourhood, b) Not compatible with current Village norms, (c) Troubled Teens are given to erratic and sometimes criminal behaviour, d) Will destabilise the community, (e) Visiting friends and relatives of troubled teens are often also troubled themselves, (f) Alcohol too close to hand - the Vivary Arms pub is right next door. (g) Troubled teens are renowned for using foul and abusive language, h) Troubled Teens can become violent, (i) Troubled Teens are known to break into private property, (j) Troubled Teens and their friends frequently loiter on street corners, k) Constant turnover of patients exposes neighbourhood to greater security risks. (l) Parking requirements assume most of Staff will be local. Neighbourhood demographics suggest this a highly speculative assumption, (m) Parking in the Municipal Car Park is not a realistic option - it is often full and in any event is too expensive for low-paid part-time care workers, n) Parking permits would inevitably be assigned - fewer spaces for local residents, (o) Parents will be fearful of allowing their children into Vivary Park on their own, (p) A programme such as this is socially divisive - Patients and local youngsters will not freely integrate. This can lead to highly-charged, tense situations, q) The proposed usage will impact unfairly on house prices in the area, (r) Abbeyfield residents and older residents would be exposed to greater security risks. The new residents will disturb the peace and quiet of the elderly residents of Abbeyfield; estranged parents calling at the centre may cause disturbance to residents and may be violent; Vivary Park is already becoming a dangerous place to visit and more people of that type will make the situation worse; the property is situated on a dangerous corner and would be unsuitable for young children; such a property should be located away from a busy road; further development in the area will make the

traffic situation worse; still more unsuitable for young children; the applicants do not appear to have any experience in dealing with teenagers; the proposal would be incompatible with the character of the area including the old persons homes; the application indicates that 7 space are needed when only 5 are to be provided the idea that other visitors will use the public car park is ridiculous; Wilton is a quiet and peaceful community created by the residential occupants; a large care facility is being provided at St Margarets school and this would be a better place for this use; this is a private enterprise how can local residents be sure that it will be run in a way that does not cause problems for the community; it is unlikely that the new use will maintain the fabric of the building to such a high standard as the guesthouse; the owner doesn't live or know the area; as residents will only be staying for short periods of time they will not integrate or care about the community around them; the proposal will result in an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area; it is unrealistic to expect to be able to recruit staff from the area; staff shifts will result in an increase in traffic generation in an area with high traffic and parking levels already; the proposed use is unsuitable for a listed building; the property will be used as a refuge or safe house but there are already such places in Taunton; individuals with learning difficulties should be supported in their own areas; are the owners going to be registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate or Somerset County Council Social Services Department; I have just moved away from a house for disturbed children in Trull who caused me approximately £1,000 damage to my property through vandalism; the pavements in Fons George are narrow and it is likely that more young people with push chairs or prams will result in elderly people being forced to step into the road, very dangerous.

2 LETTERS OF SUPPORT has been received raising the following issues:- there is no evidence that troubled teens will be accommodated on the site and this assumption on behalf of the objectors is nonsensical; this affluent area can afford to tolerate even welcome vulnerable people whose experience is different from our own; living close to the site I have no objection to the proposal it seems a worthy organisation fulfilling a need in our society; giving youngsters a chance to live in a stable community while they get their life in order; the location is good, close to the town with a well run pub adjacent with a relaxed atmosphere; I wish all those youngster good luck.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Structure Plan Policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR2 (Towns), Policy 49 (Transport Requirements)

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), H16 (Residential care homes), M3, (Non-Residential Parking Requirements) M4 (Residential Parking Requirements).

## **ASSESSMENT**

The proposed change of use would be located in a residential area just outside of the boundary of the Taunton Central Area where community and shopping facilities are located. Policy H16 requires such uses to be within walking distance of community facilities and I consider that this site is in such a location. The property has 6 bedrooms

and would be well staffed for 24 hours a day with professional support from social services etc if required. The applicants have indicated awareness for the concerns of the local community and would their use would not include those with a history of drug or alcohol problems or teenage children. The applicant has indicated that there will be 7 parking spaces to the rear of the property and plans are awaited to clarify this point. The adjacent dwelling has a garage with access rights across the rear parking area and proper delineation of the parking spaces should avoid disturbance to his rights. Proposal considered acceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Subject to the receipt of acceptable amended plans the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, maximum 6 number of bedrooms, use as a family centre or old peoples home (within the C2 use class) only, parking, cycle parking.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed change of use would be centrally located, within easy reach of community facilities in accordance with the requirements of Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 and H2.

**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**

NOTES: