

38/2007/545

MR R CRIDDLE

**DEMOLITION OF DWELLING AND ERECTION OF 8 NO. ONE BEDROOM FLATS
AT 74 SOUTH STREET, TAUNTON**

323481/124316

FULL

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of 8 No. one bedroom flats on the site of an existing two storey residential dwelling and garage. It is also noted that there is a concurrent permission for a first floor extension above the garage which has not been implemented. A previous scheme for eleven flats, planning reference 38/2007/299, was refused at Committee on 5th September, 2007.

The application was refused on the following grounds:- "the proposed building by reason of its scale, bulk and massing of the built form is considered to be excessive and if allowed would be detrimental to the character and visual amenities of the street scene and would harm the amenities of adjoining occupiers by reason of it appearing overbearing".

In addition, Members were also concerned with the omission of fenestration to provide natural light to the kitchen area. The primary revisions to the proposal relate to changes to the rear of the dwelling with the main bulk of the building reduced considerably in projection. A single storey extension which would also be dug down replaces the previous three storey rear wing. The ridge of the proposed building is also now set down marginally below that of the adjoining property No. 72. Proposed materials are indicated to be agreed at a later stage, although the Design and Access statement refers to the use of faced brickwork of similar colour and texture to the older surrounding buildings. The site is located within the designated Taunton Central Area and as such the site is well related to essential facilities and services and therefore the applicant proposes no parking within the scheme.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to landscaping it should be possible to offer some mitigation.

TWO LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- at the last planning committee meeting which rejected the 11 flats, it was clearly stated by Councillors that whatever was built should only cover the present footprint of the existing house, this is clearly not the case; building will dominate the area as it is on the crest of the hill; boring design, very unimaginative; not enough parking; loss of privacy to adjoining garden; noise and disruption of building work; loss of light; third time we have now had to object with little change to the proposal, costing money and time; increase in traffic.

POLICY CONTEXT

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

Regional Spatial Strategy for the Southwest, (RPG10) Policy HO5 (Previously Developed Land).

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

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), M4 (Residential Parking Requirements), M5 (Cycling), C4 (Open Space Requirements).

ASSESSMENT

There were a number of objections to the previous scheme on the grounds of loss of light; loss of outlook; overdevelopment; parking; poor design; out of character; scale; lack of cycle storage/bin facilities; loss of family dwelling.

This application has sought to address the previous reason for refusal. It is considered that the revised design is acceptable and the use of matching materials would help to assimilate the development into the locality. The site does not lie in a conservation area and the building proposed to be demolished is of no particular architectural merit. The predominant building pattern is of two storey dwellings of a smaller footprint and scale, in rectilinear form. However, by digging down the building would be of similar height to the row of terraced properties and would provide an efficient use of land without causing any demonstrable harm to the appearance of the street scene, especially given the existing context of the site. The revised design has reduced the overall bulk of the building in relation to its plot size and the single storey rear projection would have no discernible impact on adjoining occupiers.

The internal arrangement has been designed to avoid any unreasonable overlooking to adjoining properties. It is considered that the proposal (given its orientation and separation distances) would not be so harmful to the residential amenities of No. 76 as to warrant a refusal of the scheme. In assessing the impact of the development on No. 72 it is noted that the scale of the development, to the rear, has been amended significantly. The rear projection takes the form of a single storey extension and as such it is considered the proposal would not appear so over dominating or reduce light as to be harmful to the living conditions of No. 72.

One of the recurring concerns previously raised and again with this submission, from local residents, is the lack of parking provision within the site and the knock on effect this will have on the locality. The Highway Authority previously considered that by reason of the location of the site close to the services and amenities of the town centre, it is acceptable to have zero parking provision on site. The site is therefore considered appropriate for car free development. However, as part of any consent a requirement would be imposed to provide safe cycle storage for cycles within the site. Highway Authority comments are awaited, however given the scheme proposes less units there is likely to be no objection.

The provision of 8 flats requires a contribution towards off site play and open space provision in compliance with policy C4 of the Local Plan. In accordance with standard provisions this equates to £1023.00 per one bed unit. Should Members consider the development to be acceptable then a Section 106 Agreement would be required to ensure that the required contribution was made.

It is accepted that national planning guidance seeks to make the best use of brownfield land, especially in sustainable locations such as town centre locations. Furthermore it is accepted that the proposed development has addressed previous design concerns and reduced any impact upon local residents as such it is recommended the application be approved.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement in relation to leisure contributions and no further new issues being raised by 20th December, 2007 the Development Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject conditions of time limit, materials, cycle parking, meter boxes, aerals, landscaping, and contamination. Notes re Wessex Water systems, contamination, plan showing the proposed rear single storey elevation in full.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed development is considered acceptable and material considerations do not indicate otherwise. The development accords with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, M4, M5 and C4.

If the Section 106 Agreement is not completed by 11th January, 2008 a condition be added requiring a written agreement to provide the leisure and recreation contributions or refusal of the proposal as contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy C4.

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: