

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH, 2006

Report of the Development Control Manager

MISCELLANEOUS ITEM

38/2005/356 – Demolition of dwellings and erection of one bedroomed flats together with delivery access at 5-7 Compass Hill, Taunton

The above planning application was considered by Members at their meeting in November 2005 when it was determined that planning permission be granted subject to a Section 106 Agreement relating to the provision of a contribution for the off-site provision for sport and recreation.

Unfortunately not all those who had commented on the previous withdrawn application were re-notified of the application and a further notification of these persons was undertaken during the period when the Section 106 Agreement was being finalised. There have been two further letters of objection received summarised below:-

There has been one objection from a neighbour on the grounds that with no parking proposed visitors will use their car park, Compass Hill is some distance from the nearest car park, if development goes ahead they will have to erect gates at their car park entrance, electronic gates are not affordable and manual ones would be a nuisance and cause inconvenience to traffic flow in Compass Hill. Additional units could have a detrimental affect on existing drainage arrangements.

The Civic Society raise concern over 3 storey development on the higher part of the site and a 3 storey block adjacent to the Cann Street Boundary would be overbearing and oppressive. Hipped roof design with overhanging eaves is welcomed and it is felt that with the loss of two pleasant houses it is important that the new buildings are in sympathy with the area as a whole and do not reflect the modern style of flats opposite. Concern over servicing has been addressed by the provision of a service delivery access but where will peoples' cars go? What gauging of car ownership has taken place, development is leading to increases in long term street parking making minor road access difficult and risk of emergency services being impeded. We agree traffic management during construction must be undertaken with care and there must be intensive management of the parking during construction works.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal is the re-use of a brownfield site in an acceptable location for car free development. A servicing access is provided to comply with highway safety requirements and the scheme includes a minor road re-alignment to improve safety. If illegal parking occurs as a result of the development this will need to be addressed in the normal way. Drainage is a condition on any

approval as is the future design, height, siting and number of flats to be built on the site.

A copy of the previous report is attached for Members information.

RECOMMENDATION

The Section 106 Agreement has now been completed in relation to this site and it is recommended that Members note the comments received and grant permission for the development as per the previous recommendation and conditions.

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

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38/2005/356

SUMMERFIELD DEVELOPMENTS

DEMOLITION OF DWELLING AND ERECTION OF ONE BEDROOMED FLATS TOGETHER WITH DELIVERY ACCESS AT 5-7 COMPASS HILL TAUNTON.

22248/24281

OUTLINE APPLICATION

PROPOSAL

The site currently consists of two semi-detached two storey properties in brick with hipped slate roofs. The site lies north of the Park Street Conservation Area and given the flats development to the north of the site, it is considered suitable by the applicant for a high density residential development to maximise the potential of the site in line with government guidelines for the redevelopment of brownfield sites. The design is guided by the site which is on the one-way gyratory system where it is not feasible to provide a safe residential vehicular access. There is 3 storey development in the area, including Dovetail Court, and the Design Statement considers it appropriate for the reserved matters of any new development to be three storey to maximise potential.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the 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 as far as we are aware there are limited or no archaeological implications to this proposal and we therefore have no objections. WESSEX WATER there is sufficient spare capacity to serve this site and connection may be made to the combined sewer in Compass Hill. The sewerage system is combined in this area. Surface water may be discharged to the same sewer as the foul connection but the applicant is asked to investigate using the soakaways or other Sustainable Drainage solutions to keep the volume and rate of discharge to a minimum. Flow calculations will be required. In line with Government protocol the applicant is advised to contact Developers Services to see if any drainage systems can be adopted under a Section 104 Agreement. RIGHTS OF WAY no observations.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to detailed proposals for this important town site it should be possible to integrate a reduced scheme from the previous proposals into the local street scene. CONSERVATION OFFICER the thoughts re heritage are encompassing even the relatively recent past. It has been recommended that the conservation area be amended to include these dwellings of 'positive value'. If approval granted please add a condition requiring recording of the existing buildings prior to demolition. PLANNING POLICY as a site in central Taunton that is currently in residential use and is surrounded by other residential properties the proposal is acceptable in principle. Two significant policy issues in relation to the proposal are affordable housing and parking. On the first of these, as the proposal is in outline there is no defined number of dwellings. However the applicant's earlier withdrawn application for the site proposed 24 dwellings, just below the current site size threshold of 25 at which affordable housing will be sought. In view of the extremely high density proposed by that scheme, and only achieved through the inclusion of one-bedroomed dwellings, 24 dwellings appears to be a reasonable capacity for the site. However should a scheme of 25 or more be proposed through reserve matters, affordable housing should be provided. When commenting on the previous application I highlighted the Government consultation on a proposal to reduce the threshold to 15 dwellings and the Council's decision that if this change were to be confirmed by the Government it will be implemented with immediate effect. Whilst the Council decision still stands, it now appears unlikely the Government will introduce such a change in the near future as it has published a further consultation document, 'Planning for Housing Provision', and announced its intention to replace PPG3 with a PPS. As far as the issue of parking is concerned the principle of a car free development in this location would appear to be appropriate, and may even be a pre-requisite in view of the conditions on the adjoining highway at peak times. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER a contribution towards local recreational facilities in line with Local Plan policy should be sought.

3 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- the delivery access would be extremely dangerous and hazardous; a high turnover of younger occupants would result in an increased number of vehicles accessing and exiting onto the highway; it could lead to an accident

blackspot given the use of the area by emergency vehicles; lack of parking; query disabled access and compliance with Disability Discrimination Act; dangerous development on main road; unrealistic to assume people will dispense with their cars; vehicle setting down and picking up would be dangerous; problem of servicing and visitor access; increase in parking in surrounding area.

POLICY CONTEXT

RPG10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West.

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 37 - Facilities for Sport and Recreation, 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, M5 - Cycling Provision, C4 - Standards of Sport and Recreation Provision, EN6 - Protection of Trees, Woodlands, Orchards and Hedgerows, EN8 - Trees in and Around Settlements, EN14 - Conservation Areas.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal is in outline form for the redevelopment of an existing housing site to provide an unspecified number of one-bedroomed flats on 0.1075 ha currently occupied by two dwellings. The main considerations are the design and suitability of the site, landscape impact and access for servicing provision.

The site lies within the central area of Taunton and is considered suitable in terms of a car free development. This view is supported by the Highway Authority given that the site lies off the one way system where access for vehicles would be dangerous where there are 3 lanes of merging traffic. Hence the proposal is for one bedroomed units without any parking. A need for the safe servicing of the development has been carefully considered in light of comments received on the previous application that was withdrawn and a service access for deliveries is designed into the frontage of the site. All other issues are subject to detailed approval. A three storey development here is likely and there are other examples of three storey development in the adjacent area so it would not be considered to be out of character. The precise design and layout of the residential development is reserved for subsequent approval.

The site lies adjacent to the existing conservation area and a review of this area is ongoing. While an extension of the area may be suggested in the future this is not considered sufficient grounds to prevent the redevelopment

of this site with an appropriate form of development given the adjacent flat development to the north.

There are a number of trees within the existing site and these have been assessed by the Council's Landscape Officer. None are considered worthy of a TPO, however it is considered that replacement planting should be provided to mitigate the loss in line with policies EN6 and EN8 and it is considered that this can be achieved on site and can be conditioned into any reserved matters application.

There has been a request from the Highway Authority that a strip of land across the site frontage be incorporated into highway width improvements. The applicants are agreeable to this and it is still considered possible to design a development with defensible space and planting on the frontage. The site proposal has no access other than a pedestrian one and this is not unlike other developments in the adjacent Park Street. Adequate bin and cycle store provision will be required and be subject to conditions. A means of providing a servicing bay on the road frontage is being investigated, however such provision cannot be provided for within the site in addition to the road widening scheme as this would fatally compromise the scheme proposed. The provision of a lay-by within the frontage is currently being considered in safety terms by the Highway Authority.

In summary the site is suitable one for car free development within the town centre.

The provision of a residential development here can be designed to be in keeping with the character of the area and subject to detailed design would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbours or the visual amenity of the street scene. The site is an urban one and the provision of landscaping to mitigate the loss of trees is considered acceptable. The provision of a service lay-by on the frontage is considered acceptable in highway safety terms and the application is considered a high density urban development in line with government guidance for the reuse of brownfield sites and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to a Section 106 Agreement re a Sport and recreation contribution 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, reserved matters, drainage, levels, materials, sample brick panel, window details, landscaping, tree retention, tree protection, boundary treatment, no occupation until delivery access and road widening scheme carried out, bin stores, cycle parking, combined aerial, wildlife survey, meter boxes. Notes re design, Wessex Water connection.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal is considered an appropriate redevelopment and to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan

Policies S1, H2, H4 and C4 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

If the Section 106 is not signed by 9th November, 2005 the Development Control Manager be authorised to REFUSE permission 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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