

WEST STAR LAND LLP

DEMOLITION OF THE SPORTSMAN INN PUBLIC HOUSE AND ERECTION OF SEVEN DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AT 46 WATERLOO ROAD WELLINGTON

Grid Reference: 313251.120862

Full Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure leisure and recreation contributions.

The proposed development is acceptably designed and will successfully integrate into the area. There is adequate on-site parking provision and the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality. There would be an acceptable impact upon neighbouring residents and the impact on off-site recreation facilities will be mitigated by financial contributions. The proposal, therefore, accords with Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), C4 (Provision of Recreational Open Space), M4 (Residential Parking Provision) and M5 (Cycling) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan and policies STR1 (Sustainable Development) and 49 (Transport Requirements of New Developments) of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A4) Location Plan

(A1) DrNo 10110.P.32 Rev C Houses: Block of Four - Plans, Elevations & Sections

(A1) DrNo 10110.P.33 Rev A Houses: Block of Three - Plans, Elevations & Sections

(A1) DrNo 10110.P.35 Rev A Street Elevation & Coloured 3D Sketches

(A1) DrNo 10110.P.05 Rev J Site Plan/Block Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No demolition shall be undertaken until the implementation of a programme of building recording and analysis has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and such work shall be carried out in accordance with the written brief prior to the demolition of the existing buildings.

Reason: To help record the archaeological heritage of the district in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy EN23.

4. Prior to their installation, details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out and thereafter retained as such, in accordance with the approved details as above, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy S2 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

5. The first and second floor windows to be installed in the east elevation of plot 1 shall be obscured glazed and non-opening (unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed). The type of obscure glazing shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to its installation and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: To protect the amenities of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy S1(E) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

6.
 - (i) Prior to its implementation a landscaping scheme, which shall include details of the species, siting and numbers to be planted, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - (ii) The scheme shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development, or as otherwise extended with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
 - (iii) For a period of five years after the completion of each landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or the appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the local character and distinctiveness of the area in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S2.

7. Prior to its construction, a scheme of hard landscaping showing the layout

of areas with stones, paving, walls, cobbles or other materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such scheme shall be completely implemented before the development hereby permitted is occupied.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the local character and distinctiveness of the area in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Deposit Policy S2.

8. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, the parking and turning areas indicated on drawing 10110.P.05 rev J shall be fully provided in accordance with the details submitted and agreed in respect of condition (7). The areas shall thereafter be maintained free from obstruction and available for the use for the parking of motor vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking facilities are available for the vehicles likely to be attracted to the site, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

9. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, cycle storage facilities indicated on drawing 10110.P.05 rev J shall be fully provided. The areas shall thereafter be maintained free from obstruction and available for the use for the parking of cycles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking facilities are available for cycles, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and Policy M5 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

10. Prior to its implementation, full details of the proposed alterations to the boundary walls, including the overall heights and method of capping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The wall along the Waterloo Road frontage shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved details and shall not exceed 900mm in height above the adjoining carriageway levels at any time.

Reason: To ensure that the detail of the wall is acceptable within the street scene and to ensure that adequate visibility is maintained from and of vehicles emerging from the site, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and Policy S2 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

11. Before the dwellings hereby permitted are occupied, provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway in accordance with details of which shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

12. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, the parking area indicated on drawing 10110.P.05 revision J shall be delineated into 6 spaces.

Reason: To ensure orderly parking on the site and, thereby decrease the likelihood of parking on the highway in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

13. No entrance gates shall be installed at the site access onto Waterloo Road.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles can freely enter and manoeuvre within the site, in the interests of maintaining the free flow of traffic, in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

14. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 ("the 1995 Order") (or any order revoking and re-enacting the 1995 Order with or without modification), no extensions or new windows shall be added to the dwellings hereby permitted without the further grant of planning permission.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

Notes for compliance

1. A condition survey of the existing public highway will need to be carried out and agreed with the Highway Authority prior to works commencing on site. Any damage to the existing highway, as a result of this development is to be remedied by the developer before occupation of the development. It is recommended that contact be made with the Highway Service Manager (Taunton Deane Area) 0845 3459155 to arrange for such a survey to be undertaken.
2. There may be private sewers and service supplies to neighbouring property running through the site. Care will be required to ensure that the services to nearby properties are adequately maintained during and following development.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 7 dwellings on the site of The Sportsman's Arms public house. The existing buildings would be demolished and dwellings would be erected in two terraces of 3 and 4. The dwellings would be positioned on site such that the block of 3 would be sited broadly on the site of the existing main pub building, with only a small setback from the back of the footway on the north eastern part of the site. On the western part of the site, 4 dwellings would be sited set back behind a car parking area.

Amended plans during consideration of the application making several changes to the elevation treatment. The proposed dwellings would all be 2.5 storey with forward facing gables. They would be constructed with red brick with the second floor areas of the front elevations being finished with render and timber boarding. Porch canopies would be provided over the entrance doors. A dark grey tile or slate roof covering would be provided.

Private garden areas would be provided to the rear, with dedicated bicycle storage facilities within each of the rear gardens. Vehicular access would be via the existing entrance points, with one parking space being provided at the western access and 6 spaces being provided in the general parking area to the east. As such, 1 parking space per dwelling is proposed.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The site comprises an existing public house and its grounds/beer garden. The main building, a handsome two-storey mid-Victorian building occupies a prominent position on the site frontage, the rendered gable end being clearly visible on approach along Waterloo Road from the east, whilst the large (boarded) bay window and brick front façade is clearly visible from approach from the northwest.

The site is on the corner of Waterloo Road, Corams Lane and Beech Grove. Access to the site is available in two places – firstly the main pub car park direct from Waterloo Road and second via a small service yard on the western corner of the site onto Corams Lane.

In addition to the main public house, there is a range of attached buildings to the rear, including a skittle alley along the rear (south eastern) boundary. The car park is currently bounded by a low brick wall to Waterloo Road and a high brick wall runs around the western and south western site boundaries with Corams Lane and Beech Grove. To the west is a two storey dwelling and the southwest is a bungalow behind a timber fence and brick wall respectively.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP – Initially requested that additional parking was provided, citing the Somerset Parking Strategy which sets out provision requiring 3 car spaces per 4 bedroom dwelling. When no additional parking was proposed, an recommendation of refusal was received for the following reason:

Sufficient parking provision has not been made on the site, which would be likely to encourage the parking of vehicles on the adjoining public highway, which would interrupt the free flow of traffic and thereby add to the hazards of highway users at this point.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL – Recommend that permission be granted and action be taken to reduce vehicle speeds and improve visibility at the junction of Corams Lane and Beech Grove. Consideration should be given to how the development could affect on-street parking and the impact on the nearby bus stop.

CONSERVATION OFFICERS – This application includes the demolition of the public house which is a building of historic interest which makes a positive contribution to its surroundings. It is likely to date to the mid 19th Century. I cannot support its demolition. In line with PPS5, the significance of this asset needs to be established pre-determination, building recording to English Heritage level 3 should be carried out and the report submitted to TDBC for consideration.

LEISURE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER – A contribution of £1,100 should be made towards the provision of facilities for active outdoor recreation and a contribution of £2,200 for each additional 2 bed+ dwelling towards children's play provision. The contributions should be index linked.

Representations

4 Local Ward Members have raised objection to this scheme:

Cllr Andrew & Mrs Govier: "...Although the Town Council supported the principle of residential development on this site they had significant concerns about the highway and parking issues in the locality. [At the point of their decision, the Town Council had] not seen the report from SCC highways or any letters of objection. We believe that had the Town Council had sight of the SCC highways report, it may well have taken a slightly different position. We particularly note that the SCC report recommends that there should be three on-site parking spaces provided for each 4 bedroomed property. In addition, it is clear that residents who live in the area have now made representations which support the Town Council's view and concerns about traffic and parking issues. Again, these views were not known to the councillors when they were discussing the proposals. We personally believe that the Town Council may wish to discuss this matter again, in light of the new information. We, ourselves, believe that the site should be redeveloped but on a smaller scale and with additional parking. We are also concerned that the highways issues in the area need further assessment as the concerns of both the Town Council, SCC highways and most importantly local residents, have not been addressed".

Cllr Nicola Wilson: "...I have several concerns, the first being the small number of allocated parking spaces, 7 spaces for 7 properties is not adequate. This will result in a number of cars becoming a parking nuisance for residents in Waterloo Road, the Gables and Beech Grove. I am also concerned that this is a route school children use to access the two schools in the area. Finally, I am concerned at the scale and design of the proposed development. I fear it is not in keeping with existing architecture of current buildings in Waterloo Road. I share concerns that the height of the proposed building may be higher than the existing sky line of established properties in the area.

Cllr Vivienne Stock-Williams: "This proposed redevelopment was discussed at the December meeting of Wellington Town Council, when Councillors supported the principle of redevelopment. We were, however, very concerned about the highways and parking issues in the vicinity. Some local residents have now contacted Wellington councillors because they are very concerned about the impact of the proposal on them and the parking in the area. It is clear from the planning website

that SCC highways have objected to the lack of parking and some other highways issues. SCC believe that there should be three on-site parking spaces for each of the four bedroomed properties and the developers are planning far fewer. The highways report and comments from residents were not available to Wellington Town Councillors when we made our recommendation. If I had known that highways and residents were objecting I may have taken a different view at the meeting...”.

Cllr R Bowrah: “I will be objecting to the lack of parking at the proposed development of the Sportsman Inn Wellington”.

In respect of general principles and the proposal as originally submitted, 7 letters of objection have been received raising the following points:

- The proposal is out of character. The design is a pastiche which ignores the quality of existing materials and detailing as well as the nature of the streetscape and existing context. It would appear that as many local design features as possible were included in the design as token gestures. Continuous porches are not a feature of the area and the horizontal bulk of the buildings is emphasised.
- The argument that conversion of the existing public house is unviable due to level changes would appear to be entirely irrelevant given the scale of proposed changes to the site.
- The existing building is a local landmark, distinct from the surrounding housing at the west end of the town. It has strong local connections to the sports centre, rugby club, bowling club and other local amenities.
- There would be a loss of community leisure space, including a pub garden with children’s playground.
- The proposal ignores the role of the green space in its curtilage in enabling it to be a focal-point.
- The perceived openness of the site will not be maintained by recessing the buildings back from the road, rather it infills the vista beyond to create an enclosed space.
- The proposal ignores the scale and proportion of other existing buildings along Waterloo Road. Dwellings in this area of the road are semi-detached without exception.
- There is no affordable housing, so the scale of development appears to be based upon greed on the part of the developer.
- The design is suited to the future conversion to flats should the properties not sell.
- The proposal extends well beyond the existing footprint, significantly increasing its proximity to the existing townhouses to the east, affecting quality of light to the neighbouring properties and their gardens.
- The privacy of nearby neighbours is compromised.
- The site access is adjacent to an existing bus stop, at the entrance to a busy junction, already congested by on-street parking. Query whether the bus stop will be relocated and if so, where to.
- The junction is particularly dangerous due to the volume of traffic which travels at speed to and from the Sports Centre and Rugby Club.
- Waterloo Road is extremely busy. It is a main route to the schools.
- All residential properties along Waterloo Road are recessed back behind a small front garden. The pub was a singular exception due to its function, but there is no justification for the proposed dwellings to imitate this model.

Rather it adds to the imposing nature.

- There are 2 houses in multiple occupation opposite, which have no off-street parking. There is also the Baptist church which is in constant use all day.
- 1 parking space per car is unrealistic and additional cars would have a negative impact on an already overcrowded street and junction. There is no safe on-street parking available near the site.
- All private residential parking along Waterloo Road has provision for vehicles running perpendicular to the building's main façade. The proposal to retain the current location of the pub's parking bays is a token gesture which in no way maintains a balance between existing and new.
- High volume development has been undertaken on the edge of the town. It would be better if the type of development proposed were confined to such locations and did not leave the historic fabric of the town intact.
- Two blocks of semi-detached dwellings would seem to be a more sensitive proposal.
- The sewerage and other services to 6 & 7 Beech Grove run through the proposed development site into Waterloo Road. Continuity of supply must not be disrupted or damaged by the building works and access for repair and maintenance of the pipes must be incorporated.
- Views from dwellings opposite the site will be lost.
- 6 Beech Grove will be completely overlooked.

Two letters of comment have suggested that development of the site is preferable to leaving the site in its current state, but still raises concerns over parking provision and the lack of space between the buildings.

In respect of the amended plans, 1 further representation has been received, making the following additional points:

- The amendments are superficial and have not addressed local concern.
- The objections could be overcome by a reduction in the number of units proposed on the site.

PLANNING POLICIES

W1 - TDBCLP - Extent of Wellington,
STR2 - Towns,
STR4 - Development in Towns,
EN12 - TDBCLP - Landscape Character Areas,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The site is within the settlement limit for Wellington and is considered to be acceptable in principle. The main issues in the determination of this application are the impact on the character of the area, the impact on the highway network and the impact on neighbouring properties.

Character of the area

The site is situated within residential area surrounded by a variety of dwellings. Housing types are Victorian, with some later Edwardian and inter-war development in a mix of terraces and semi-detached dwellings. There is a much more recent block of flats to the north of Corams Lane and bungalows along Beech Grove.

However, it is the Victorian character that prevails and these are generally red brick under slate roofs and are 2 – 2.5 storeys in height.

As noted in the representations, many of the surrounding properties are semi-detached, but this is not exclusively the case and short terraces of 3 or 4 dwellings do exist in reasonably close proximity to the site. It is not, considered, therefore, that the proposed development of terraced dwellings is out of character with the grain of development in the area. The proposed parking area to front is not an ideal solution in terms of its contribution to the street scene, however, there is already a car park for the pub in this location and in this context, it is considered to be acceptable.

In terms of the scale of development, although the adjoining properties to the immediate east are only 2 storey, there are many examples of 2.5 storey dwellings in the immediate locality. The development will be higher than the existing public house, but very similar (in terms of overall height) to the adjoining dwelling to the east. Given the scale of other surrounding development, the proposed building heights are considered to be acceptable.

The detailed design picks up on certain key details within the locality, particularly in terms of materials and forward facing gables to the main elevations. The amended plans are a great improvement in terms of unifying design across the development, and improving the vertical emphasis, which is certainly characteristic of the area. The provision of timber panelling within the gable ends is also representative of some of the local dwellings and it is considered that the detailed design is now acceptable.

The loss of the public house to facilitate development is regrettable. It is certainly an attractive building and could be considered a heritage asset under Planning Policy Statement 5. A brief assessment of heritage asset value has been submitted with the application, which suggests that additions and alterations to the building over time, together with its poor condition has reduced its value, not making a significant positive contribution to the reading of the historic development in the area. Whilst your officers do not necessarily agree that the value of the building is so limited – its contribution to the townscape for instance is considered to be significant – the site is not within a conservation area and its demolition is, therefore, ultimately outside the control of the Local Planning Authority. It is understood that the public house has ceased to trade periodically in recent times and it seems unlikely that now it is closed once more, it would successfully trade again. Without any specific conservation status, it is not considered that the loss of the building can be resisted. However, it is recommended that a full recording of the property is made for submission to the records office prior to its demolition.

In light of the above, the proposals are considered to have an acceptable impact upon the character of the area.

Highway network

The main point of access is proposed at the point of the existing access to the car park, with a secondary access to serve one property from Corams Lane. Given the established use of the site, the Highway Authority do not consider that amount of traffic using these access points would be detrimental to highway safety. Their concern, and that of many local residents is one of the level of parking proposed on

the site, which would equate to one space per dwelling.

Policy M4 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan imposes a maximum car parking standard of 1.5 spaces per dwelling across a development. The proposal, therefore, complies with this policy whereas the Highway Authority's request for 3 spaces does not. The site is relatively centrally located within easy walking distance of local schools. In addition, dedicated cycle storage facilities are proposed within the curtilage of each dwelling, which should encourage occupiers to consider cycling for local trips. Whilst Waterloo Road is busy and parking is limited, in the above context, and given that there is already significant on-street parking in the area, it is not considered that would be significant additional disruption to the free flow of traffic above and beyond the existing situation. Accordingly it is not considered that sufficient weight could be attributed to this matter to justify refusing permission on a lack of parking provision, contrary to policy M4.

Some concern has been raised regarding the bus stop outside the site, but this would be unaffected by the proposed development. It has also been suggested that there could be improvements to the alignment of junction of Corams Lane and Waterloo Road or to the junction of Beech Grove and Corams Lane. However, it is not clear how the development could achieve this and, in any case, there would be no intensification of the use of these junctions as a result of the development proposal so any such requirement would be unreasonable.

The Local Highway Authority have recommended that conditions are attached to any permission requiring the maintenance of visibility splays above 900mm in height, the provision of parking areas prior to occupation and that no entrance gates are erected at any time. It is considered reasonable to prevent the installation of gates on the Waterloo Road access, however the access from Corams Lane is already gated and, accordingly, it is not considered reasonable to add new restrictions to it. The wall in this location is high, which contributes to the character of the area, and the gates help to maintain the continuity of the enclosure. The Highway Authority has also recommended conditions that the surface water is adequately disposed of and that the parking areas are delineated prior to occupation. These requests are considered reasonable.

Neighbouring properties

The site is surrounded by neighbouring residential property. The least affected of these would be the flats to the north of Corams Lane, which would not be significantly impacted by the proposals. On the opposite side of Waterloo Road the outlook of from the dwellings would change, but the proposed dwellings would be of a similar scale to their own and it is not considered that they would be overbearing upon them.

To the east and southeast of the site are the two storey dwellings of 45 Waterloo Road and the bungalow of 6 Beech Grove. These properties would be the most affected by the proposed development. The closest unit to the eastern boundary would sit slightly behind the main elevation of 45 Waterloo Road, the main entrance door to which is on the side facing the site, with two small windows above. The largest of these facing windows is obscure glazed, so it is presumed not to be a significant habitable room, most likely a bathroom. The neighbouring dwelling also has a single storey projection to the rear. The proposed dwellings would be 2m from the site boundary and 11.5m from the side of the single storey element, which

encloses the neighbours private garden (there is a drive alongside the dwelling between the building and the site) and, given the remaining open outlook from this garden to the south and southwest, it is not considered that the relationship would be overbearing upon 45 Waterloo Road. Bathroom windows in the gable end of the proposed development, facing the neighbour, would be obscure glazed, so there would be no overlooking.

The bungalow of 6 Beech Grove sits just off the southeastern site boundary. The bungalow is some 9m from the site boundary and 13m at its closest from the proposed building. The only meaningful amenity space of this neighbour is on its western side, between the bungalow and site boundary. As with 45 Waterloo Road, the site will remain generally open to the south and west with the proposed building sitting off the northwestern corner of the curtilage and, accordingly, it is not considered to be overbearing on the dwelling or its amenity space. It is possible that the garden of 6 Beech Grove could be slightly overlooked by the first and second floor bedroom windows of the proposed dwelling. However, the proposed plot 1 is not in a direct line with the neighbouring property and, accordingly, any overlooking is not considered to be significant, especially given the existing relationship to 45 Waterloo Road to its immediate north.

Other Matters

Concern has been raised regarding the impact on private sewers that run across the site. This is a civil matter to be resolved between the parties and is not material to this decision. The application indicates that foul water would be disposed of to the mains sewer and this is acceptable. Surface water would be disposed of to soakaway, which is also acceptable.

The development is of a scale that is required by policy C4 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan to provide for adequate public open space. The site is of insufficient size to warrant on-site provision so, in accordance with the Leisure Development Manager's comments, the applicant has agreed to make contributions to off-site provision of children's play and active recreation facilities. A Section 106 agreement is currently being prepared to secure these contributions.

Conclusions

It is considered that the proposed development is acceptably designed and, subject to careful consideration of the final materials, will successfully integrate into the area.

It is considered that, given the location of the site, there is adequate on-site parking provision, such that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality. There would be an acceptable impact upon neighbouring residents and the impact on off-site recreation facilities will be mitigated by the payments that have been agreed with the developer.

With regard to these matters, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and it is, therefore, recommended that planning permission is granted.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988.

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