

43/2007/003

RAGLAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ERECTION OF 8 NO. TWO BEDROOM HOUSES AND 3 NO. THREE BEDROOM HOUSES AT LAND OFF GAY CLOSE, WELLINGTON

314403/120799

FULL

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of 8 No. two bedroom dwellings and 3 No. three bedroom dwellings on land to the west of Gay Close within the settlement limits of Wellington. The site is well related to essential facilities and services. The proposed application would involve the development of a linear strip of land located to the rear of properties in Gay Close, which has a service road providing access to existing garages. The existing strip of land is currently grassed. The proposal also incorporates a parcel of land at the end of the cul-de-sac to the north. To the west of the site the land adjoins the extensive rear gardens of those dwellings located at Priory. The application site is currently owned by the Council's Housing Department and would be sold to the developer for a nominal fee subject to a legal agreement that the development be solely for the provision of affordable housing.

A Design and Access statement has been submitted with the application. The development would take the form of a contemporary design style and proposes to incorporate sustainable measures in its construction and design, including measures such as the orientation of the main glazing elements, water rain collectors and inclusion of small solar powered light source within the storage element. Each of the two bedroom dwellings would have a small side garden with larger gardens for the three bedroom dwellings. The development would take the form of two storey dwellings with traditional pitched roofs. The three bedroom properties would incorporate dormer windows on the frontage to provide additional accommodation within the roof space. The proposed materials are to be a combination of cedar cladding and render. Roofs are to be tiled. Each of the dwellings would be provided with one dedicated parking space, in addition parking has been provided for visitors and existing residents. The agent has indicated that the development would provide an additional 15 parking spaces over and above the existing situation and those allocated to the proposed new housing.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY the following highway related comments have been made as a result of looking at the site location plan together with submitted drawing numbers 0602.4.04, 0602.4.05 and 0602.4.06. Upon comparing the location plan, within which the agent/applicant has edged in red the extent of land for this application, with the 'attached road record plan, it appears that there is a length of publicly maintained highway that falls within the site boundary. Can the agent/applicant revisit this and ensure that the application site lies beyond highway limits. I would suggest contacting Somerset County Council's Road Records

Department on 01823 356181, who will be able to provide a definitive plan showing highway owned land. The proposed locations of the two bed dwellings appear to encroach upon the existing publicly maintained highway that serves existing dwellings 18 - 40. The proposed development must not encroach upon the existing public highway. The proposed 14 No. parking bays at the south-western boundary of the site appear to lie within the existing publicly maintained highway. These bays should be located beyond highway limits. It has been noted that no footway provision has been made for the proposed 2 bed houses within Gay Close. How will pedestrian safety be secured? Any proposed planting of trees immediately adjacent to the public highway must be supported by the submission to the Highway Authority of a planting schedule for approval purposes. Details of tree grilles will also need to be submitted. Drawing number 0602.4.05 shows 3 No. 3 bedroom houses and parking bays that will not have a direct link onto the public maintained highway. Is it the applicant's intention to provide such a link? There appear to be existing lighting columns situated within the land set aside for the two bed dwellings. These columns will need to be removed and relocated. Contact will need to be made with the Highway Authority Street Lighting Manager (Trevor Gutteridge 01823 423367) to seek his approval for the movement/relocation of these columns. Where an outfall, drain or pipe will discharge into an existing drain or pipe or watercourse not maintainable by the Local Highway Authority, written evidence of the consent of the authority or owner responsible for the existing drain will be required. If it is the intention to connect into an existing highway maintained drainage system, the applicant will be required to commission a CCTV survey of the existing system to its point of outfall and submit supporting evidence to the Highway Authority appropriately. The Highway Authority will then assess the submitted evidence and determine any upgrading or remedial measures that is felt necessary to ensure that the integrity of the system is not compromised. As this approach looks at the performance of drainage systems, rather than individual pipe runs, it is possible that upgrading or repairs can be some distance from the point of the connection. If it is the Highway Authorities view that the existing system is operating at capacity, alternative outfall arrangements will need to be made. No doors, gates or low-level windows/utility boxes/down pipes/porches are to obstruct footways/carriageways. The Highway limits shall be limited to that area of the footway/carriageway clear of all private service boxes, inspection chambers, rainwater pipes, vent pipes, meter boxes (including wall mounted), steps etc. Surface water from private areas, such as parking bays, shall be intercepted by private drainage measures, prior to any discharge onto the public highway. The existing turning heads within Gay Close shall not be encroached/built upon. I look forward to receiving revised engineering drawings showing the full extent of the application site lying beyond highway boundary limits at your earliest convenience on receipt of which I will be able to conclude my highway observations. WESSEX WATER the development is located within a foul sewered area and the developer will need to agree points of connection. In respect of surface water, there are no existing separate sewers in the vicinity of the site. The developer is advised to investigate alternative methods for the satisfactory disposal of surface water (e.g. soakaways). With respect to water supply, there is a public combined sewer crossing the site. Wessex water normally requires a three metre easement on either side of its apparatus. Diversion or protection works may need to be agreed. SPORT ENGLAND views awaited.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER my main concerns are loss of amenity area within a residential area; loss of trees due to construction; and limited opportunity for landscape mitigation or replacement tree planting. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER no observations. DRAINAGE OFFICER no observations. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT the ward of Wellington East has the lowest amount of open space per head of population of any ward in the Borough. The average is 3.49 hectares per thousand population and Wellington East has just 0.70 hectares per thousand population. To lose this site will exacerbate this level of under provision. This site has been identified in our 2006 Audit of Green Spaces, as an "amenity open space" of low quality and low value. However with some investment it could become a more valuable and usable site for a part of Wellington where there is very little open space available. If Members are minded to approve this application there should be compensation made for this loss of open space by way of additional land being provided for recreation in the neighbourhood. Additionally provision should be made in line with Policy C4 for play facilities to serve the new residents of the dwellings constructed. It may be possible to negotiate a sum in lieu of the compensation and also in lieu of the new provision if a suitable site for investment can be identified. There is also a requirement in Policy C4 for playing field contributions from new developments. The current sum is £859 per dwelling to be spent in the vicinity of the development.

TOWN COUNCIL object to the application stating it is overdevelopment with too many dwellings on a cramped site, will cause a loss of amenity and create overlooking and transport problems.

6 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- building in this location will cause congestion; highway safety; loss of/and existing parking problems; flooding issues – drains cannot take existing run off; green space is used in the summer by children; impact on wildlife; must be other locations available such as Cox's Corner; proposal would create slum housing; would emergency vehicles be able to enter the site?; were people who rent the garages notified?; extra noise and anti-social behaviour; loss of light; loss of views; loss of amenity space; loss of existing secure parking through direct surveillance; disruption during construction; impact upon quality of life; view of the community and petition ignored through previous meeting in relation to the development.

PETITION SIGNED BY EIGHTY TWO RESIDENTS, under the heading of 'This would affect the whole of Gay Close, Gay Street, and Priory, with extra volume of traffic and parking problems' has been submitted with reference to the proposed development has been submitted.

POLICY CONTEXT

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

Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR4 (Development in Towns), Policy 33 (Provision of Housing), Policy 35 (Affordable Housing), Policy 48 (Access and Parking).

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements), S2 (Design), H2 (Housing in Settlements), H9 (Affordable Housing Within General Market Housing), H10 (Indicative Targets For Affordable Housing), M4 (Residential Parking Requirements), C4 (Open Space Requirements).

ASSESSMENT

It is considered the main issues for determination relate to the provision of affordable housing; loss of amenity land; visual appearance and impact upon residential amenity and highway safety.

As previously mentioned, the site is currently under the ownership of the Council's Housing Department. The proposed application is submitted on behalf of Raglan Housing Association as prospective purchasers. The Taunton Deane Local Plan defines affordable housing as housing that is provided, with subsidy, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes. The Borough Council is strongly committed to the provision of affordable housing as a corporate priority. The Local Plan policies reflect this commitment by seeking to meet as much of the housing need as feasible through the planning process.

The Housing Officer has agreed with the agent and the Registered Social Landlord that the breakdown of provision would be as follows: - 4 No. x 2 bed and 2 No. x 3 bed dwellings would be social rented properties and 4 No. x 2 bed and 1 No. x 3 bed would be homebuy (shared ownership). The Housing Officer states that there is a demonstrable need for this type of housing especially for 2 and 3 bed houses and as such fully supports the proposal, which would help satisfy the need for affordable housing.

The character of the area is of low density two storey residential properties. The proposed development is considered to be of an acceptable layout and would provide an innovative design solution which would respond to the context of the area. It is considered that the proposed siting of the dwellings would be within normal planning standards in relation to distances between elevations and as such it is not considered that the proposal would have any unreasonable or harmful impact upon adjoining residents.

One of the recurring concerns from local residents is the effect of the development on existing parking provision within the site and the knock on effect this will have on the locality. The Authority's parking standards for general residential development is for there to be no more than an average of 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling. As detailed earlier in the report, each of the dwellings will have provision for one parking space. In addition there is parking provision for visitors and existing residents. The agent has submitted a plan indicating an additional 15 spaces will be provided over and above the existing situation and additional to those spaces for the new dwellings within the scheme.

The Leisure Department have raised an objection to the proposal resulting in the loss of amenity open space. However, it is considered that as the area, which has been identified as low value, is currently under utilised this must be balanced against

the provision of affordable housing on this site. It is of important to ensure that investment is redirected into other leisure space within the vicinity of the development. Policy C4 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan sets out the requirements for the standards of provision of recreational open space on new residential development. The Leisure Development Manager requires a payment of £859 per dwelling.

There has been some discussion between parties (County Highway Authority) over land ownership regarding the layout of the site. This is not a planning matter per se; however, discussions are continuing between parties to clarify the situation and Members will be updated should further information or clarification be forthcoming. It is however necessary to ensure that any development would not interfere with highway land or give rise to any highway safety issues.

To conclude, careful consideration has been given to the nature of the site, amenities of local residents and the character and appearance of the area. The development of this site within settlement limits is promoted by national guidance and the development plan commensurate with environmental considerations. It is considered the existing linear strip of land is not of such high amenity value as to warrant a refusal of the application. Furthermore, substantial weight is given to the requirement to provide additional affordable housing provision which would add to the mix of development in the locality. It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable and would provide a positive design response to its context.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the submission of further information and clarification in relation to ownership in respect of Highway land which addresses the concerns of the County Highway Authority, the views of Sport England and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement in relation to affordable housing and leisure and recreation by 30th March, 2007 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, materials, drainage, meter boxes, details of walls/fences, removal of GDPO rights for extensions only and landscaping.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed development is considered to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, H2, M4, H9, H10 and C4 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

Should the Section 106 agreement not be completed by 30th March, 2007 the Development Control Manager be authorised to REFUSE permission for the following reason of inadequate provision has been made for the provision of affordable housing requirements facilities in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy H9.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: 356586 MR A PICK

NOTES: