

45/2005/002

MR & MRS C L POPHAM

**DEMOLITION OF AGRICULTURAL AND EQUESTRIAN BUILDINGS AND
ERECTION OF 2 STOREY DWELLING WITH GARAGING, STABLES AND STORES,
BASHFORD RACING STABLES, WEST BAGBOROUGH**

17112/33426

OUTLINE APPLICATION

PROPOSAL

The application is in outline and provides for the demolition of existing buildings and their replacement with a two-storey dwelling with garaging. Although no details of the proposed dwelling are submitted at this stage, the applicants envisage that the dwelling will be constructed using natural materials to a local design, to give the appearance of a traditional farmhouse style dwelling. The 'farmhouse' would be accompanied by garaging and other outbuildings, erected on the site of the existing stable yard. The buildings would be arranged around a central courtyard, in order to seek to maintain the rural character of the site and to preserve the privacy of the adjoining property to the southwest. An area of private garden would be laid out to the rear of the site. Access would be gained via the existing driveway serving Bashford Racing Stables. The site is largely located beyond the limits of West Bagborough. The applicant's agent contends that as there is existing residential properties on three sides, there are a number of genuine material considerations in favour of the development proposed:- (a) the site is presently occupied by a range of agricultural and equestrian buildings and has a highly developed appearance; visually the property is very much part of the built up area of the village and is therefore a natural and logical location for development without encroaching into open countryside; the proposal may therefore be regarded as acceptable infill development or a minor extension to an existing group of houses; (b) the site is in a sustainable position, with convenient access to local services and public transport links available within West Bagborough; the distances concerned are conveniently negotiable on foot or by cycle and therefore the occupiers of the proposed dwelling will not be entirely reliant upon use of the private car; (c) existing buildings on the site are in mainly equestrian use and the site can therefore be regarded as a brown field site, a preferred location for residential development under established policy; making effective use of previously developed land in this way can also be regarded as sustainable development; (d) the site is located within the AONB where priority is given to preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area; the proposal will result in the removal of not only the stable yard, but also a very substantial agricultural building, which presently dominates the site and has considerable landscape impact; the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a single dwelling as proposed will considerably enhance both near and distant views of the site; (e) the present use of the land as a racing stables generates considerable amounts of vehicular and equine traffic on the local highway network; the narrow village roads and the predominance of vehicles parked on the highway have caused particular problems for horses being ridden through the village, with a number of accidents and near misses in recent years; the site is served by large vehicles transporting the horses themselves, other livestock, feed and equipment; the development proposed will substantially reduce the level of

vehicular and equine activity generated from the site, to the considerable benefit of highway safety and road users in general; (f) there is potential for considerable nuisance to arise from the current proximity of the agricultural and equestrian activities to neighbouring residential properties; the current proposal will eliminate any potential for such nuisance to arise.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the site lies outside the recognised settlement limit for West Bagborough, which has only limited facilities and services. As a consequence the site is a significant distance from adequate services, facilities, education and employment opportunities, schools and there is limited public transport services. The development proposal would therefore be harmful to sustainable transport objectives, which seek to reduce the reliance on the private car. The proposal is therefore contrary to PPG13, RPG10 and the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the County Structure Plan and refusal is recommended on highway grounds. WESSEX WATER points of connection will need to be agreed for the disposal of foul drainage and water supply. SOMERSET ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS CENTRE no statutory and non-statutory sites and species at the site. SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and one or more legally protected species within 1 km of the site.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to suitable landscaping it should be possible to integrate the proposals into the local landscape. CONSERVATION OFFICER the demolition of the buildings in question is acceptable in principle as they are of no intrinsic quality either historically or visually. However the granting of Conservation Area Consent for demolition would be subject to an acceptable scheme to have been granted planning permission for the replacement. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER requests contaminated land investigation/remediation report. DRAINAGE OFFICER soakaways should be constructed in accordance with Building Research Digest 365.

PARISH COUNCIL would be a new dwelling outside the settlement limits of the village. If approved it would disregard the policy set down. Would set a precedent for future planning applications. Although do not object to the concept of this new dwelling, do object to the fact that it would be outside the settlement limits and within the Conservation Area.

ONE LETTER OF OBJECTION raising the following issues:- site is outside the settlement limits and within the Conservation Area therefore any approval would be wholly unjustifiable as this would require overruling normal policy; not a brownfield site as it is used for equestrian and agricultural activities; would wish to ensure that the boundary wall is retained to ensure privacy; should be no damage to boundary wall or other property; disruption to adjacent bed and breakfast business due to noise, mess and increased traffic therefore should be restriction of working hours; would expect to be compensated for any loss of business; would need to ensure that property is not out of keeping with the existing settlement; foul drain connection would require an easement with adjoining property owner; contention of potential smell and noise nuisance is misguided.

ONE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION in favour of demolishing existing buildings, but reluctant to fully endorse the building of a new house outside the village boundary; the

village is within an AONB and has a carefully thought through Village Design Statement; in future years, the remaining stable block could be converted to residential use using this application as a precedent.

6 LETTERS OF SUPPORT raising the following points:- present buildings are an eyesore and their demolition and replacement with a house will be of great benefit to the village; within a Conservation Area and the existing buildings are a blot on the landscape; would open up views of the hillside; a sympathetic development would blend in with the existing buildings and new occupants are needed to keep the village flourishing rather than stagnating; will enhance this part of the village and is in keeping with recent developments that have been allowed; proposed garaging will keep vehicles off the road; natural materials should be used; reduction of traffic, both cars and lorries; will remove the danger of racehorses in a very congested village and a very ugly tin building; will not intrude further into the countryside; proposal will blend in admirably; the proposed dwelling will be far more visually acceptable to neighbours, residents and those visiting the village and the Quantock Hills; site is already built on and redevelopment should be encouraged; privacy of adjacent property will be ensured; proposal could be considered as infill and does not encroach further on the AONB.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy STR1 of the County Structure Plan contains criteria for sustainable development, including ones that (a) development should develop a pattern of land use and transport which minimises the length of journeys and the need to travel and maximises the potential for the use of public transport, cycling and walking; and (b) give priority to the continued use of previously developed land and buildings. Policy STR6 states that development outside towns, rural centres and villages should be strictly controlled and restricted to that which benefits economic activity, maintains or enhances the environment and does not foster growth in the need to travel.

Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan includes general requirements for new developments. One of these requirements is that the accessibility of the development by public transport, cycling and pedestrian networks would be consistent with its likely trip generation and minimising the need to use the car. Policy S8 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan states that outside defined settlement limits new building will not be permitted unless it maintains or enhances the environmental quality and landscape character of the area and meets certain criteria, none of which are met with the current proposal.

ASSESSMENT

Although buildings currently occupy the site, it is not a greenfield site in planning policy terms. The site is located outside the settlement limits of the village and consequently there is a policy presumption against new residential development. No special justification has been put forward for the proposed development. The removal of the existing buildings on the site is not considered to be sufficient justification to set aside the normal planning policies for the area. The County Highway Authority raises objection on transport sustainability grounds.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the reasons of (1)The majority of the application site is identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan as being outside the limits of a recognised settlement in open countryside, where it is the policy of the Local Planning Authority to resist new housing development unless it is demonstrated that the proposal serves a genuine agricultural need or benefits economic activity. The Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that the proposal does not satisfy the above criteria and is therefore contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S8 (Revised Deposit numbering). The proposal is also contrary to Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6; and (2) The proposal would be located where it is remote from adequate services, employment, education and public transport and will therefore increase the need for journeys to be made by private vehicles which is non-sustainable and in conflict with advice given in PPG13, RPG10 and Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 and STR6.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: 356461 MR J HAMER

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