

49/2004/033

MAGNA HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**ERECTION OF 16 NO. BUNGALOWS AND PROVISION OF COMMUNITY HALL
CAR PARK, LAND TO NORTH OF WIVELISCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH
STREET, WIVELISCOMBE AS AMENDED BY LETTER DATED 11TH AUGUST, 2004
WITH ACCOMPANYING ANNOTATED O.S. SHEET AND DRAWING NO. 207/04/A
AND AS AMPLIFIED BY LETTER DATED 13TH AUGUST, 2004 WITH
ACCOMPANYING DRAWING NO. 207/05**

07897/28150

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The proposal provides for the erection of 16 bungalows on land to the north of the primary school at Wiveliscombe. The emerging Taunton Deane Local Plan reserves the site for educational purposes. Each bungalow provides for 2 bedrooms, living room, kitchen and shower. The proposed materials are brick walls, upvc windows and doors and concrete tiled roofs.

The applicants' agent in the amending letter states that the site is between 1.8 m and 2.3 m above road level along North Street and rises away from the road. They consider it would not be possible to provide a normal 'street frontage' without considerable excavation, which they consider would further exacerbate the site water drainage problem. They consider that there is no particular defined street frontage pattern, but rather a mixture of buildings of no particular architectural merit, randomly laid out, except for the adjacent school building. They emphasize that the proposed units are bungalows and considerably lower than the adjacent school building. The client group will be older ambulant people. The layout is determined by the need for level access into the dwellings, therefore the agents see terracing along the contours as the most logical layout.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objection in principle but raise a number of detailed points, which have been addressed on the amended plans. In the event of permission being granted request conditions regarding estate roads, proper surfacing, disposal of surface water, footway works and contribution towards 20 mph speed limit. Detailed comments of the Estate Roads Section also forwarded for information, such details to be included in a Section 38 Agreement. COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST there is some evidence of an earthwork on the site which may be impacted by this proposal. For this reason, recommend that the applicant be required to provide archaeological monitoring of the development and a report on any discoveries made. This should be secured by condition. COUNTY EDUCATION the site is currently designated in the Local Plan for school purposes. There is unlikely to be any long term requirement to use this for educational purposes other than for vehicular access to the school. Although

understood that the development was to be sheltered accommodation for elderly people, there is no warden's accommodation or communal area. Combination of coach and car parking and general vehicle movements causes congestion outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day. Aware of highways colleagues requirement to secure a footway along the entire frontage of the development and that this should be extended along that of the adjacent school. The existing parking in front of the school would in part need to be removed, causing severe inconvenience to the school staff. The existing retaining wall on the school frontage should not be removed or relocated. Given that there would be a reduction in the width of the carriageway, funds should also be secured from the developer for the provision of a 20 mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school. Barriers and gates should be provided around the proposed parking area which could be managed by the school. In view of the loss of roadside parking used by school staff, the parking area should be for the exclusive use of the school. The Local Education Authority would not be able to support the use of the land for purposes other than education, for which it is designated in the Local Plan, unless the above measures are secured. WESSEX WATER it will be necessary for the applicant to agree points of connection onto their infrastructure. There is a public water main crossing the site. Diversion or protection works may need to be agreed. SOMERSET ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS CENTRE no statutory or non statutory sites or species at the site. Within 1 km one or more legally protected species found, two County Wildlife Sites, one County Geological Site and badgers.

CONSERVATION OFFICER The site is outside the defined settlement limit, therefore an exception to policy S8. If an exception to policy S8 deemed appropriate by virtue of policy H13, question whether the need has been identified/justified. Note that the site is identified for educational purposes in the emerging Taunton Deane Local Plan. Also note that County Property Services say there is unlikely to be any long term requirement to use this site for educational purposes, but this requires more detailed justification, particularly in the light of successive applications for 'temporary' classrooms at the adjacent school, a Grade II listed building. The site is a steep one, characterised by open countryside, which suitably marks the extent of the developed settlement on the west side of North Street. The proposal would not make a positive contribution to the streetscene and would be detrimental to the setting of the adjacent listed building. The design of the buildings and the layout is bland, bearing no relationship to the area, ie single storey, hipped roofs, wide plan hence shallow roof pitches, brick construction, concrete roof tiles and upvc windows and doors. Give the proposal is for bungalows, assume the scheme is designed for elderly occupants. This said, levels are not conducive for elderly people, the accommodation does not provide for disabled bathrooms/wcs. Consider that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed primary school, the streetscene and transition from the developed settlement to the countryside at this point. Therefore raise objection to the principle of developing the site. If there is overriding and convincing evidence to consider the principle acceptable, respectfully suggest that the design of buildings, layout, materials and potential future occupants be radically revisited. FORWARD PLAN the site is identified in the emerging Local Plan for educational purposes, although lying beyond the settlement limits. Policy S8 would normally apply, preventing development for most purposes, including residential. However, opportunity exists under policy H13, enabling the provision of affordable housing on sites adjoining settlement limits. This site falls within this category, subject to two criteria:- Firstly, the County Council Education Department confirms there is no short or long term need for additional school land in

this part of the town, including for potential pre-school proposals. Secondly, any permission is strictly conditioned to ensure that development is only allowed for affordable housing and the site is not suitable for private housing. Finally, are Highways happy with what appears to be a lack of footpath on this side of the North Road frontage? A tactile crossing is indicated as a termination and presumably a crossing point. This does not appear to be accompanied with any safe road crossing (e.g. pelican), which makes it very un-user friendly for elderly persons. Likewise, from a design perspective, if the community car park is to be used in evenings (with the school hall), is it a good design solution to have the car park access right in front of elderly persons living space? DRAINAGE OFFICER details have been submitted for agreement and ask that they be included in any permission. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER this development should make a contribution of £2,056 per dwelling, giving a total off-site contribution towards recreational facilities of £32,896, in line with local plan policy. HOUSING OFFICER fully supports this proposal which will help to satisfy a proven need.

PARISH COUNCIL approve.

POLICY CONTEXT

County Structure Plan policy STR1 on sustainable development is relevant. Part of this policy requires the development of 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. 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 9 states that the setting of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest should be maintained and where possible be enhanced.

WD/SP/2 of the West Deane Local Plan states that outside defined settlement limits, development will not be permitted unless it is for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or accords with a specific development plan policy or proposal. Policy WD/HO/6 states that small schemes of affordable housing to meet local needs will be permitted on sites on which housing would not otherwise be permitted subject to certain criteria being met. It is not considered that all the criteria are met with the proposal. Policy WD/HO/7 of the same plan sets out guidelines for the design and layout of new housing developments.

Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan includes general requirements for new developments. Policy S8 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. Policy H1 states that housing development will be permitted within defined limits of settlements provided certain criteria are met. Policy H13 does allow for small affordable housing schemes in areas outside the limits of settlements which meet the local community's needs for affordable housing provided certain criteria are met. It is not considered that all the criteria are met with the current proposal. Policy EN17 states that development proposals which would harm the setting of a listed building will not be permitted.

ASSESSMENT

The site is outside the limits of the settlement and although the Housing Officer confirms that there is a confirmed need for the proposed accommodation, the site is included in the Local Plan as a reservation for education purposes and the Conservation Officer objects to the proposal. I consider that the layout and form of the proposed dwellings does not respect the character and setting of the school and its surroundings. The Victorian school buildings, together with the recent extensions are of natural stone with steeply pitched roofs. The proposed development provides for bungalows with a deep plan form, shallow roof pitches, hipped roofs with concrete tiles and brick walls, which are not particularly traditional to the Wiveliscombe area. If development is to take place on this site, it needs to be of a form, design and appearance which respects the characteristics of the site and its surroundings..

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for reasons that:- (i) the proposed development would constitute an undesirable departure from the provisions of the Taunton Deane Local Plan in which the site is reserved for educational purposes and would be detrimental to the successful implementation of the principles of the Plan . (Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy C2); (ii) the site is located outside the limits of the settlement, where new residential development is not normally permitted. The Taunton Deane Local Plan does allow for small affordable housing schemes in such areas which meet the local community's needs for affordable housing provided certain criteria are met. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, not all of these criteria are met. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the street scene and transition from the developed settlement to the countryside at this point. It would consequently harm the character and landscape setting of the settlement more than is justified by the housing need to be met and the approach to the layout, landscaping, building designs and materials would not create a locally distinctive development well related to its surroundings, contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies H1 and H13; (iii) the proposed development of this site, as proposed, would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent primary school, which is a Grade II listed building, by reason of its siting, design and appearance. (Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy EN17).

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:

