

47/2004/009

MR GRAHAM WINTER

CHANGE OF USE OF CARE HOME, OFFICES AND TRAINING CENTRE TO PRIVATE SCHOOL, SCHOOL OFFICE AND SCHOOL RECREATION, BATH HOUSE FARM, WEST HATCH.

28807/21995

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

Bath House Farm is located to the west of the A358. Until recently the site was used as a restaurant and there was planning permission for the erection of 15 holiday units in the grounds. In June 2004 planning permission was granted for the change of use of the premises to office use. This proposal is for the change of use from offices to a private school. Bath House Farm is located off the A358, in the open countryside. It is adjacent to Nightingale Farm and the Scout Centre at Huish Woods. There would be no alterations to the external appearance of the buildings and the existing access and car parking facilities would be used. The school would generate up to 30 car movements in the morning and 30 car movements in the afternoon.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objections.

DRAINAGE OFFICER no observations. RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER a footpath crosses the field to the south of the Farmhouse and buildings.

PARISH COUNCIL consider the site unsuitable for a school for the following reasons:- the property is sited next to a busy main road; 30-50 vehicles a day would access the site off a dangerous, accident prone, junction off the A358; the perimeter fences are not secure; the A358 may be duelled in the future.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 Development in Somerset and the Exmoor National Park should:- be of high quality, good design and reflect local distinctiveness; 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; minimise the use of non renewable resources; conserve biodiversity and environmental assets, particularly nationally and internationally designated areas; ensure access to housing, employment and services; give priority to the continued use of previously developed land and buildings; enable access for people with disabilities. STR6 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 49 Proposals for development should be compatible with the existing transport infrastructure, or, if not, provision should be made for

improvements to infrastructure to enable development to proceed. In particular development should:- provide access for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and public transport; provide safe access to roads of adequate standard within the route hierarchy and, unless the special need for and benefit of a particular development would warrant an exception, not derive access directly from a National Primary or County Route; and, in the case of development which will generate significant freight traffic, be located close to rail facilities and/or National Primary Routes or suitable County Routes subject to satisfying other Structure Plan policy requirements.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policies S1 Proposals for development, taking account of any mitigation measures proposed, will be required to meet the following criteria, in addition to any other Development Plan policies which apply in a particular case:- (A) additional road traffic arising, taking account of any road improvements involved, would not lead to overloading of access roads, road safety problems or environmental degradation by fumes, noise, vibrations or visual impact; (B) 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; (D) the appearance and character of any affected landscape, settlement, building or street scene would not be harmed as a result of the development; (E) potential air pollution, water pollution, noise, dust, glare, heat, vibration and other forms of pollution or nuisance which could arise as a result of the development will not harm public health or safety, the amenity of individual dwellings or residential areas or other elements of the local or wider environment; (F) the health, safety or amenity of any occupants or users of the development will not be harmed by any pollution or nuisance arising from an existing or committed use; and (H) the site will be served by utility services necessary for the development proposed.

ASSESSMENT

The application is for a private school that would provide education for young people with challenging behaviour. The pupils would come from a wide geographical area and are already taken to and from school by car. In this case a location within Taunton would not necessarily lead to fewer car trips. A letter from the school has confirmed that the school has looked at other sites but these have been unacceptable for various planning reasons. The applicants consider that the Bath House Farm site offers the following: - a range of accommodation for a variety of education purposes and is of a high standard that would allow scope to enlarge the curriculum that can be offered; there is a small building that can be adapted to provide workshop facilities; the adjacent fields will allow outdoor activities including management of the land, agriculture, and rearing a small number of animals which is proven to help reluctant learners; there is a safe and enclosed car park well away from the main road. The site is located in the open countryside where development is strictly controlled. Whilst this site is within a non-sustainable location and only accessible by private car, it has contained a variety of commercial (restaurant/holiday accommodation & office) uses with the potential to generate significant traffic movements and the County Highway Authority do not object to the proposal on highway safety grounds. In terms of policy S1, the current proposal would provide an alternative use that would not materially affect the character of the area and would be unlikely to cause unacceptable nuisance to neighbours. Proposal considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of school use only and removal PD rights for buildings. Note re public footpath that crosses the site.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:- The impact of the proposed use is considered to be in accordance with Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy S1.

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: