

MR & MRS D NURCOMBE

**Demolition of stables and erection of 2 No. detached dwellings with garages, parking and associated works at Bashford Stables, West Bagborough Road, West Bagborough (resubmission of 45/18/0019)**

Location: BASHFORD STABLES, WEST BAGBOROUGH ROAD, WEST  
BAGBOROUGH, TAUNTON, TA4 3EF

Grid Reference: 317122.133425 Full Planning Permission

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**The above application was recommended for refusal and a decision was issued on 3 March 2020.**

**However under the Somerset West and Taunton Council Scheme of Delegation the application should have been reported to Planning Committee for consideration and determination as letters of support were received from West Bagborough Parish Council and 14 local residents.**

## **Recommendation**

**Recommended decision: Refusal**

- 1 In consideration of the above assessment, it can be concluded that planning permission should be refused. The proposed dwellings by reason of their size, design and height would be out of scale with the traditional housing in the area, appearing incongruous in this edge of the settlement location and would therefore detract from the character of the conservation area contrary to policies CP8 and DM1d of the Core Strategy and policies D7 a & b of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, The National Design Guide 2019, and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

## **Recommended Conditions (if applicable)**

### **Notes to Applicant**

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council works in a positive and pro-active way with applicants and looks

for solutions to enable the grant of planning permission. However in this case the applicant was unable to satisfy the key policy test and as such the application has been refused.

## **Proposal**

The proposal seeks planning permission for the demolition of stables and erection of 2 detached dwellings with garages, parking and associated works. Each property would be of the same design. The dwellings would be 10.5 metres wide, 12 metres deep at ground floor level and a depth of 7.5 metres at first floor level. The building would be 5 metres high at the eaves and 7.4 metres high at the ridge.

Each property would be served by a single bay garage and two off road parking spaces.

Both Plot 1 and Plot 2 would have an external private amenity area of circa 150 square metres.

The sites surface is currently mostly impermeable. The development proposed would reduce the impermeable footprint.

It is suggested the stables and associated Trekking business are to be decanted from the stables and all ponies rehoused in the existing agricultural barns to the north of the site (not the barn as identified and approved in planning application 45/18/0003).

The development would be finished with natural stone, of local provenance, concrete profile tiles for the roof, and would have wooden doors and windows.

## **Site Description**

The site is within the settlement boundary of the West Bagborough village, situated approximately 8.0 km north of Taunton. The site, and the wider village lies on the south-west slopes of the Quantock Hills and combines. The village has a wide variety of properties, with a wide range of building techniques and ages. Due to its availability, local red sandstone features heavily in buildings, both ancient and modern. The village has a 16th-century inn (the Rising Sun), a village hall, and a number of establishments offering accommodation.

The site is positioned at the location of the existing stable yard, between a large agricultural building and large residential property to the north, and residential properties to the south and west. To the east is open countryside. The site is not clearly visible when viewed from public vantage points. The north, as it is screened by the large residential property and the agricultural building. The south as it is set 45 metres back from the highway, on a private drive, and from the west, it is screened by residential properties and their associated gardens.

The site is within the settlement boundary, the Quantocks AONB and the West Bagborough Conservation Area. The site has no statutory designation constraints.

## **Relevant Planning History**

45/07/0020 - Replacement of Woolaway bungalow with dwelling. Conditional approval 10.03.2008

45/08/0012 - Erection of a dwelling to replace demolished Woolaway bungalow and erection of a garage. Conditional approval 04.11.2008

45/12/0009 - Formation of outdoor riding menage (retrospective). Conditional approval 07.08.2012

45/14/0021 - Erection of a 4 bay garage with self contained accommodation above (ancillary to main house and associated riding stables). Conditional approval 20.11.2014

45/14/0022 - Replacement of storage barn with single storey dual pitched agricultural barn. Conditional approval 20.11.2014

45/18/0003 - Erection of steel framed agricultural barn. Conditional approval 08.05.2018

45/18/0019 Demolition of stables and erection of 2 detached dwellings with garages, parking and associated works. Refused 05.07.19:

The proposed development by reason of the size, design and height of the dwellings would out of scale with the traditional housing in the area and would be prominent in this edge of settlement location and detract from the character of the conservation area contrary to policies CP8 and DM1d of the Core Strategy and policy D7A&B of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

## **Consultation Responses**

*WEST BAGBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL* – voted in favour of the application subject to strict conditions controlling any planned changes to design and layout.

*SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP* – no objection subject to conditions.

*SCC - ECOLOGY* – Initially had a holding objection until May bat survey data has been received. In response to these comments the applicant had discussions with the Ecology Officer and proposed preparing an addendum letter/mitigation plan including ‘worst case scenario’ mitigation/compensation to which the Ecology officer was agreeable.

*WESSEX WATER* – Wessex Water initially objected to this application and

requested that a private survey was undertaken to determine the precise location of the existing 150mm and 100mm public foul sewers which cross the site.

A revised drawing was required showing how the existing sewers will be protected.

The agent submitted a drawing which shows a proposed sewer diversion and the new connections within the application site to which Wessex Water responded

“The proposed diversion route of the 100mm public foul sewer as indicated on drawing J-1717-21 is acceptable”.

*CONSERVATION OFFICER* - Bashfords farmhouse is constructed of random rubble red sandstone with orange pantile roof and grey limestone curtilage wall. There is no conservation area appraisal for the conservation area however, the farmhouse is not listed but makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and is shown on the 1840 tithe map; the 1888 OS map shows courtyard outbuildings. The farm group includes the farmhouse which fronts onto the principal road at the heart of the conservation area but also has a characterful side elevation and the farm buildings grouped around a courtyard to the north east are viewable from the principal road. The buildings to be demolished are stables stepping up the road and a modern timber barn. The farm group is typical of Somerset farm groups with outbuildings on both sides of the track. The modern timber barn is of no heritage interest. There is no heritage statement to accompany the application and to consider the effect on the conservation area which is a designated heritage asset (NPPF 189).

The proposal is to demolish the stables and courtyard and modern barn and erect two executive houses with garages and car port.

Without information it cannot be determined whether the stables make a positive contribution to the conservation area for their own historic interest but the grouping as typical agricultural buildings to the rear of a farmhouse are visible from the principal road and make a contribution to the conservation area as they are more typical and relate well to the farmhouse.

The proposed houses are badly located within the group. One wall of the northern house, plot 2 is very close to a boundary wall and their front elevations shape around a camber as opposed to a courtyard or front directly onto the road as historic farm groups normally do. Detached garages and car ports also do not blend in happily with the farm group and conservation area as they are more urban in design. The southern car port directly against and protruding from the eastern elevation of the farmhouse will be particularly jarring.

The proposed dwellings are large detached houses with large block floor plans and are larger than other houses; the longer side elevations will be viewable from the principal street and will not blend in happily with other buildings.

it is not considered this application preserves the conservation area and will be less than substantial harm to the asset with no perceived public benefit.

*THE QUANTOCK HILLS AONB SERVICE* – Objects to this proposal to which the agent provided a detailed response.

## **Representations Received**

5 letters of objection were received, many of which drew attention to their objection to the previous scheme. The concerns raised related to:

- Need
- Location – AONB, Conservation Area
- Access
- Flooding
- Planting
- Design
- Scale
- Traffic
- Unsustainable

14 letters of support were received in regards to:

- Design and scale;
- Use of Brownfield Land;
- In the Settlement Boundary;
- Need for Family Housing;
- Visual Improvement (so betterment);
- Potential Economic Benefits

## **Planning Policy Context**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

- D7 – Design Quality;
- D9 – A co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning;
- D10 – Dwelling Sizes;
- DM1 – General requirements;
- DM4 – Design;
- CP8 – Environment;
- CP1 – Climate Change;
- SP1 – Sustainable Development Locations

## **Local finance considerations**

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The application is for residential development outside the settlement limits of Taunton and Wellington where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £125 per square metre. Based on current rates, the CIL receipt for this development is approximately £50,000.00. With index linking this increases to approximately £71,000.00.

## **Determining issues and considerations**

The main issues in the determination of this application are: the impact on visual and nearby users' amenity; Heritage Assets; Highways; Impact on the AONB; Ecology; 5 Year Housing Land Supply and the principle of development.

The development relates to an existing yard area and 'split' quadrangle of single storey stable blocks. The site is nestled between houses and farm buildings to the north (which are raised higher) and residential properties to the south. The site is also within the West Bagborough Settlement Boundary, so is within a defined 'built up' area.

The policies against which it will be considered are Policies D7 (Design Quality); D9 (A co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning); D10 (Dwelling Sizes) of the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan 2016 and Policies DM1 (General requirements); DM4 (Design); CP8 (Environment); CP1 (Climate Change); SP1 (Sustainable Development Locations) of the TDBC Adopted Core Strategy 2011-2028.

### Principle:

As the site is within the settlement boundary, and is on previously developed land, the delivery of housing in such circumstances is supported in principle. Full support is subject to accordance with other policies of the Development Plan.

### Amenity:

The position of fenestration on each of the dwellings is such that there would be no lines of direct sight to other properties nearby.

The size of the dwellings, being 3 bedrooms, intended for up to 6 people and their associated private outdoor amenity space is such that it would accord with the size requirements detailed in Policies D10 and D12.

In light of the above it is considered impacts on neighbouring amenity would be unaffected, and the amenity of future residents is suitable and one that would accord with policy of the Development Plan.

### Heritage Impact:

The site is identified as being in the West Bagborough Conservation Area (this being a statutory heritage asset designation). Applications for development in a conservation area must be considered with regard to the general duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

The site is not near any identified listed buildings.

In terms of local vernacular and urban grain, it should be noted that within the 100 radius of the site there are large, relatively modern detached properties, Argent House, dormer style bungalows, Easter Cottage, modern style, traditional finished two and half storey detached property Adelaide Cottage) and more historic terraced properties (Post Box Cottage, The Old Post Office and Tapp Cottage). In addition there is the Rising Sun Public House, a two storey white washed thatched building. In essence, the area around the site, in this part of West Bagborough has an eclectic mix of styles and sizes, however a number of these are considered to detract from the character of the area.

The previous report concluded that:

“Erecting two large, detached two storey properties facing east in this edge of settlement location on the northern side of the road would add to a modern built form that due to their size and design are not locally distinctive and so detract from the character of the area and this would not be offset by their material construction. Policy CP8 seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment and it is considered that the scheme would harm these interests”

During the course of the previous application comments from the Conservation Officer stated that the dwellings are not of traditional form and their height would have a strong visual impact on the area, located towards the edge of the settlement.

The West Bagborough Conservation Area design characteristics include narrow gables and low lying roofs with steep pitches. Any new development, therefore should respond positively to these features as per the advice in the National Design Guide 2019 and the Local Design Guide, which is currently at consultation stage. This proposal has reduced the overall scale of the properties by reducing the first floor depth by approximately 2.5 metres and the overall height by approximately 1 metre. These amendments, unfortunately are not considered to overcome the previous issues raised. The reduced roof height has compromised the pitch of the roof which now appears too flat and subsequently more modern. The depth of the properties is still considered too deep and the gable, which is visible from the main street, would appear incongruous. Whilst modern houses do appear within the Conservation Area, as previously mentioned they are considered to detract from the character of the area, and to use these as a precedent would go against the definition of the Conservation Area which is to 'preserve and enhance the special character and appearance'.

Efforts have also been made to reduce the impact by creating a more street scene like appearance but the reorientation of the dwellings and garages is still not considered to respect the existing private access and neighbouring properties to the south of the site. It is considered that the intended 'cottage style' appearance has not been achieved and the design of the dwellings fails to reflect the local vernacular, contrary to Policy D7 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, the National Design Guide 2019 and, the emerging Local Design Guide 2020.

The development will be finished in natural stone which is acceptable as it is a typical finish to many buildings in and near the village of West Bagborough. The use of red concrete tiles for the roof, however, is considered to be a 'watered down' version of the local vernacular and is therefore inappropriate.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states:

*'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*

In this case, while the development would create homes within the settlement boundary, with the potential for job creation (building and subsequent services provision), the size and scale of this housing is not in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area.

#### Highways:

The Highways Authority (Somerset County Council) have considered the proposal, drawing attention to their previous comments in which they raised no objection providing a number of conditions were attached if an approval was issued.

#### Impact on the AONB:

Objections received, including those from the Quantock Hills AONB Unit, have suggested the scheme would be to the detriment of the character of the AONB.

However, of principle consideration in this instance is the advice contained in paragraph 172 of the NPPF. It reads:

*'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*

The village is identified as one detailed in Policy SP1 - Sustainable Development Locations. This implies that the village is sustainable for certain forms of development.

In addition, and to clarify, Policy SP1 states that where Villages have a



settlement boundary, such as West Bagborough, there is:

‘... some scope for small scale proposals within settlement limits’

The position of the development, being in the settlement boundary and set below the ridge height of the large agricultural barn to the north and set against the back drop of, and in context with the village, when viewed from the Quantock Hills, is such that the landscape would have a minimal impact when viewed from further afield. In addition, as the site is within the settlement boundary, this small scale development is considered acceptable.

### Ecology

As stated in the consultations section, there were concerns raised by the Council's Ecology officer which have now been satisfied through the submission of an addendum to the submitted Bat report and Bat mitigation plans.

### Conclusion

In consideration of the above assessment, it can be concluded that planning permission should be refused. The proposed dwellings by reason of their size, design and height would be out of scale with the traditional housing in the area, appearing incongruous in this edge of the settlement location and would therefore detract from the character of the conservation area contrary to policies CP8 and DM1d of the Core Strategy and policies D7 a & b of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, The National Design Guide 2019, and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

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

**Contact Officer: Abigail James**