16. Planning Appeals

Head of Service: Simon Gale – Head of Development & Building Control
Lead Officer: Andrew Gunn, Deputy Planning Team Leader – Holyrood
Contact Details: andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462192

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Background

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the Committee.

Report Detail

Appeals Lodged

Written Representation

Combe St. Nicholas – Erection of 2 no. dwellings on land off Combe Wood Lane – Colin Mear Engineering Ltd. – 06/03151/OUT.

Crewkerne – Change of use and alterations to provide seven residential units, Crewkerne Baptist Church, North Street – Brookvale Homes – 06/04126/FUL.

Crewkerne – Change of use and alterations to provide seven residential units, Crewkerne Baptist Church, North Street – Brookvale Homes – 06/04131/LBC.

Appeals Dismissed

Written Representation

Chard – Erection of a bungalow to rear of 4 Snowdon Heights – Mr. T. Hawker – 06/02134/FUL.

Officer's Delegated Decision - Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 43-44.

Combe St. Nicholas – Conversion of existing with extension for use as annexe to Home Farm House, Sticklepath – Mr. & Mrs. M. Pearce – 06/02822/FUL.

Officers Delegated Decision - Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 45-46.

Appeals Allowed

AW

Written Representation

Misterton – Residential Development on land at Concrete Works, Mill Lane – Messrs. Cole. Holman & Linnee – 06/01693/OUT.

Officer's Delegated Decision – Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 47-49.

Informal Hearing

Combe St. Nicholas – Proposed erection of residential development works with parking provision and demolition of an existing skittle alley, land rear of The Green Dragon – Mr. & Mrs. T. Salway-Roberts – 05/03238/FUL.

Officer's Recommendation – Grant Permission. Area West Committee Decision (15/2/06) – Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 50-53.

Appeals Withdrawn

Public Inquiry

Chard – Erection of 12 no. residential dwellings on land rear of Fore Street – The Cooperative Group – 05/02955/OUT.

Background Papers: Application files 06/03151/OUT, 06/04126/FUL, 06/04131/LBC, 06/02134/FUL, 06/02822/FUL, 06/01693/OUT, 05/03238/FUL, 05/02955/OUT.



Site visit made on 28 February 2007

by Gareth Symons BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
© 0117 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 8 March 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/06/2025962 Plot to rear of 4 Snowdon Heights, Chard, Somerset, TA20 1QY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr T Hawker against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
- The application Ref: 06/02134/FUL, dated 20 June 2006, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2006
- The development proposed is to erect a 2 bedroom bungalow on a separate site with access via Shepherds Lane.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

- 2. My visit should have been carried out in the company of the main parties. However, the Council failed to attend. With the agreement of those present I made an unaccompanied site inspection. I was able to see the site and its surroundings from Shepherds Lane.
- 3. I have noted the appellants offer to reduce the height of the bungalow and the request that this design modification could be covered by a planning condition. However, such an alteration would materially change the nature of the proposal and I must determine the appeal on the basis of the details before me.

Main Issues

4. I consider the main issues to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and highway safety.

Reasons

5. The properties in Snowdon Heights have a mostly uniform layout. They are generally set back from Shepherds Lane in large plots that give this side of the lane a relatively open character. Dividing the rear garden to No 4 would interrupt this rhythm of development. In addition the proposed location of the bungalow squeezed into one corner of the site right next to the lane would bring about a cramped appearance. This would be at odds with the spaciousness I have identified. I note that other parts of Chard may be developed at greater densities. Also, hedges and fences could limit views of the new dwelling. However, these points would not overcome the harm to the character and appearance of the area.



- 6. In the above context, the proposal would not accord with the design aims of policies ST5 and ST6 from the adopted South Somerset Local Plan.
- 7. The presence of a roadside wall means that the junction of Shepherds Lane with the main road falls well short of the recognised visibility distance to the right that is required for safe egress on to roads. The narrow width of the lane also means that vehicles turning out of and into the lane could conflict. Proposed improvements to the left would do little to alleviate the situation. I appreciate that previous decisions by the Council have increased the number of dwellings along the lane. These have no doubt added to the number of vehicles using the access. I also note that there are no recorded accidents here. However, so poor is the visibility for emerging drivers, I am satisfied that these other developments should not be seen as a precedent for further increasing the vehicular use of the junction.
- 8. It also seems to me that if I were to allow this appeal it could itself potentially set a precedent for further development. Notwithstanding that the appeal site already has an access on to the lane I disagree with the appellant's view that the rear garden of no 4 is the only one large enough to accommodate another dwelling. There are several houses along the lane with sizeable gardens in which new dwellings could be located. Granting planning permission in this instance would set a harmful example making it difficult to resist such future proposals. Cumulatively these would exacerbate the harm to highway safety.
- 9. In these circumstances the proposal would be contrary to the highway safety aims of policy 49 from the adopted Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.
- 10. I note the suggested arrangements for the lane's upkeep and that an additional passing place could be provided. I also acknowledge that the proposed bungalow would not cause undue harm to residential amenity. Furthermore I am aware that this application attempts to overcome design concerns raised following the refusal of an earlier scheme. There are frustrations that the Council did not discuss the application before determining it and about inconsistent decision making, here and elsewhere. However, none of these outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area, and to highway safety.
- 11. I have taken account of all other matters, including how the dwelling could contribute to the stock of smaller retirement properties in the South West. However, none dissuade me from my conclusion that the proposal would be unacceptable. Therefore planning permission is denied and the appeal fails.

Gareth Symons

INSPECTOR

S.SOM.D.C.

0 9 MAR 2007



Site visit made on 26 February 2007

by Ken Barton BArch DipTP Registered Architect

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
2 0117 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 13 March 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/06/2032395

Home Farmhouse, Stickle Path, Combe St. Nicholas, Chard, Somerset TA20 3HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs M Pearce against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
- The application Ref.06/02822/FUL dated 2 August 2006 was refused by notice dated 27 October 2006.
- The development proposed is conversion of existing stone outbuilding with extension for use as annexe to Home Farmhouse.

S.SOM.D.C.

1 5 MAR 2007

RESOLUTION CENTRE

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Reasons

- Home Farmhouse is situated in attractive countryside, outside any settlement boundary, in a location where residential development is strictly controlled. The stone outbuilding which the Appellants wish to convert and extend is separated from the farmhouse by an access drive which leads past the buildings and a parking/turning area up to a sizeable stable building and a horse exercise area. The outbuilding has a corrugated sheet roof and appears to be in reasonable structural condition. It is adjoined on one side by an open-fronted leanto structure. The proposal is that the outbuilding would be converted into a kitchen/dining room at ground floor level with a bedroom above it. The lean to would be replaced by a stone built extension to the outbuilding, with about the same footprint as the lean-to, and would accommodate an office and bathroom at ground floor level with a lounge above it. The Appellants have explained that they wish to use the extended outbuilding as an annexe to the main house, to serve as a quiet office space/study area plus guest accommodation and also as future accommodation for elderly parents. No details of personal circumstances or need for the space have been given in the representations, but the Council have indicated that the principle of an annexe could be acceptable. They are concerned, however, about the size and nature of the extended building and its position away from the house, and contend that it would be tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling in the countryside.
- 3. I understand the Council's concerns and I also would have reservations as to the proposed overall size of the annexe, without more detailed and convincing justification. On the other hand, the stone outbuilding is of some architectural and historic interest and occupies a conspicuous position on the entrance driveway into the house. It would be desirable, in my view, if it could be restored and brought into use along the lines envisaged, both in terms of retaining part of the older fabric of the farm and in enhancing the setting of the farmhouse

and the character of the locality. Whilst the lean-to structure is not especially attractive in itself however, especially in its current somewhat dilapidated condition, I consider that its replacement by an extension of the bulk proposed would seriously diminish any visual benefit that might otherwise be gained. To my mind the extension would be seen as overly large in proportion to the existing outbuilding and the effect would be materially detrimental to the character of the outbuilding and its rural setting and relationship to the farmhouse. As a detailed design consideration, I would also have reservations about the proposed arched window in the gable of the extension, which would give that part of the structure a chapel-like appearance out of keeping with the rest of the building and its situation. The overall harmful effect, in my opinion, would not be acceptable and could not be offset by any conditions that might reasonably be attached to a grant of planning permission. I consider that approval of the proposal would conflict with the aims of South Somerset Local Plan policies ST3, ST5, ST6 which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development adequately respects its setting and is appropriate to its locality.

The Appellants prepared sketches showing a smaller extension, but they made it clear that they wished the appeal to proceed only on the basis of the extension shown on the formal application drawings. The sketch scheme was not addressed by the parties in their written representations and it would not be appropriate for me to comment in any detail on its merits or otherwise, since there may be relevant matters of which I am not aware. It does seem to me however that a reduced scheme of that sort could be more visually acceptable than that which is before me. It could also reduce any concerns, that despite the safeguards that could be provided by a condition to tie use of the annexe to the main house, there could be pressure in the longer term for its occupation as an independent residential unit. These considerations do not of course affect my views as to the likely harmful visual effects of the 9.SOM.D.C.

15 MAR 200

RESOLUTION CENTRE proposed scheme or my conclusion that the appeal should not succeed.

K. Barton

INSPECTOR



Site visit made on 28 February 2007

by Gareth Symons BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
© 0117 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 13 March 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/06/2031727 Concrete Works, Mill Lane, Misterton, Somerset, TA18 7RZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Messers Cole, Homan and Linnee against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
- The application Ref: 06/01693/OUT, dated 2 May 2006, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2006.
- The development proposed is residential development.

Decision

- 1. I allow the appeal, and grant planning permission for residential development at the Concrete Works, Mill Lane, Misterton, Somerset, TA18 7RZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 06/01693/OUT, dated 2 May 2006, and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto, and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development begins and the development shall be carried out as approved.
 - 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Procedural Matters

- 2. My visit should have been carried out in the company of the main parties. However, the Council failed to attend. With the agreement of the appellants' agent who was present and the Council, who were contacted from the site by telephone, I made an unaccompanied site inspection. I went into the site and also saw it from the road.
- 3. The application is in outline form with all matters reserved for later approval. A site layout plan indicates that the land could accommodate three dwellings.

Main Issue

4. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

- 5. Policy STR6 from the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and policy ST3 from the South Somerset Local Plan generally seek to restrict development outside defined settlements. Because the appeal site is in the countryside the proposal would conflict with the development plan in this respect. However, an underlying purpose of the relevant policies is largely to safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside. I shall therefore examine the actual impact of the proposal bearing in mind that it would be on previously developed land at the very edge of Misterton.
- 6. The site is tucked against a large railway embankment while on the other side is an existing house. There is also a group of dwellings opposite the site entrance. As such the site is not prominent in the landscape or isolated from existing development. I accept that the proposal would change the currently industrial appearance of the site. However, a residential use would not look out of place given the presence of other houses very nearby. The railway does detach the site from the defined settlement. However, for the reasons given this does not necessarily give the site a rural character and nor would it make the proposed use unacceptable in visual terms. Concerns over the layout and appearance of the dwellings could be controlled at the reserved matters stage.
- 7. While the proposal would conflict with development plan aims that seek to strictly control development outside settlement boundaries, this is outweighed by the absence of harm that would occur. As such, the proposal would accord with the aims of policies 5 and EC3 from the Structure and Local Plan respectively as they relate to protecting the character and quality of the landscape.
- 8. Turning to other matters, despite some lingering concerns about possible continued employment use of the site, this did not form a reason for refusing the application. In addition, the Council's Economic Development Officer accepts that following a robust marketing exercise there was no serious local interest in the site. I note that the next door neighbour expressed an interest in buying the site but I have little detail about the extent of any alternative employment uses.
- 9. There are concerns about highway safety. However, the local highway authority did not object, preferring instead the traffic connected with a residential use as opposed to heavy goods vehicles associated with the concrete works.
- 10. Regarding the relationship with adjoining development, this would be taken into account under a future submission. I note that other houses are being constructed nearby and that further houses are planned in the wider area. However, this does not necessarily mean that houses on this site would be unacceptable. Several persons, including the Parish Council, have expressed a preference to see affordable or starter homes. The scheme does not propose such accommodation and it could not be controlled in this instance.
- 11. I do not set aside the settlement boundary lightly. However, accepting development here is warranted because of the specific circumstances of the case which include the priority given

to the continued use of previously developed land. It follows that my decision is unlikely to set a precedent as feared by a local resident.

- 12. Conditions seeking to control external materials, appearance, and access are not necessary as these matters would be dealt with when applying for reserved matters approval. Further, it would be inappropriate to impose conditions that seek to control the layout of, for example, turning spaces within the site. The submitted layout plan is indicative only and the siting of development has again been reserved for future consideration.
- 13. I have taken into account all other matters but find none of sufficient weight to alter my conclusion that planning permission should be granted. Therefore the appeal succeeds.

Gareth	Symons
--------	--------

INSPECTOR



Hearing held on 3 April 2007 Site visit made on 3 April 2007

by Simon Miles BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
4/09 Kite Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
Contact S17 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 10 April 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/06/2024709/NWF Land adjoining the Green Dragon, Combe St Nicholas, Chard, Somerset TA20 3NH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs T Salway-Roberts against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
- The application Ref 05/03238/FUL, dated 5 December 2005, was refused by notice dated 8 March 2006
- The development proposed is a residential development with parking provision and demolition of an existing skittle alley.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is allowed, and planning permission granted subject to conditions set out below in the Formal Decision.

Procedural Matter

1. At the Hearing an application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs T Salway-Roberts against South Somerset District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Reasons

- 2. The appeal relates to a parcel of land including an existing skittle alley and beer garden at the Green Dragon public house, within the Somerset village of Combe St Nicholas. The Council does not oppose the principle of residential development on the site and indicated at the Hearing that the proposed development was in accordance with its housing and design policies. However, the Council is concerned that the loss of facilities at the pub would prejudice the ability of the business to adapt in the future, thereby undermining the long-term viability of the public house. Policy MS1 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011 seeks to resist development that would lead to the loss of local shops or services where this would result in a significant or total loss of such services to the community. There was broad agreement between the parties that the existing pub provides an important service within the village, a view which I share. I therefore consider that the main issue is whether the proposed development would undermine the viability of the public house, leading to a significant or total loss of such facilities within the community.
- 3. The appellants have provided detailed financial information about the business. This evidence demonstrates a number of important points. Firstly, it is clear to me that the existing pub is a viable business. Secondly, it is apparent that the skittle alley generates a very small proportion of the overall turnover and profit. Although I have not been provided with any documentary evidence about the use of the beer garden, the appellants stated at the Hearing that it is only used occasionally and, in their opinion, it is not essential to the



success of the business. Thirdly, the appellants have sought to develop the business by various other means, for example, by staging live music events in the public bar. In my opinion, there is no evidence whatsoever that the loss of either the skittle alley and/or the beer garden would undermine the viability of the business. On the contrary, all the evidence suggests that the pub would continue to be viable in the future. Moreover, the Council did not contest this evidence and, at the Hearing, accepted that the loss of the skittle alley and beer garden would not, of itself, undermine the viability of the pub.

- 4. The Council is nevertheless concerned that, if existing facilities are lost and the size of the landholding is reduced, the ability of the business to adapt to change in the future would be compromised. However, even without the skittle alley and beer garden, I do not consider that the pub would be unusually small by rural standards, as it would retain a lounge and a good-sized public bar. Moreover, it does not necessarily follow that a reduction in the size of the site would lead to a reduction in the potential profit that could be generated by the business. Indeed, at the Hearing the appellants' accountant explained that, in rural areas, small pubs are often more profitable than larger establishments, since small pubs require less maintenance and less expenditure on staff, thereby reducing costs. I therefore consider the Council's concern, which seems to me to be founded on nothing more than conjecture and speculation, to be groundless.
- 5. Overall, I find no evidence that the proposed development would undermine the viability of the public house. I therefore see no reason why the proposal would lead to a significant or total loss of such facilities within the community and, accordingly, I find no conflict with Policy MS1.

Other Matters

Various concerns have been raised by local residents and the Parish Council. However, I consider the design and layout of the development to be appropriate to the scale, form and character of surrounding development. The layout and orientation of the development is such that, in my opinion, the living conditions at neighbouring properties would not be significantly harmed in terms of light, outlook, privacy, noise and disturbance. I accept that the proposed dwellings would generate some additional traffic. However, there are no objections to the proposal on highway grounds from either the Council or the highway authority and I do not consider that a small-scale development such as this would have a significant adverse effect on traffic conditions on local roads. Local residents are concerned about parking in the vicinity of the pub. However, whilst there may occasionally be some overspill parking on surrounding roads when the pub is particularly busy, that is no different to the present situation and, having regard to the national advice in Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing and Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 Transport, I am satisfied that the proposal includes sufficient provision for parking. I note that an existing public right of way would be diverted. However, this is a separate matter that is being dealt with by means of an appropriate diversion order and dedication agreement between the District and County Councils.

Conditions

7. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council, in addition to the standard time limit, and the advice in Circular 11/95 *The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions*. Where appropriate I have amended the Council's suggested wording to accord with that



advice. I will impose conditions in relation to materials and to secure a scheme of landscape works, including means of enclosure, and to protect the hedge and trees on the southern boundary of the site, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. I will deal with the landscape matters in a single condition. It is necessary to control the details relating to the construction of the estate road, access and car parking, in the interests of highway safety. However, I propose to simplify the Council's suggested conditions, which I consider to be unnecessarily complex and repetitious, and to deal with these matters in a single condition. I will impose a condition in order to secure a satisfactory method of disposal of surface water drainage.

8. Permitted development rights should only be removed exceptionally. In this case, given the small size of the plots and the relationship between proposed and existing dwellings, I consider that it is necessary to exercise control over any future extensions to the dwellings in order to protect the living conditions at neighbouring properties. However, I see no reason why such a condition should include porches and curtilage buildings, such as sheds and greenhouses. Similarly, I see any justification for restricting permitted development rights in relation to the erection of satellite dishes or to control the installation of external services and meter boxes. A condition is necessary to control the insertion of additional windows on the first floor side and rear elevations of the dwellings in order to avoid problems of overlooking. However, a blanket condition of the type suggested by the Council is not necessary. It is not necessary, in my opinion, to impose a condition in relation to levels, as there is no significant slope across the site.

Conclusions

9. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Formal Decision

- 10. I allow the appeal and grant planning permission for a residential development with parking provision and demolition of an existing skittle alley at land adjoining the Green Dragon, Combe St Nicholas, Chard, Somerset TA20 3NH in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 05/03238/FUL, dated 5 December 2005, and the plans submitted therewith (numbered GDRD2SLP1 and GDRD2, dated November 2005), subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) No development shall take place until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 3) No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme showing details of new trees and shrubs and the programme for their planting, any existing trees/hedges to be retained, and details of all screen fencing, walls or other means of enclosure, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscaping scheme shall be carried out as approved before the end of the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the development or the completion of the development, whichever is sooner. If, within a period of five years



from the date of planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies, another of the same species and size shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

- 4) The hedge and trees on or adjacent to the southern boundary of the site shall be retained and fencing for the protection the hedge and trees shall be erected in accordance with a scheme of works to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development. The fencing shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written approval of the local planning authority.
- Development shall not begin until details of the construction of the access, estate road and parking spaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. None of the dwellings hereby permitted shall be occupied until the access, estate road and parking spaces have been constructed in accordance with the approved details and retained for such purposes thereafter.
- 6) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no development falling within Classes A, B and C of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall be erected.
- 7) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows (other than those expressly authorised by this permission) shall be constructed on the first-floor east, west or south elevations of the dwellings hereby permitted.
- 8) Prior to the commencement of development, details of the method of disposal of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Simon Miles

INSPECTOR

