

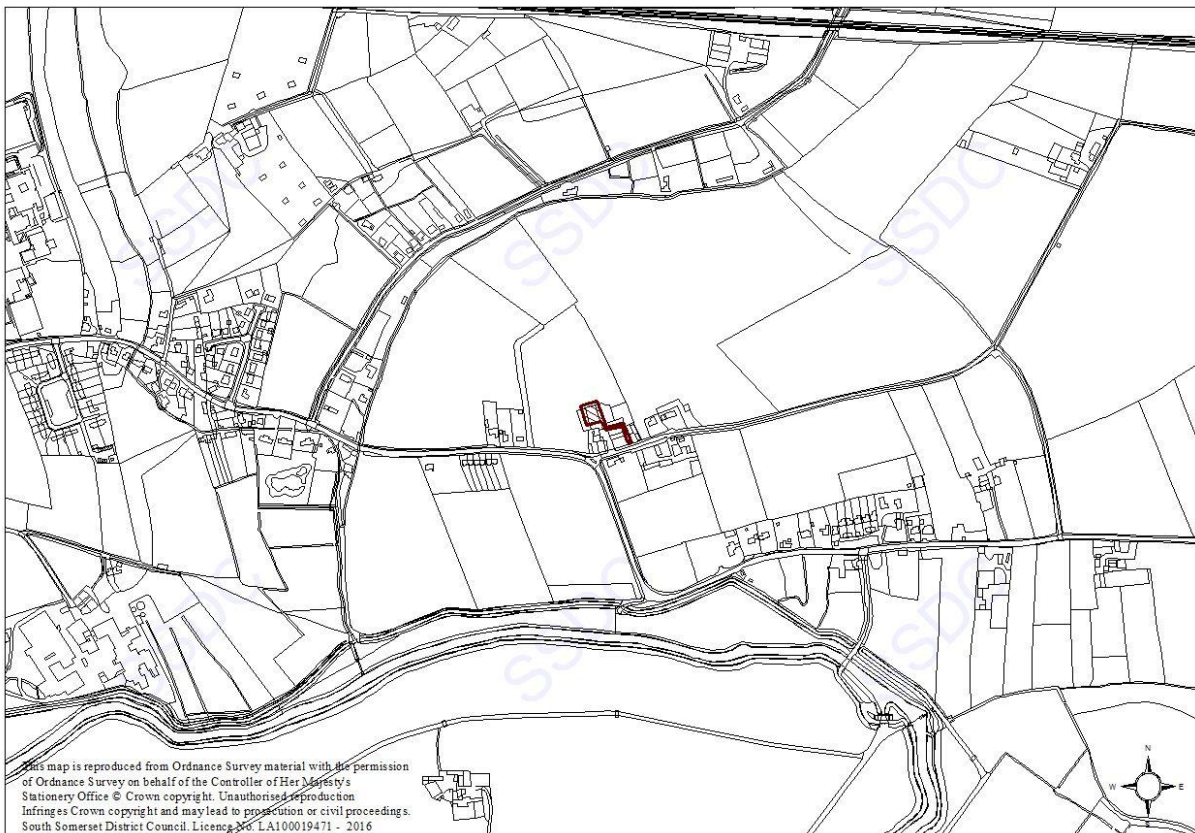
Officer Report on Planning Application: 16/03175/FUL

Proposal :	Redevelopment of existing agricultural building to provide two 1.5 storey semi-detached dwellings
Site Address:	Highfield Farm, Windmill Lane, Pibsbury
Parish:	Huish Episcopi
LANGPORT AND HUISH Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr Clare Aparicio Paul
Recommending Case Officer:	John Millar Tel: (01935) 462465 Email: john.millar@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	15th September 2016
Applicant :	Mr & Mrs David
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Clive Miller, Sanderley Studio, Kennel Lane, Langport TA10 9SB
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is referred to committee at request of the Area Chair with the agreement of the Vice Chair to enable the issues raised to be fully debated by Members.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The application relates to a former farm site situated on the north side of Windmill Lane in Pibsbury, a loose linear collection of properties located along the A372 to the east of Huish Episcopi. The site comprises a large portal frame agricultural building to the north of the former farmhouse. The remainder of the site to the south and south east is currently being developed following the grant of planning permission for the erection of two new dwellings and a barn conversion. Neighbouring properties are located to the east and south with open land to the north and west of the site. The site is also located approximately 585m from Wet Moor SSSI and 325m from Muchelney level County Wildlife Site. A concurrent application has been made on the land immediately to the east for outline planning permission for the erection of two single storey dwellings.

This application is made for the demolition of the existing agricultural building and replacement with a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The proposed dwellings are to have the appearance of an L shaped barn conversion and be constructed from natural stone with double roman roof tiles. Access is proposed via the new access arrangements provided for use by the new development to the south east.

HISTORY

- 16/03755/S73A: Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) to planning permission 15/00931/FUL to allow for slight repositioning of plot 2 and single storey veranda to plot 1 - Pending consideration.
- 16/03716/OUT: Outline application for the erection of two detached bungalow - Pending consideration.
- 16/01490/S73: Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 15/000931/FUL by substitution of revised plans 6408 - 01B,04B,05B and 02A - Permitted with conditions.
- 15/00931/FUL: Detailed design and layout for two dwellings, alterations to approved access

- and parking arrangements and the erection of a car port - Permitted with conditions.
- 14/04241/S73: Application to vary Condition 2 of planning permission 13/05050/FUL, with revised plans no's 6407-02, and 6407-01a (Porch enlargement) - Permitted with conditions.
- 13/05051/OUT: Conversion of redundant farm building to a dwelling - Permitted with conditions.
- 13/05050/FUL: Conversion of redundant farm building to a dwelling - Permitted with conditions.
- 13/03902/FUL: Proposed alterations and extensions to Highfield House - Permitted with conditions.
- 03/01738/AGN: Erection of an agricultural storage barn - Permitted with conditions.

POLICY

The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted on the 5th March 2015. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the adopted local plan now forms part of the development plan. As such, decisions on the award of planning permission should be made in accordance with this development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Legislation and national policy are clear that the starting point for decision-making is the development plan, where development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

SD1 - Sustainable Development

SS1 - Settlement Strategy

SS2 - Development in Rural Settlements

SS4 - District Wide Housing Provision

SS5 - Delivering New Housing Growth

HG4 - Affordable Housing Provision

TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

TA6 - Parking Standards

EQ2 - General Development

National Planning Policy Framework

Core Planning Principles - Paragraph 17

Chapter 4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

Chapter 11 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Design

Natural Environment

Rural Housing

Planning Obligations

Policy-related Material Considerations

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (September 2013)

Somerset County Council Highways Development Control - Standing Advice (June 2015)

CONSULTATIONS

Parish Council: No objections.

SCC Highway Authority: I am aware that there are two applications within the blue line site of the application that are being run simultaneously. One is for the erection of 2 detached bungalows and this application is for the redevelopment of an existing agricultural building to provide two 1.5 storey dwellings. The proposed access is to be used by both of the proposed applications.

The average dwelling generates 6-8 vehicle movements per day, however, this application must be considered alongside application 16/0317/OUT as it will have a direct impact on the proposed access. This will mean that there could be an additional 12-16 vehicle movements giving a total of approximately 24 vehicle movements. Between the two applications the proposed level of traffic that the site would generate is not deemed to be severe and it would be unreasonable to recommend refusal on these grounds.

The access is onto Windmill Lane which is an unclassified road that is subject to a 60mph speed limit. Windmill Lane can be considered to be lightly trafficked rural road and although it is within a 60mph speed limit, vehicle speeds are likely to be much lower due to the nature of the road and the proximity of the proposal to the A372. From my onsite observations vehicle speeds were lower than 30mph and as such Manual for Streets (MfS) can be used to establish the required visibility. Drawing number 6525-100A shows that the proposal has provided visibility splays of 2.4x43 metres with no obstruction greater than 600mm. The Highway Authority would not raise an objection to this aspect of proposal as it complies with the specifications as laid out in MfS.

Turning to the internal aspect of the proposal, the applicant must ensure that there is enough provision for parking and suitable space for turning within the application site. The application site sits within Zone C of the Somerset Parking Strategy (SPS). The application is for 2 four bedroomed units and Zone C of the SPS would require there to be 3.5 spaces per four bedroomed dwelling plus visitor parking. Drawing number 6525-100A shows that there will be a total of 3 spaces per dwelling which is below the specified amount in the SPS. However, the SPS offers guidance for parking levels and as such on balance the levels of parking would not draw an objection from the Highway Authority. The SPS also specifies that bicycle storage should be provided for the dwellings and enough space should be allocated for one bicycle per bedroom. This can be with the use of a garden shed but there should be direct access to the rear of the property from the front.

The applicant must ensure that under no circumstance should water be discharged onto the highway.

To prevent any loose material being deposited onto the highway, the applicant must ensure that the first 6 metres of the access as measured from the edge of the carriageway should be fully consolidated, i.e. no loose stone or gravel. This could avoid a potential highway safety concern.

The Highway Authority therefore raise no objection subject to the addition of suggested conditions.

Natural England: No objections.

SSDC Landscape Architect: I recollect the site from earlier applications, and am aware that we have already consented both conversion and new-build residential works here.

The farm site is currently characterised by both traditional and 20th century framed farm buildings. Whilst in a rural context, it has residential properties in close proximity, although these are a small collective that is an outlayer of the main settlement of Huish Episcopi to the west. The earlier consents allowed for the removal of the majority of the farm structures, and their replacement by domestic form and from a landscape standpoint, it was considered that this would bring about some reduction of the scale of built form on the site, and would relate to the adjacent residential properties. With containment of the new build and the extent of their domestic curtilage, and provision of landscape enhancement in the form of orchard planting, on balance I considered the proposals to be acceptable.

The current applications intend further residential development to the rear (north) of the current approved footprint. It would bring about an uncharacteristic concentration of residential form, in an aggregation that is at variance with the loose-grained and low level presence of established dwellings in the vicinity, which in most part address the lane. Mindful of the rural context, I view the proposal as failing to correspond to local character, and thus failing to comply with LP policy EQ2.

REPRESENTATIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The site is located to the east of Huish Episcopi, approximately 400m from the developed edge of Huish Episcopi, 800m from the public house, 1.3km from the entrance to Huish Episcopi Academy and 2km from Langport town centre (junction of The Hill and North Street/Cheapside). Policy SS1 (Settlement Strategy) highlights the areas where new development is expected to be focused, grouping certain towns and villages into a hierarchy, of settlements including the Strategically Significant Town (Yeovil), Primary Market Towns, Local Market Towns and Rural Centres. All other settlements, are 'Rural Settlements', which policy SS1 states "will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply (subject to the exceptions identified in policy SS2. Policy SS2 states:

"Development in Rural Settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) will be strictly controlled and limited to that which:

- Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or
- Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- Meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for one or more of the types of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general. Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation. Proposals for housing development should only be permitted in Rural Settlements that have access to two or more key services listed at paragraph 5.41 (i.e. local convenience shop, post office, pub, children's play area/sports pitch, village hall/community centre, health centre, faith facility, primary school)."

Usually applications in locations such as this would be considered against the settlement strategy contained within Local Plan policies SS1 and SS2, however the Local Planning

Authority are currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing sites. As such, several recent appeal decisions have confirmed that in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework these policies should be considered out of date, as they are relevant to the supply of housing. In such circumstances, the main consideration will be whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

As a starting point, the site forms part of a small group of buildings separate from the main settlement of Pibsbury to the south, and Huish Episcopi to the west. As such, this is not generally a sustainable location, however it is noted that it is within walking distance of several key services within Huish Episcopi, and there is a fully formed public footway that runs all the way to Huish Episcopi. Despite policy SS2 being viewed as out of date, the site has access to several key services referred to in this policy. Taking the above into account, the application site is considered to be adequately well located in relation to the key local services. As such, it is considered that the development of housing in this location may be acceptable in principle, subject of course to the assessment of other appropriate local and national policy considerations, to determine whether there are any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Scale, Design and Appearance

This part of Windmill Hill contains a small group of housing predominantly in a linear pattern of development characterised by a loose-grained and low level presence of established dwellings in the vicinity, which in most part address the lane. There has been further development recently that broadly respects this established development character. This development, as proposed, will extend northwards beyond the existing residential development to the south, encroaching further into adjoining countryside. The proposal does include the removal of an existing barn, however this is an open frame building of agricultural form that is seen as part of the rural context of the area. Replacing this with residential development that includes domestic curtilage, parking and associated domestic paraphernalia, fails to respect the local character leading to an uncharacteristic extension of built form into open countryside, contrary to the prevailing pattern of development. The lack of 5 year land supply is noted, however the limited benefits associated with the development proposal are not considered to outweigh the harm to local distinctiveness caused by the encroachment into adjoining countryside.

Residential Amenity

The proposed dwellings are located at an appropriate distance, and orientated to avoid direct overlooking at close proximity and also avoid overshadowing or overbearing impact. It is therefore considered that there will be no unacceptable harm caused to the residential amenity of existing and future residents within the immediate area.

Highway Safety

The proposal includes making use of the recently constructed access serving the three new dwellings to the south. It is further proposed to provide four parking spaces per dwelling within site, as well as providing turning facilities. The Highway Authority have considered the proposal and raised no objection. While there will be an increase in traffic using this new access, it is not considered that this will cause a severe impact on highway safety. Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions suggested by the Highway Authority, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety point of view.

Other Issues

The site is also near to the Wet Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Muchelney

Level County Wildlife Site, however the proposed development is not considered to have any adverse impact on these national and locally important sites.

Policies HG3 and HG4 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan requires either on site provision of affordable housing (schemes of 6 or more units) or a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the district. In May 2016 the Court of Appeal made a decision (SoS CLG vs West Berks/Reading) that clarifies that Local Authorities should not be seeking contributions from schemes of 10 units or less. It is considered that whilst policies HG3 and HG4 are valid, the most recent legal ruling must be given significant weight and therefore the Local Planning Authority are not seeking an affordable housing obligation from this development.

In considering this proposal initially, consideration was given to policy HG3 due to the size of the site, however in light of the above, no affordable housing contributions will now be requested.

Conclusion

It is considered that while the site is located within a reasonable distance to services within the nearby settlements of Huish Episcopi and Langport, the proposed development represents an uncharacteristic spread of residential development into adjoining countryside, at odds to the established pattern of development and to the detriment of local character. As such, the scheme is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

01. The proposed development, as a result of its form, scale and siting, introduces an uncharacteristic concentration of residential development at variance with the local pattern of development and thereby fails to preserve or enhance local character. As such, it has an unacceptable impact on the character, appearance and the rural context of the locality. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-28) and provisions of chapters 7, 11 and the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.
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