

Officer Report On Planning Application: 17/03792/FUL

Proposal :	Erection of a dwelling
Site Address:	Weir Cottage, Weir Lane, Yeovilton.
Parish:	Yeovilton
IVELCHESTER Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr A Capozzoli
Recommending Case Officer:	Alex Skidmore Tel: 01935 462430 Email: alex.skidmore@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	23rd November 2017
Applicant :	Mr & Mrs N Hardy
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Oliver Marigold, Unit 2, Eclipse Office Park, 20 High Street, STAPLE HILL, BS16 5EL
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application has been referred to Area East Committee at the request of the Ward Member Cllr Capozzoli and with the agreement of the Area Chair Cllr Weeks to allow the matters of concern to be discussed more fully.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





This application is seeking full planning permission for the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling.

The application site forms part of the existing garden area belonging to Weir Cottage, which is a grade II listed dwelling, and sits within the listed curtilage of this property. The cottage occupies a large garden area and the property is bounded by a neighbouring residential property to the north side and agricultural land to the rear. The site is not within a conservation area or designated archaeological area. The property opposite Weir Cottage is also grade II listed.

The application site relatively flat and level with the neighbouring development to either side and mainly comprises an area of lawn but also includes the existing access and parking area and a detached timber outbuilding located at the rear of the garden. There are numerous trees within the garden area but these lie outside of the application site.

A short distance to the south is the River Yeo and on the constraints maps the site is partly located within flood zones 2 and 3. Due to the site's proximity to the runway at RNAS Yeovilton it is within designated Noise Exposure Zone B. A public right of way, Bridleway Y 30/13, passes west to east through the adjoining field immediately to the south of Weir Cottage.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

- 16/01186/FUL: Erection of a dwelling. Withdrawn.
- 16/01187/LBC: Erection of a dwelling. Withdrawn.
- 15/00552/FUL: Erection of an outbuilding. Permitted.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the adopted development plan comprises the policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 2028 (adopted March 2015).

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

SD1 - Sustainable Development

SS2 - Rural Settlement

TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

TA6 - Parking Standards

EQ2 - General Development

EQ3 - Historic Environment

EQ4 - Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework:

Part 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy

Part 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Part 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Part 7 - Requiring good design

Part 8 - Promoting Healthy Communities

Part 10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Part 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Part 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

CONSULTATIONS

Yeovilton Parish Council: Object for the following reasons:

- a) Impact on an adjacent listed building;
- b) Parking issues;
- c) Within a flood zone;
- d) Proximity and overlooking of neighbouring property creating loss of privacy and light.

County Highways: Referred to their standing advice.

SSDC Highway Consultant: Consider accessibility and connectivity in terms of sustainable transport. The traffic impact on the local highway network would not be significant. As this is a full application more details are required in respect of the access arrangements. Visibility splays commensurate with vehicles speeds need to be shown on the plans given the increase in use of the access. The SCC standing advice document recommends that an access serving two dwellings (a garage and a dwelling in this case) should be 5m wide. The first 6m of access should be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone / gravel). Drainage measures should be proposed to prevent surface water from discharging onto the highway. The level of on-site parking should accord with the SPS optimum levels. Amended plans should be submitted.

Environmental Health: Initially objected as they believed the site was within Noise Exposure Zone C where the local plan states new build housing should be refused for amenity reasons. On further consideration they accepted that the site was actually within Noise Exposure Zone B where new build housing development can be accepted subject to a condition to secure a scheme of noise insulation.

Environment Agency: No objection subject to a condition to secure minimum internal flood levels.

We have reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This links the topographical surveys carried out on the site with the newly completed Yeo and Cam model, which has been used to update the EAFlood Map for Planning. This FRA now adequately demonstrates that the site (where the proposed dwelling is to be sited) falls within flood zone 1 and therefore is applying the Sequential Approach to the development.

Conservation Officer: Objects.

Latest comments - Some modest changes have been made to the materials and window design, but nothing substantial enough that allows me to withdraw my previous refusal recommendation. I still find the scale of the new dwelling to be odd, and inappropriate in the context of the listed buildings. The 1.5 storey arrangement gives the impression of an over-scaled bungalow, whereas a modest but full two storey cottage would be a more appropriate design response in this context. The low eaves means that elements of the first floor layout will not work, and roof light positions are still mis-represented on the plans.

Original comments - I find the heritage statement inadequate. The statement doesn't give me a good grasp of the significance of the setting of the existing building. It also fails to give any justification to the design choice.

Although I am of the view that a new dwelling in this location could be accepted without causing harm to the setting of the existing listed buildings I am still firmly of the view that the proposed design is wholly inappropriate. It is disappointing that this hasn't been amended. The overall form fails to respond to the modest but full two storey scale of the existing cottage. The eaves of the new building is almost the same as the existing yet it is only a 1.5 storey property, which actually gives it a sense of increased scale compared with the existing cottage as first floor openings are pushed right up into the roof slope. The timber banding across the front is odd. It gives the upper part of the building a heavy appearance, which again will make it more prominent. This cladding continues around the south elevation, but stops abruptly where it meets the rear wing, with no corresponding break in the plane of the wall.

Large vertically stretched areas of glazing will further increase the scale of the building. The scale of this glazing is at odds with the small scale of proposed windows, which are oddly proportioned due to the glazing bar layout. I note that roof lights on the front roof slope differ in position between the proposed elevation and first floor plan. In addition, due to the low eaves, wardrobes shown in bedrooms two and three will be unusable.

I suggest starting again with the proposed design, taking into account advice I have given previously. A modest but full two storey cottage could work here, taking references from traditional buildings in the village. As the application currently stands I recommend refusal. The proposed design will harm the setting of the two listed buildings.

REPRESENTATIONS

Written representations have been received from one adjacent household raising the following observations and objections:

- Contrary to policy SS2 as there are insufficient amenities in the village. The Church is owned by RNAS Heron therefore the village cannot sustain any new builds.
- Permission has been granted for the building of 157 new homes within a 2 mile radius.
- Highway safety - the proposed access is shared with Weir Cottage is on a blind bend.

- In adequate parking provision.
- The site sits within flood zone 1 / 2, the new dwelling will put Oaklands at higher risk of flooding. Weir Cottage has a history of flooding almost up to the point of breaching the barrier. Water pressure coming up through the floor of Weir Cottage caused the previous owners to have the floor taken out and a concrete floor with a water membrane put in. The proposed new dwelling will sit only marginally higher than this. A further building will reduce the area available to absorb water runoff.
- Approximately 9 trees have been felled (one being a lovely large London Plane) all of which must have helped to drink up excess water.
- The proposed new house is the same size as the listed house, there is no requirement for a new dwelling of the same size.
- Visual amenity - The oak cladding is out of keeping with the rest of the properties nearby. The windows on the proposed new dwelling in the roof of the barn like structure are on two different levels, surely one level is adequate.
- The design of the proposed dwellings appears to be the same as the 2016 submission which the Conservation Officer objected to due to its negative impact upon the setting of the listed building.

Written representations have been received from one local household expressing their support for the proposal and commenting:

- I have no objection to this application. I have lived in the village for 23 years and to the best of my knowledge the area where planning approval has been requested has never flooded. Some building is necessary in Yeovilton or the village will stagnate.

CONSIDERATIONS

This application is seeking full planning permission to erect a detached, two-storey dwelling within the side garden of Weir Cottage, which is a grade II listed dwelling.

Principle

The village of Yeovilton is a very small settlement which is devoid of local facilities or services, with even the Church in the village owned by the Navy. Yeovilton is not closely related to other settlements in the area and so it is not considered appropriate to 'cluster' it with other surrounding towns and villages from the point of view of services and contributing towards the sustainability of these neighbouring communities. The village does not therefore meet the criteria of being a Rural Settlement as set out within LP policy SS2, and due to its lack of to day to day services and facilities must be considered to be an unsustainable and therefore inappropriate location for new build residential development as prescribed by both the local plan and the NPPF. The principle of the proposed development is therefore considered to be unacceptable.

Setting of listed building

Unfortunately the scheme submitted for this application is unchanged from that submitted for the previous 2016 application which the Conservation Officer raised strong objection to. Amended plans have since been received however these merely remove the timber boarding that was previously proposed on the upper walls of the house and some very minor fenestration changes and do not address the Conservation Officer's more fundamental concerns.

Weir Cottage is a relatively modestly proportioned stone built cottage which has a fairly shallow gable depth and low overall height and retains traditional characteristics that are indicative of its age, all of which are central to its overall character. The proposed dwelling on the other hand, with its 1.5 storey form, lowered eaves height and modern design has a more bulky appearance that responds poorly to the context of the listed cottage. The position of the dwelling in the side garden of Weir Cottage means

that it will be viewed directly in the context of the setting of Weir Cottage and due to its bulky and poor design it will appear at odds with and be harmful to the setting of this listed property.

The NPPF offers clear parameters as to how to deal with applications that impact upon designated heritage assets. Paragraphs 132 - 134 are of particular relevance and state that great weight must be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including to their settings. It states that where the harm to a designated heritage asset is substantial then the application should be refused unless it is demonstrated that the development is necessary in order to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm to the heritage asset. Where the harm is less than substantial then this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The Conservation Officer has been clear that he feels that a new dwelling can be accommodated on this site without causing harm to the setting of the listed building but considers the proposed design to be wholly inappropriate for the reasons given above. It is accepted that the level of harm to the setting of Weir Cottage is less than substantial as such it is necessary to carry out a planning balance exercise, as per paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

The proposed dwelling is an open market property that will not be meeting any identified local need and whilst it will be making a contribution towards meeting the district's five-year housing supply as well as towards the local economy during the construction phase such a contribution is extremely modest and in terms of the economic benefit short-lived. The location as detailed earlier in this report is unsustainable due to the lack of local facilities and services in Yeovilton and so future occupiers will be dependent upon driving to meet their day to day needs and such the proposal will be harmful to the environment. In conclusion it is considered that the benefits of the proposal are only very modest and as such they do not outweigh the identified harm that the proposal would have upon the setting of the listed cottage. For this reason the development is contrary to the aims and objectives of LP policy EQ3 and the provisions of the NPPF.

Visual amenity

The streetscene comprises mostly 1970-80's reconstituted houses and bungalows of a similar character and appearance with a number of older listed cottages mixed in. The new house will sit between the modest proportions and traditional characteristics of the listed house on one side and the modest dimensions of the neighbouring bungalow on the other and will have an odd appearance when viewed in the context of not just these properties but also within the wider streetscene. The proposal therefore fails to respect the local context or to preserve local distinctiveness and is also contrary to LP policy EQ2.

Residential amenity

The next door neighbour to the north (Oaklands) has raised concerns that the proposal will be harmful to their privacy and cause them loss of light. It is noted that the bungalow at Oaklands is positioned close to the adjoining boundary and that there are two windows within their south elevation that faces towards the development. Due to the position of the development to the south of Oaklands and its position in line with the neighbouring bungalow it is possible the proposal will result in some loss of light to the neighbour during the winter months. However, due to the siting of the new house away from the adjoining boundary this loss of light is not considered to be so significant as to represent a demonstrable harm to the neighbour's amenity. With regards loss of privacy, no windows are proposed within the north elevation of the new house and so the proposal will not result in any significant overlooking or loss of privacy.

Initially the Environmental Health Officer objected to the proposal as it was believed that the site was located within noise contour C, as defined by the Local Plan, and where new build residential development should normally be refused. The EH Officer however has since accepted that the site sits in noise contour B and subject to a condition to secure a noise acoustic scheme they no longer object to this proposal.

In all other regards the scheme is not considered to give rise to any substantive harm to neighbour or residential amenity.

Highway safety

It is proposed to utilise the existing access to serve both the proposed new dwelling and the existing cottage. The existing access is quite substandard with regards to visibility in both directions as well as its width. Unfortunately little can be done to improve either the width or visibility to the south as this would require partial demolition and significant works to a curtilage listed wall and visibility to the north is outside the applicant's control as it extends over a neighbouring property. Whilst the proposal will generate more traffic and result in the intensification in the use of this substandard access it is not considered to be so poor as to be severely detrimental to highway safety. The access egresses on to a through road, however, it is a fairly lightly trafficked road with traffic speeds tending to be quite low and below the prevailing speed limit of 30 mph due to the position of the access close to a sharp bend. Furthermore, it is possible for passing motorists to see vehicles emerging and to exercise extra caution in such circumstances. So although it is accepted the access arrangements are well below what is ideal it nevertheless is not severely prejudicial to highway safety.

The Highway Agency's parking strategy recommends a parking provision of 2.5 parking spaces for a three-bedroom dwelling with additional space for turning. The level of proposed parking is just below this level however Weir Lane does not have any parking restrictions, nor is there any particularly demand for on-road parking in the area and overspill parking could occur on the public highway without causing any undue obstruction and other highway safety concerns for other road users.

For these reasons the proposal is not considered cause any severe highway safety harm.

Flooding and drainage

According to the Environment Agency's own flood constraints maps the application site is located partly within flood zones 2 and 3. The application however is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and on the basis of this report the EA has accepted that the topographical details show that the level of the site of the new house is above these flood zones and indeed the site should be classified as being in flood zone 1, i.e. the lowest level of flood risk. Based on this information it is accepted that the proposed new house should not be at any undue risk of flooding or result increased flood risk to other property.

Other matters

- Loss of trees - The tree removal referred to by the neighbour had taken place prior to the application being submitted. The trees were not protected by Preservation Orders and nor were they located in a conservation area, as such the applicant was entitled to remove the.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out, the proposed development is considered to constitute an unsustainable form of development where future occupiers will be highly dependent upon driving to get to day to day services and facilities. Furthermore, the form and design of the proposed house is considered to have an incongruous appearance alongside Weir Cottage and within the wider streetscene. The benefits arising from the proposal are only very modest and therefore are not considered to outweigh the identified harm that the proposal would have upon the setting of the listed cottage. The proposal is therefore considered to be an unsustainable and inappropriate form of development that is contrary to the aims and objectives of LP policies SD1, SS2, EQ2 and EQ3 and the provisions of the NPPF, in particular paragraphs 17 and 134.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

01. The location of the proposed development is remote from local services, facilities and local transport as a consequence occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependent on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. The proposal is not sought to meet an identified local need and so will not contribute to increasing the sustainability of this settlement and it is considered that such fostering of growth in the need to travel is contrary to the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out within policies SD1 and SS2 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 02. The proposed development, due to its siting, form and design, will have an incongruous presence alongside Weir Cottage to the detriment of the setting of this listed building. The benefits of the proposal are not considered to outweigh the identified harm that it would have to the setting of the listed building and furthermore it fails to preserve or compliment the key characteristics of the location or local distinctiveness. As such the proposal is contrary to the aims and objectives of policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraph 134.
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