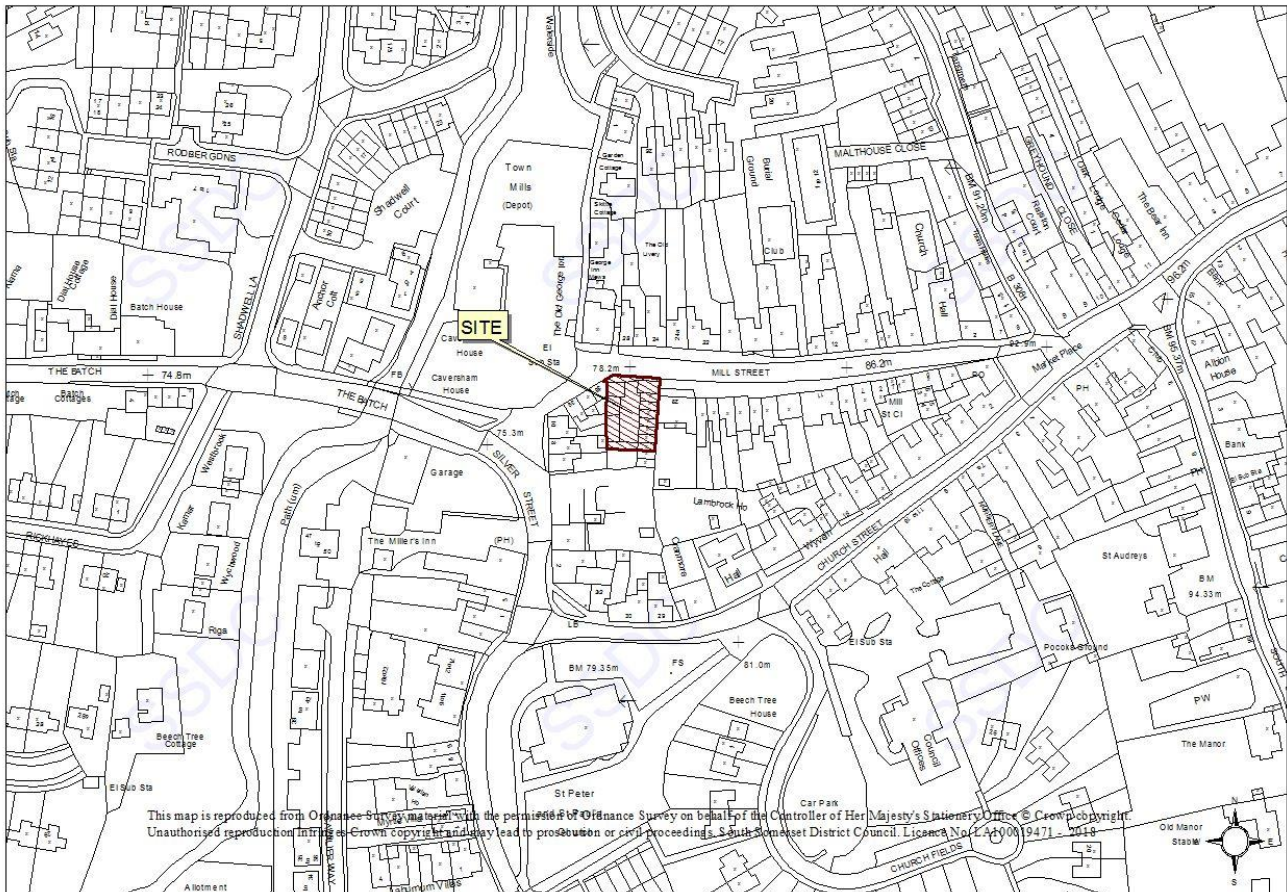


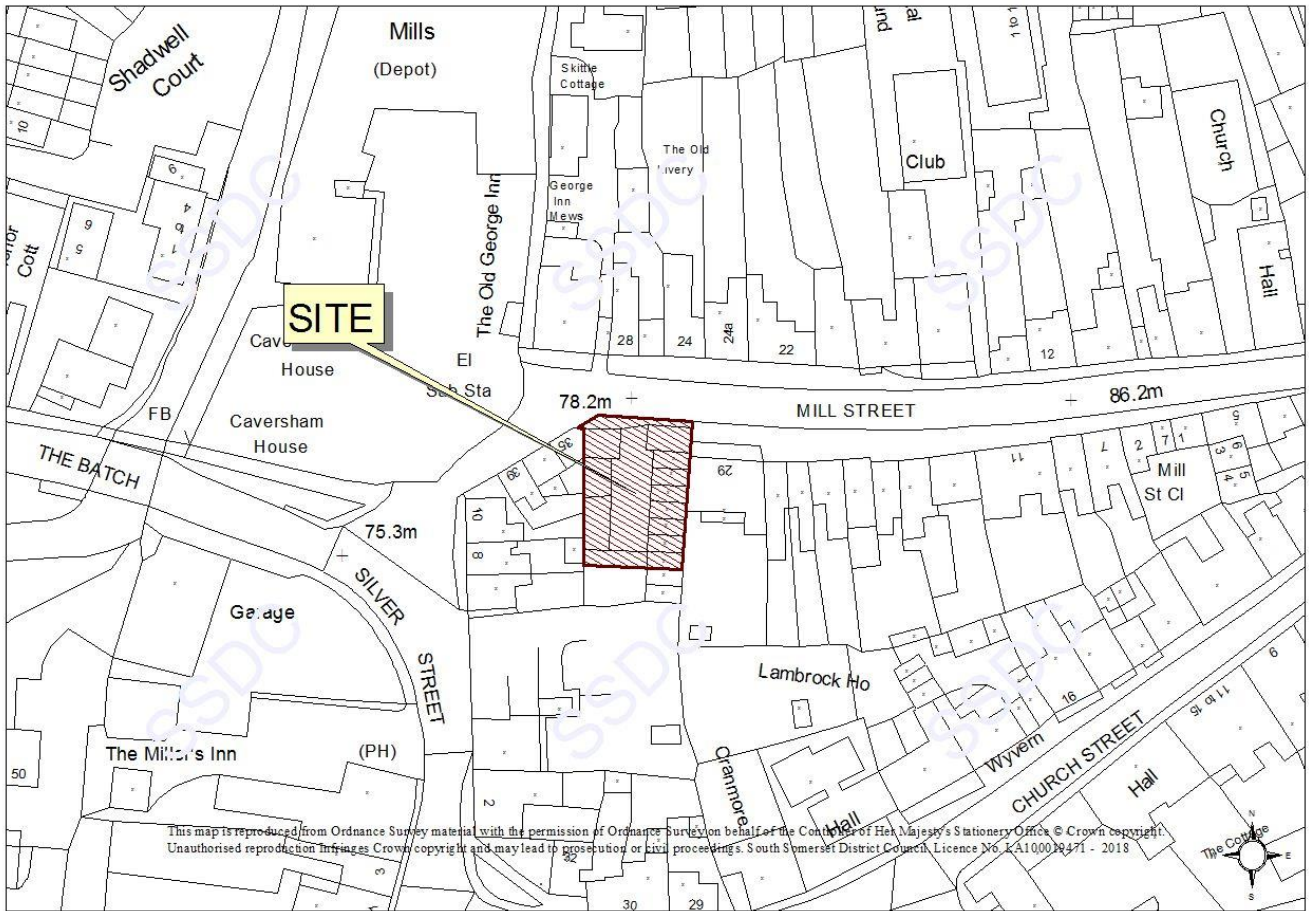
Officer Report On Planning Application: 18/00942/FUL

Proposal :	Demolition of single storey extension at 35 Mill Street and two thirds of a garage block along with stone boundary walls. Erection of 3 dwellings.
Site Address:	Land And Garages Off Mill Street Wincanton
Parish:	Wincanton
WINCANTON Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr Nick Colbert Cllr Colin Winder
Recommending Case Officer:	Jeremy Guise Tel: 01935 462645 Email: jeremy.guise@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	31st May 2018
Applicant :	Mr Colin Williams
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Ian Sing Lerner Sing Ltd 29 Lower Street Rode Frome BA11 6PS
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

This application has been called to East Area Planning Committee at the request of ward member and with the agreement of the chairman, to allow assessment of the impact on the conservation area and amenities of neighbours.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The application site is a rectangular shaped piece of land 0.04ha (423sqm) fronting onto Mill Street, to the north and a garage in the same ownership, to the south. The site is currently occupied by 'lock up' garages along the eastern side - part of a block of 9 of which 6 are located in the application site. The southern three are shown retained as part of the neighbouring garage site, which is also in the applicant's ownership. Topography the site falls approximately 1m from south to north and approximately 2.5m from east to west across the frontage.

The site is located in the historic centre of Wincanton in an area designated as a Conservation area. There is a small terrace of three houses (Nos. 35-39 Mill Street) on lower ground, immediately to the north west of the site. These are located at a point where Mill Street turns the corner into Silver Street. Nos 6-10 Silver Street back onto the site at right angles. Small yards belonging to these houses converge in a tight space.

Planning permission is sought for the development of three dwellings in alignment with No. 29 Mill Street. The plots are set back 6m from the frontage with the area in front used for car parking, two dedicated spaces per house. Floorplans show a combined living /dining room, a WC and a kitchen at ground floor level and three bedrooms two bathrooms one en-suite at first floor level. Externally the houses 'step up' then hill to the east on rising land. They are shown rendered with 'tunnel back' extension projecting sub gables to the rear and small 27-31sqm rear yards / gardens.

The application is accompanied with a Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Lerner Sing Ltd and a Transport Statement prepared by MBC Traffic Engineers. The DAS states:-

The proposal is to construct a 3 dwelling two storey terraced block of housing with tiles pitched roofs, which the terraced stepped after the first houses to eliminate undue excavation of the area, and to mirror the type of stepped form in the street. Two thirds of the rear existing garage block (6 no

garages) and the Utility extension to 35 Mill Street will be demolished as part of this scheme. 3 garages of the original garage block are to remain.

Appearance

-The new building will be 2 storeys with painted rendered walls with plain clay tiles and brick work chimneys.

-As the rear will be gardens fenced off with timber boarded fencing.

-At the front an area will be formed in tarmac to provide 2 parking bays on each for the houses. There will be a continuous 1.7m public footpath across the front of the site, with a dropped kerb to allow for vehicular access to the parking bays.

Access

The vehicular access to the rear of the site as it is now will cease to exist.

The Transport Statement quotes Paragraph 32 of the NPPF and concludes:-

There is by no reasonable interpretation a 'severe' impact of the proposal, safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users, and the site is transport accessibly location. In our opinion, there should be no sustainable highways or transport objections to the proposed redevelopment.'

There is a parallel application ref. 18/00943/FUL for the erection of a rear single storey kitchen extension at 35 Mill Street Wincanton that is pending determination.

HISTORY

Ref. 63085 Erection of eight private lock-up garages and the formation of vehicular access - conditional approval 27/08/1963

Ref.63085/A Erection of a block of nine private garages and the alteration of an existing access - conditional approval 08/11/1966

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF state 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).

The policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

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

Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development

Policy SS1 - Settlement Strategy

Policy SS2 - Development in Rural Settlements

Policy EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

Policy EQ2 - General Development

Policy EQ4 - Biodiversity

Policy TA1 - Low Carbon Travel

Policy TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

Policy TA6 - Parking Standards

Policy HG5 - Achieving a Mix of Market Housing

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

Chapter 8 - Promoting healthy communities

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

Chapter 11- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Other Material Considerations

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy

Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2028

CONSULTATIONS

Wincanton Town Council - Recommends approval.

County Highway Authority - The Highway Authority has the following observations on the highway and transportation aspects of this proposal following consideration of the application details and a site visit carried out on 14th May 2018.

Somerset County Council's Highway Development Control require further information in this instance.

Traffic Impact:- The proposed development of three dwellings is unlikely to cause a significant impact to the operation of the local highway network.

Parking:-The proposed car parking provision of six spaces for the three dwellings is less than the optimum recommended provision of eight (7.5) car parking spaces set out in the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012).

A review of the proposed site plan (Drawing No. 703/01) shows that the arrangement of the six on-site car parking spaces will extend across the north of the site and will front the footway. It is expected this arrangement will result in the loss of two on-street public parking spaces. These on-street parking spaces are subject to 1 hour max stay, no return within 2 hours (Mon-Sat 8am-6pm) restrictions.

In order for the applicant to remove the two on-street car parking spaces and provide access to the proposed development site, the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process will need to be followed.

Visibility:- Vehicular visibility splays for the proposed site access has not been provided by the applicant. Vehicle access to the site is via Mill Street, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit and operates as a one-way highway. Based on Manual for Streets Standards, visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m (for visibility to the right from the site access) is required to be demonstrated by the applicant.

Pedestrian visibility has not been assessed by the applicant. It is also recommended that pedestrian visibility of 2.4m x 2.4m this is demonstrated by the applicant.

Other:- The development proposals have also included providing a footway of 1.7m width that will front the north of the site. The width of the proposed footway is 0.1m less than the preferred average width of a footway (1.8m) which is set out in Estate Roads in Somerset Design Guidance. It must be ensured that the proposed development retains the existing footway width or widens the footway to the recommended width of 1.8m.

The red line boundary of the site location plan supplied by the applicant has overlapped with public highway (Highway Maintainable at Public Expense) at the section of footway that bounds the north of the site. It should be clarified with the applicant that this described area is public highway.

Conclusions:- The Highway authority does not object to the principle of the development, but details of this application for full planning permission are insufficient for the Highway Authority to provide a final recommendation.

The applicant should provide further details regarding the expected loss of two on-street car parking spaces in order to provide their proposed on-site parking arrangement. Plans demonstrating the design of Mill Street following the loss of on-street parking on should be provided along with visibility splays for vehicles and pedestrians.

The applicant should also be aware that they will need to finance the Traffic Regulation Order for the loss of on-street parking.

SSDC Highways Consultant On the basis that the site is located in the town centre within easy / comfortable access to nearby public car parks, no highways objections is raised.

SSDC Conservation Officer - The current gap in the historic street and poor design of the current garages is recognised as a negative feature here, highlighted on page 26 of Wincanton's Conservation Area Appraisal. Historic maps and photos show that a pair of cottages existed here, positioned well forward of the building line to the east.

I welcome the opportunity we have here to reinstate the historic form of the street and remove the current negative impact arising from the garage block. However, it is a very sensitive site. It is significant to the character of the conservation area and the setting of a number of listed buildings. Mill Street is arguably Wincanton's most characterful street. This is derived from the large number of historic buildings either side of the hill, set far apart to give a spacious and generous setting. It is really important that the reinstatement of cottages here enhances its existing character.

Therefore, I have no objection to the principle of development here. However I have several concerns about the proposal as it currently stands.

The overall position does not seem to be appropriate. I suggest bringing the building forward so that it can be considered a proper reinstatement. This will remove the formalised on plot parking at the front, which I consider to be wholly inappropriate in this location, and will free up more space at the rear. It will also improve the really poor proposed relationship with the neighbour to the west.

In terms of the parking, I note that there is some informal parking on the wide pavement to the east of the site, however it is informal. The proposed plots would have formalised on plot parking at the front, which would look poor and cause the lower part of the street to be dominated by a row of parked cars viewed side on. I note that the applicant owns the garage site at the rear so it should be possible to secure access to garaging and parking at the rear of the plot.

Turning to the design of the buildings, I suggest that a narrower depth of building will be more suitable as per the historic photos. Rear extensions could be adapted to provide additional accommodation lost by narrowing the gable width. Although there is some render in Wincanton it doesn't dominate Mill Street. I suggest that the gable end facing up the street and the front should be stone.

The front elevation needs improving. Designing all three plots to look the same is contrary to the character of the street - almost every building here is different. Bays could be considered to some of the lower windows as these feature here. The first floor windows should be more consistently sized to avoid the obvious location of a bathroom.

The form of the chimneys needs improving. The chimneys should have a narrow single flue width facing the road, and be double depth on the gable, with two pots. The chimneys should stand in line with the end masonry wall, so the verge should be broken at this point. The brick should timber down into the

stone in a traditional manner.

As the application stands I must recommend refusal. The current proposal, by virtue of the positioning of the units, frontage parking and building design, will cause harm to the character of the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings.

REPRESENTATIONS

Eleven letters of has been received from the occupiers of a neighbouring properties. They all raise objection to the proposal. The grounds of objection can be summarised as follows:-

Overdevelopment

Replacing existing garages with houses is welcomed in principle, but the intent to 'cram' as many houses on the small site to maximise profit has produced a cheap design that has no architectural merit and will not protect or complement the existing architecture and character of the street. To produce housing of character it would be necessary to reduce the number of houses and significantly increase the build quality. The proposal for three dwellings is needlessly dense for the small footprint. This will have several negative consequences to those properties in the immediate surrounds. I would suggest two properties would be more reasonable.

Impact on neighbours

Building opposite will severely reduce light to the small windows in my cottage

The proposal will look directly into my living room and bedroom affecting my privacy

The new houses proposed will greatly infringe on the privacy of my home and also could in turn greatly devalue my property's attraction

I live immediately next door at no. 37 Mill Street and having seen the plans I feel these developments will have a detrimental effect on my property. The 3 dwellings which will be at the rear of my property will have a serious impact on the light issue and will make my kitchen and living room very dark.

Impact on Character of conservation area

This does not preserve and enhance the conservation area. The demolition of the existing historic stone walls is unacceptable within a conservation area. Has there been consideration to re-use the stone material on the fascia of the new buildings?

The garages are inconspicuous from Mill Street, so the perceived advantages to the appearance of the area resulting from their removal are slight.

Mill Street is the oldest street in Wincanton, modern houses are out of keeping

The street 'Mill Street' is one of the most historic streets in the area, with heritage dating back some 300 plus years. It is likened to Gold Hill Shaftsbury. Plans show the development with no consideration to the heritage or historic aesthetics of this street.

Materials

It's proposed that the new properties are rendered and painted to be in keeping with the surroundings. There are only three rendered houses and one rendered building, The Old George Inn, and the latter is not opposite. All the remainder are stone.

The use of render in the street has been overstated to reduce building costs and maximise profit. Render should be rejected and replaced by natural stone with lime mortar or a combination of stone and brick similar to the adjoining houses.

Roofing should be of natural slate or clay rosemary plain tiles.

The design of the porches further creates an image of cheap affordable housing similar to that being constructed elsewhere in Wincanton. Any porches must be more in keeping with the existing porches in the street or removed in their entirety.

New rendered buildings will not be in keeping with the street : there are 40 residences facing onto the street , only three of which are rendered ; those properties were rendered at a time pre-dating the existence of conservation laws or grade listings, and represent a historical significance in their own right. In the case of The Old George, the render is necessary for structural integrity and protected by eth Grade II listing. As such, there is no mitigation to render these properties when local stone / rubble is possible.

A key photo attached to the planning application is misleading: the Old George (which is historically rendered) is indicated as being directly opposite the proposed site, whereas the camera is actually off-set by approx. 45 degrees in order to capture that property. The two properties that are directly opposite the site are stone rubble.

Rendered houses totally out of keeping with the aesthetic nature of this historic street

Loss of parking/ adequacy of parking

Removal of the boundary wall and opening up for parking will result in the loss of some existing on-street parking. Parking in the area is tight. Questions whether the proposed parking spaces are big enough for 4x4s.

The parking is already a major issue around mill Street and the plans do not pay consideration to this.

The parking arrangement is totally unacceptable and will reduce existing parking space. The photographs provided with the application do not reflect the dire parking situation in Mill Street whose residents either cannot park in the street if they return in the evening due to events at the social club or church or blocked in and prevented from accessing the road . The developer is retaining three garages to the rear for use of his business Bridge Motors. These garages should be retained and instead designated to each of the houses.

The proposal would negate the use of two (arguable three) extant parking spaces, whilst also increasing demand for the remaining spaces. The parking spaces assigned to the new properties will be private, whereas the new residents will entail increased visitors / guests / workmen / and second family cars to this end of the street, where parking is already insufficient.

Miscellaneous

My house is more than 200 years old; the excavation work around such old buildings could cause considerable issues.

The proposed new houses could in turn greatly devalue my property's attraction

Notification for the application appears to have been very limited, and many residents claim to have not been notified. My property received three notifications, including two with spurious addresses. It seems the target audience may not have been allowed sufficient opportunity to raise comments or objections.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The site represents a gap in the existing frontage along Mill Street. Historic records show that it was previously occupied by frontage buildings, abutting the pavement, in alignment with No.35, to the west and forward of its neighbour at No. 29 to the east. Numbering (odds only on the southern side of the street) suggests two properties. Residential development that re-instates the street is therefore welcome in principle. However, the current proposals are not supported. They are considered to be unsympathetic to the character of the conservation area, detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring residential property and to provide inadequate external amenity space (gardens) for 3 bedroom sized family houses.

The difficulties that the site has in accommodating three 3 bedroom houses with adequate external amenity space, suggests that the historic division of the site into two units, indicated by the historic street numbering, is the optimum amount of development for units of this size on this site. The development of three 3 bedroom houses on this site would lead to a cramped layout, a sign of overdevelopment.

Visual Amenity

Planning applications affecting a conservation area are considered, in the first instance, against the provisions of Policy EQ3, Historic Environment of the adopted Local Plan. It states:-

Heritage assets will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. Their potential to contribute towards the economy, tourism, education and local identity will be exploited.

All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to:

-Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets

-Make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and compliment it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques

Ensure alterations, including those for energy efficiency and renewable energy, are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and performance of buildings, adopting principles of minimum intervention and reversibility.

Mill Street bow widens between Nos. 11 and 29. The historic building therefore represented the point where the bow in the street ended.

In terms of appearance and impact on the street scene the architect has made some effort to reference the character and setting of the conservation area by: stepping the buildings down with the underlying topography. Showing sash, portrait shaped windows and deep roofs with chimneys. But, despite stepping up with topography, the base floor levels are high (1m above No.35) with stepped entrances. Coupled with the modern floor to ceiling heights and deep 3.5m high roof planes (a consequence of the 7m depth, of the main part of the house) the houses are too high and the relationship poor.

Large sections of the southern side of Mill Street, where it 'bows' out to the south between Nos 11 and 29, are wide enough to accommodate vehicles parked in a perpendicular arrangement to the highway. In modern times this obviously provides a useful resource for residents as parking in the town centre is at a premium.

Historic records, maps and photographs, confirm what the patched up end elevations of Nos. 29 and 35 Mill Street show on the ground, that the garage block site was once occupied by buildings (presumably Nos. 31 and 33 Mill Street). These buildings were positioned on the site frontage, immediately abutting the pavement in alignment with No. 35 - and forward of No.29.

The alignment of the proposed houses is with No.29, to the east, rather than replicating the historic alignment with No. 35, to the west. This allows the frontages to be dedicated to allocated parking, which isn't quite the same as the informal parking in 'the bow' further up. The spaces are laid-out, allocated for used by the residents, and more likely to be permanently parked. Essentially it introduces a suburban feature to the street, which will adversely affect its character. It also results in the houses being pushed further back into the site, and results in their internal configuration being quite deep, 11m, with a consequent adverse impact on the neighbours' amenity. Shallower, frontage development would better respect the character of the conservation area.

The vast majority of buildings in Mill Street are constructed from stone, with only a handful of rendered frontages. In order to maintain the historic character of the conservation area it is considered that the frontages onto Mill Street, and parts of the side elevation that are visible and reasonably conspicuous within the street scene, need to be constructed from stone.

Residential Amenity.

Policy EQ2 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan seeks to protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. It states:-

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:

- *Sustainable construction principles ;*
- *Creation of quality places*
- *Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;*
- *Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect local context.*
- *Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;*
- *Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and*
- *Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:*
- *Housing demand and need;*
- *Infrastructure and service availability*
- *Accessibility*
- *Local area character*
- *Site specific considerations*

Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife and landscape sites. Development proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and new dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW1

The relationship with neighbouring property would be oppressive. The bulk and mass of the proposed building: 7m depth of the house plus an extra 4m set back in the tunnel back (11m in total) with a high gable would result in an over-dominant feature that would adversely affect the amenities of Nos. 35-39. The difference in levels exacerbates the relationship, with the site located approximately 1.5m above neighbours. Having such a large building in an elevated position close to the rear of these

properties will have a significant negative affect upon neighbours' amenities contrary to policies EQ2 Size of garden usable external amenity space approximately 29sqm, 27sqm and 31sqm. Policy EQ2, General Development of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan which requires development proposal to provide acceptable levels of residential amenity space, Policy HW1 which requires private open space to be given full consideration and Policy 7, Housing Types, of the of the adopted Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan, which seek reasonable sized gardens to allow informal play.

Highways

Mill Street is a quiet street on the edge of Wincanton town centre. The scheme that has been submitted does not satisfy the Highway Authority in respect of all details. This forms a reason for refusal, albeit one that can probably be overcome. But it is clear that the highway authority support the proposal in principle.

The existing lock-up garages and two on-street parking spaces would be lost as a result of the development. The lock-up garages are currently in the same ownership as the Bridge Motors Ltd., the garage that fronts Silver Street. It is surmised that they are used in connection with that business. However, neither the DAS or TS discuss the implications of loss of the garages. Equally, no representations from the Parish Council or local residents relating to the loss of the garages have been received. Representations relate only to the loss of two on street parking spaces. Given the lack of any evidence that the removal of the garages will result in the loss of parking in the area, it is insufficient grounds to refuse planning permission on grounds of loss of garaging.

Proposals for new development are considered in relation to Policy TA6 Parking Standards, which states:-

Parking provision in new development should be design-led and based upon site characteristics, location and accessibility. The parking standards within the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy will be applied in South Somerset.

According to the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy Wincanton is designated in being located in an intermediate accessibility zone B (amber) where the optimal level of 2.5 spaces per unit (i.e. 7.5). The proposed provision is 1.5 spaces short of the optimum and involves the loss on-street parking equivalent to two spaces.

The proximity of the site to the town centre facilities, shops and bus hub means that a proposal that provides slightly sub-optimal level of parking cannot reasonably be refused on these grounds. It is also considered unreasonable to withhold planning permission on the grounds that it would involve the loss of on-street parking equivalent to two spaces. The issue is with the design of the frontage parking and its adverse implications for the street scene and character of the area.

The applicant has not included electrical charging points, and is therefore not in compliance with Policy TA1, Low Carbon Travel which states:-

All new residential development and employment developments in South Somerset should, should subject to general viability: ii. Provide for the charging of electric vehicles with an external charging point of at least 16 amps adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site. Such charging points should also be provided for garages within the development.

In the absence of a development proposal that satisfies wider planning policy aims and objectives and delivers sustainable development, the failure to provide on-site charging points, as per policy TA1, forms another refusal reason.

Conclusion

Residential redevelopment of this garage block is acceptable in principle. But the proposal as currently submitted falls a long way short of what can be considered to be acceptable. The size, mass, scale and material details of the proposal would have significant detrimental effect upon the character of the conservation area and the amenities of neighbouring residential property. In addition the level of external amenity space proposed is inadequate for three bed, family sized dwellings. As such the proposal is contrary to policies EQ2, and EQ3, of the South Somerset Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The proposal development is located on higher land directly to the south east of established residential property. Owing to its close proximity to the boundary and its depth and height the proposal would result in an unacceptable level of overshadowing to the rear of those properties, adversely compromising their amenities. As such the proposal would be contrary to policy EQ2, General Development, which requires development proposal to protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
02. The proposed houses by reason of: their form and design would not safeguard and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the Wincanton conservation area. As such the proposal would be contrary to policy EQ3, Historic Environment, and Policy EQ2 General Development, of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan, which requires all proposals to conserve and enhance heritage asset and be of high quality and Policy 2, key buildings and spaces of the adopted Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan, which requires all development in the town's conservation areas to preserve and enhance their character and appearance; and paragraphs 64 and 131 of the NPPF.
03. The proposal fails to provide adequate external amenity space, of a regular size and configuration, for three bed family dwellings. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy HW1, Provision of open space, outdoor playing space, sports cultural and community facilities in new development, and Policy EQ2, General Development of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan which requires development proposal to provide acceptable levels of residential amenity space and Policy 7, Housing Types, of the of the adopted Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan, which seek reasonable sized gardens to allow informal play.
04. The proposed new residential development does not include 16amp electric charging points and, as such, does not contribute positively towards low carbon travel as required by Policy TA1ii of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan and paras 93 and 94 of the NPPF.
05. In the absence of details demonstrating how the design of Mill Street, following the loss of on-street parking, and visibility splays for vehicles and pedestrians can be satisfactorily accommodated, the proposal is considered contrary to policies TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Informatives:

01. This decision relates to the following drawing Nos. 703/BL1a; 703/BL1; 604/S01a; 703/01; 703/02; 703/03 and 703/04 received 05 April 2018.
02. It may be possible to address refusal 4 and 5 by the provision of additional information and or minor alterations to the submitted scheme.

03. In this case there were no minor or obvious solutions to overcome the significant concerns caused by the proposals.
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