

EXMOUTH TOWN
(Exmouth)

07/2549/FUL

Target Date: 05.11.07.

Applicant:

Mr Spring

Location:

90 Exeter Road, Exmouth

Proposal:

Extension and internal alterations to form 2 no. one bedroom apartments and 5 no. studio flats

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

No comments received

Environmental Health

Recommended conditions restricting burning of any kind at site, no noisy construction machinery being operated outside specified times and a dust suppression scheme to be operated.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

Originally objected on grounds of dormer window overlooking neighbours, insufficient information and description different from plans. In the light of these comments and the probable misunderstandings by Town Council members some of the issues were clarified for their clerk (such as there being no new dormer windows) and having reconsidered the scheme the Town Council has confirmed that it no longer has any objection to the development.

WARD MEMBER(S)

No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Objections

1 letter has been received raising the following points:

- Existing parking problems in the area being exacerbated by the proposed development

PLANNING POLICIES

Devon County Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy CO6 – Quality of new development

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy H6 – Conversion of Existing Dwellings and Other Buildings to Flats

Policy TA7 – Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access

Policy RE3 – Off-site contributions towards open space provision is also relevant, should permission be granted

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

No 90 Exeter Road is a three storey mid-terraced property located on the rising ground, well above street level on the east side of the road, as it drops down the hill towards the town centre.

Pedestrian access into the property is obtained from Exeter Road, but it also has a rear gated entrance off a service road that runs to the east of the long terrace. This service road is connected to Belvedere Road that runs at right angles to Exeter Road. No 90 is the second dwelling in from the junction with Belvedere Road and is presently in multiple occupation in the form of bedsits. The two properties to the north of No 90 (Nos. 92 and 94) are also in the applicant's ownership, and also in multiple occupation.

The property is on three floors, with dormer windows in the front and rear elevations. Like its neighbours, it also has a two storey projecting wing and a further single storey mono pitched rear extension. The remainder of the rear garden is laid to grass and there are no boundary divisions between the rear of Nos. 90 and its neighbour No 92.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application proposes the conversion and adaptation of the existing bed-sit accommodation to create 2 one bedroom apartments on the ground and first floor parts of the main house and a further 5 one bedroom studio flats in the rear projecting wing, that would be extended above the existing single storey element and beyond into the rear garden, to line up with the outward depth of the existing single storey wing behind No 92.

Internally, the existing accommodation would be adapted to create the new units and the design of the extension at the rear would replicate the form of the existing projection, but extend it into the rear garden by a considerable amount, especially at first floor level.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The Principle

No 90 Exeter Road is currently in multiple occupation and whilst there are no planning records relating to its change/conversion to that use, advice obtained from Environmental Health is that they have been inspecting the premises since June 2004, when it was also in multiple occupation.

This application seeks to adapt and convert the premises into a number of self-contained units with independent facilities. The site lies within the Built-Up Area Boundary of Exmouth and Policy H6 is a permissive policy that supports the principle of the conversion of existing residential properties into self contained flats subject to three provisos.

The first relates to the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the building itself, the second to the relationship of the property to public transport or the provision of adequate car parking and the third to provision being made for the storage of refuse.

Policy H6 considerations

This area of Exmouth has a very mixed character, and the terrace of which this property forms a part contains a number of houses in multiple occupation. In principle there would be no objection to either the continuation of the existing multiple occupancy use or the adaptation of the property into some purposely designed self-contained units.

However, notwithstanding their use(s) the houses within the terrace have a uniform style and appearance, both at the front, where the overall effect is one of a harmonious, virtually unspoilt façade, standing quite proudly above street level. The rear elevation is perhaps less impressive, but still has a degree of harmony, evidenced by the small dormers and lower, two storey rear projections that run along the rear of the terrace and are seen in views from Belvedere Road and from the service road that provides rear access into the gardens.

This application involves more than just the conversion/adaptation of the existing floorspace. It is also proposed to add a two storey rear extension to the existing projecting wing, creating a unit on the ground floor and another full unit and part of another on the first floor. It is felt that this long outward projection would tend to disrupt the rhythm of the existing rear projections at first floor level and create a development that would be out of character with not just the building itself and the terrace of which it is a part, but also the street scene of the rear elevations of the terrace, when viewed from Belvedere Road and the rear service road.

Similarly Policy D1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure a high quality of design and local distinctiveness and amongst its provisions is the need for development to reinforce key characteristics and special qualities of the area, ensure that the scale, massing, height, fenestration and materials relate well to their context, do not adversely affect the urban form in terms of significant street patterns etc and protect the amenities of adjoining dwellings.

Highway

Insofar as the highway considerations are concerned, the Highway Authority do not appear to have offered any comments, but in the light of similar instances involving conversions such as this, in highly sustainable locations, within walking distance of Exmouth town centre and the availability of a nearby bus service the view has been taken that a highway objection could not be sustained.

Adequate refuse facilities can be provided from the rear access, satisfying this element of Policy H6.

Open Space Issue

Finally, the application, if granted, would attract the need for a commuted sum payment for off-site open space facilities. In this case the application is not accompanied by any indication that such a payment would be made. The calculations indicate that a sum of £14,983.29 would be required for this development, based upon the creation of the self-contained units. However, in the light of the planning objections to the development it is considered appropriate to add a further reason for refusal relating to the open space issue, albeit that in more favourable circumstances a mechanism could and would be agreed to deliver the commuted sum, and an amount that reflected that the existing and proposed number of dwellings and bedrooms within them.

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst the principle of converting this property into self contained flats would be acceptable, the enlargement of the building in the manner shown would, it is felt, amount to an overdevelopment of the site, out of character with the existing terrace and the area generally. A smaller extension, with the ground floor projecting out as far as those alongside No 90, but without the first floor above it would be likely to be more acceptable. This point has been put to the applicant's agent but he has confirmed that his client would like a decision on the application, as submitted, without prejudice to an amended scheme being submitted in the event of this application being refused.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development by reason of the scale, size, height and overall massing of the two storey rear extension, the resultant conversion of the enlarged building into 7 self contained units, with associated hard surfacing and a general lack of amenity space to serve the needs of the development would result in the gross overdevelopment of the application site, incompatible with the existing character and appearance of both the terrace of which No 90 forms a part and its surroundings and detrimental to the amenities of adjoining and nearby dwellings, contrary to the provisions of Policies S4 (Development within Built-up Area Boundaries), D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) and H6 (Conversion of existing dwellings into Flats) of the adopted East Devon District Local Plan 1995 –2011.
2. In addition to reason 1 above the first floor extension to the existing rear projection would disrupt the rhythm and harmony of the rear elevation of the existing terrace to an unacceptable extent, to the detriment of the street scene along the rear of the terrace and contrary to the provisions of Policy D1 of the adopted East Devon District Local Plan 1995 – 2011.
2. The proposed development involves the creation of additional dwellings that would generate a demand for additional formal and informal open space facilities in the locality. The submitted application does not include any mechanism to secure a contribution towards the provision of such facilities and as a result the development would be contrary to the provisions of Policy RE3 (Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments) of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011.

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.