

Committee Date: 12.01.2010

AXMINSTER RURAL
(Axminster)

09/2448/FUL

Target Date: 02.02.2010

Applicant: Communities Directorate, East Devon District Council
Location: Land adjacent 14 Heals Field, Axminster
Proposal: Erection of 2 social rented 2 bedroom flats and formation of access and parking area

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

Comments awaited

Head of Streetscene

Comments awaited

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

Comments awaited

WARD MEMBER(S)

Comments awaited

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of compiling the report no third party letters commenting on the application had been received

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history for this particularly site. It is understood the housing estate at Heals Field was built before 1974.

PLANNING POLICIES

Devon Country Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy ST1 - Sustainable Development

Policy C06 - Quality of New Development

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy S4 - Development within Built-Up Area Boundaries

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy H3 - Range and mix of New Housing Development

Policy TA9 - Parking Provision in New Development

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The location for the social rented flats is a corner site within the Millwey Rise area to the north of the main town centre. The area is presently a grass area located on the corner between two terraces of houses fronting Heals Field. The immediate area is solely residential with the commercial area of Millwey Rise Industrial Estate located to the north.

Existing housing is a mixture of two storey to the north, east and south, with bungalows located to the west. The 2 storey dwellings are finished in brown coloured brick with horizontal white coloured timber cladding to the frontages; the bungalows are similarly finished in a brown coloured brick. Openings are mainly uPVC.

The site is within the built-up area boundary of the town and is not covered by any designations. Although the grassed area is believed to be used by local children to play within, it is not formally designated as a play area or land of amenity importance.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The scheme is for the erection of 2 no. 2 bedroom flats for social rent, one flat to each floor. A stairwell, which would also include bin storage, allows entry on the eastern side of the building to the flats which comprise a large lounge and dining area to the west side, kitchen and bathroom to the rear and two bedrooms for each flat.

The building is proposed to be finished in a brown or golden brown coloured brick to the end gables with the main elevations supplanted with rendered and horizontal painted timber boarding. The roof would be finished in a man made slate grey or blue slate. Openings are proposed in a mixture of timber and uPVC. It is proposed to construct the buildings to a Code Level 3 standard.

Externally the site boundaries will be enclosed with a 900mm high post and wire fence, three off road parking spaces and a clothes drying area provided.

The original plans submitted have been amended to overcome an overlooking issue from the first floor flat into the rear garden of No 16 Heals Field. This has involved reorganising the first floor layout and position of windows and adding 2 no rooflights for additional light.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Correspondence received from third parties and comments from consultees will be reported to Members verbally at the Development Management Meeting.

The application comes before the committee as the Council is applicant and landowner.

Background

The site has no formal designation as a play area or as open space, having been held by the Council for housing land since the original residential estate was built under the aegis of Axminster RDC.

Highway Issues

3 parking spaces have been provided at the front of the site which meets the requirements of Policy TA9 with a new section of footpath, kerbing, and hard surfacing constructed in accordance with Devon County Highways Standards.

Whilst vehicles will not be able to turn and manoeuvre within the site, and therefore use of the parking spaces will involve potentially reversing onto the highway, this is a common situation in this residential area. Comments received from the County Highways Authority will be reported to Members at Committee. However at this stage there is no objection raised on this issue.

Design and Materials

The proposal utilises modern materials seeking to ape the appearance of the existing 2 storey properties. The proposed materials are considered to be acceptable, although to ensure they relate as closely as possible, samples of the brick and slates could be conditioned.

In terms of the design, the massing and scale is considered to relate to the existing buildings alongside, and the finished floor levels are set so that the overall height of the building is no higher than either No 14 or No 16 alongside. This would also enable any impact from the siting of the building in this location to be reduced especially in regard to the rear and garden of No 16.

Streetscene

As stated previously the area is wholly residential and therefore in principle there is no objection to the siting of further dwellings in this location. The building would occupy a visible corner site, and in an attempt to reduce any amenity issues with the neighbouring dwelling to the rear - No 16 - the building is positioned 1.5m forward of the dwellings located to the south east. Notwithstanding this positioning, it is considered the proposal largely fits into the layout and character of the street and the use of similar materials, scale and massing will enable the development to relate well to the existing dwellings within the estate.

Although the scheme proposes keeping a small tree sited to the rear of the site, in all practicality this is likely to be affected during the construction of the site. Taking into account its existing size, it is not thought that its loss could be easily objected to when balanced against the Council's need for social rented housing.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Although the building has been moved slightly forward, the layout of the first floor flat has been rearranged from the original submission to reduce overlooking to the garden area of No 16 immediately behind this house. The revised layout moves the bathroom to the rear which will have an obscure glazed window, with the kitchen window on the rear set on a high level to ensure there is no overlooking. The two rooflights will provide extra light to the rear part of the building. Although there is one further window on the northern elevation of the proposal this is to a stairwell, and considering this part of the building's use, it is not thought unacceptable overlooking would be enabled.

Other windows are proposed to the front and west elevation; however the road on each side separates the site from other dwellings and taking into account the distance, the proposal is not considered to be harmful either in terms of overlooking or being overbearing.

In terms of the position of the building in relation to No 16, although the building will be obvious set as it is to the side of this property's rear garden, it is considered the position 5m back from the boundary with the width of the neighbouring garage to take into account as well ensures that the new building would not significantly alter the outlook of this neighbouring property.

Occupancy

Although the application is for social rented housing developed under the aegis of the Council, as the site is within the built-up area boundary of the town, open market housing would in principle be acceptable. Therefore it is not considered that any condition could be reasonably attached to a grant of permission, restricting the accommodation to social rented. Taking into account the size of the site and the number of units proposed there is no requirement for affordable housing as part of the scheme.

CONCLUSIONS

The application proposes the erection of 2 flats, for social rental purposes. The design, layout, form and materials of the proposed building seek to replicate those of the original estate. The layout of the top floor flat has been reorganised so that there would be no harmful overlooking to the rear windows or private rear garden of No 16 Heals Field.

The full comments of consultees and those of any third parties will be reported to Members at committee, however at this stage, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions on materials, provision of parking areas, and restrictions on further boundary treatments. As the development is for 2 flats, any new windows or other works would not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore it is not necessary to remove these rights under a condition.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission and shall be carried out as approved.
(Reason - To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.)
2. The boundary fencing shown on Plan No 09:44: PL / 01 shall be erected prior to the flats hereby permitted being first occupied and thereafter, notwithstanding Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted development) Order 1995 shall remain, with no other fences, gates, walls or enclosures erected on the boundary or within the site.
(Reason - The erection of fences of a different style than that approved by this permission would be out of character with the area.)
3. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.
(Reason - To ensure that the materials are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.)
4. The parking spaces shall be laid out prior to the first occupation of the flats hereby permitted and maintained for those purposes thereafter.
(Reason - To ensure adequate facilities are available on site for parking.)

Informative

The building hereby approved does not benefit from permitted development rights. Any alterations to the building which result in a material change to the building will require planning permission.

Reasons for approval

The proposal complies with the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 Policies ST1 (Sustainable Development) and CO6 (Quality of New Development).

The proposal complies with the adopted East Devon Local Plan 1995-2011 Policies S4 (Development Within Built-up Area Boundaries), D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness), H3 (Range and Mix of New Housing Development) and TA9 (Parking Provision In New Development).

List of Background Papers

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