

Ward Dunkeswell And Otterhead

Reference 19/2140/OUT

Applicant T Kendall

Location Storage Building Land North Of Powells Way
Dunkeswell

Proposal Conversion and extension of existing storage
building to form single dwelling (outline
application with all matters reserved)



RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions

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		Committee Date: 4th February 2020
Dunkeswell And Otterhead (Dunkeswell)	19/2140/OUT	Target Date: 22.11.2019
Applicant:	T Kendall	
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application is before Members as the officer recommendation is contrary to the view of one of the Ward Members.

The proposal is for the extension and conversion of a small storage building in the residential part of the village to create a one bed dwelling. As the site is technically in the countryside (because Dunkeswell does not have a Built-up Area Boundary), the proposal falls to be considered against Policy D8 of the Local Plan.

Given the residential character of its surroundings and the access to a range of local services, reuse of the building for residential purposes would be appropriate. The main issue is whether a scheme could be achieved that would be compatible with the character and appearance of the area.

This is an outline application with all matters reserved but an indicative layout has been submitted which represents the most likely scale and configuration for the dwelling. While the proposal would be a more compact form of development than is found in the surrounding area, it would not appear cramped or incongruous in the streetscene. Suitable treatment of the land around the extension could be secured at reserved matters stage to ensure that development is sympathetic to the character of the area whilst adequate car parking is proposed with retained access to the adjoining garages.

On balance it is concluded that development would be compatible with Neighbourhood and Local Plan policies and can therefore be supported.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Dunkeswell And Otterhead - Cllr David Key

Unfortunately I cannot support the application even after reading the report.

Parish/Town Council

Dunkeswell Parish Council strongly object to this application. This area is currently a Garage block for residential parking, Councillors are concerned that the application is a very small area and will restrict the ingress and egress of the other garage owners and cause access issues for the property and garage directly opposite & below this proposed site. In addition to this, The property owner at the end of the garage block is believed to access their property through the garage block and residents can use the access pathway for garage owners living in Louis Way as a cut through.

The visual impact, this being right on the corner of the junction into Powells Way and abutting the pavement is not ideal.

The Council feel that in Dunkeswell currently, there are parking issues and in granting this application a precedent would be set for further applications to convert garages/garage blocks, losing valuable parking areas that help to minimise on road parking.

This would be contrary to our Neighbourhood Plan, Page 43 Policy TA3 7.9, 7.10 & 7.11.

Other Representations

Three objections have been received raising the following concerns:

- Adding to street parking.
- Encroaching on access to resident garages and also emergency vehicles.
- Obstruction of view onto the highway.
- Disruption when the works are in progress.
- No provision for parking with the proposed property and the parking on this part of the estate is already intolerable.
- Not in keeping with the immediate surroundings.

Technical Consultations

None.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

POLICIES

Dunkeswell Neighbourhood Plan (Made)

Policy NE1 – Retaining, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of our Parish

Policy BE1 – Maintaining the Built Character through High Quality Design

Policy HP1 – Responding to Demonstrable Local Housing Need

Policy TA3 – Off-road Parking

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies

Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)

Strategy 27 (Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages)

Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs)

D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

D2 (Landscape Requirements)

D3 (Trees and Development Sites)

D8 (Re-use of Rural Buildings Outside of Settlements)

TC2 (Accessibility of New Development)

TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)

TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

Government Planning Documents

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Site Location and Description

The site is located just off Highfield Road, the central spine road through the Highfield Estate in Dunkeswell. It is situated on the corner of Powells Way, from where access is gained. The application building is attached to a row of four garages which front onto a tarmacked forecourt. Between the building and Powells Way there is a small area of land enclosed by a 2m high close boarded fence. The site also extends towards Highfield Road to include an area of shrubs and the nameplate for Powells Way.

The site is in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Proposal

Outline planning permission is sought to extend and convert a storage unit to create a dwelling.

ANALYSIS

The main issue for consideration is the principle of development and impact from the proposal on the street scene and car parking.

The unit is on the end of a row of domestic garages and replicates their size and form but has never been used as such. It is understood that this 'garage' was used as a sales office for the housing estate and hence it has a window in the front elevation, rather than a garage door. Its use thereafter is not known until it came into the ownership of the applicant who uses it for their own domestic storage purposes.

The indicative details show that the extension would be the same scale as the existing unit and therefore the dwelling would be roughly the size of a double garage (without first floor accommodation). It would have a curtilage extending up to the pavement on the west and south sides and into the hardstanding on the east side. It is important to note, however, that details of scale and layout are reserved matters and the final scheme could be somewhat different to the indicative scheme.

Principle of Development and visual impact

Dunkeswell does not have a built-up area boundary and therefore the site is in the countryside for planning purposes. In such locations, policy D8 supports the reuse of buildings subject to a number of conditions.

As this proposal is for the reuse of a building in the countryside, Policy D8 is relevant. Each of the criteria are addressed in turn below:

1. The new use is sympathetic to, and will enhance the rural setting and character of the building and surrounding area and is in a location which will not substantively add to the need to travel by car or lead to a dispersal of activity or uses on such a scale as to prejudice village vitality.

The building is in a residential area and therefore a dwelling would be a compatible use. The proposal would introduce a more compact form of development than is prevalent in the surrounding area and the limited space available would mean that the undeveloped corner of Powells Way and Highfield Road would be eroded to a small degree. However, an extension and appropriate landscaping may offer some enhancement to the streetscene compared to the blank fenced enclosure which abuts the pavement. While full enclosure of the small triangle of land behind the street name sign would potentially be harmful, the treatment of this area can be fully controlled in the reserved matters application.

There is a self-seeded tree adjoining the western boundary in close location to the proposed extension but this tree is not worthy of a TPO being multi-stemmed. Given the current relationship of the tree to the garage, and given that the area for the proposed extension is partly hardsurfaced and used already, it is not considered that the proposal would harm the long-term future of this tree. In addition, any consent would be subject to the submission of a landscaping scheme that if necessary, could ensure the provision of new tree planting.

On balance it is considered that replacing the storage use with a residential use would lead to a neutral impact or minor enhancement, subject to consideration of details of the reserved matters.

Whether the site is an appropriate location for a dwelling is addressed under criterion (c).

2. The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial extension, alteration or reconstruction and any alterations protect or enhance the character of the building and its setting;

The building appears of sound construction and capable of upgrading to a habitable standard. The indicative extension is likely to be the minimum size necessary to make a viable dwelling and even that would create only a small one-bed unit. Having regard to the small scale of the existing building, any extension would be at least as large again and would be a 'substantial extension' in the terms of the policy. In this particular case, however, even a substantial extension would not be detrimental to the building to which it would be attached, it being of no architectural or historic merit. While details of scale and appearance are not for consideration in this application, it is likely that a development could be achieved that would protect the character of the building.

The space that would be occupied by the extension is currently enclosed by a 2m high fence and this area contributes little to the setting of the building. There is potential therefore for a brick or rendered extension with doors and windows to add character to the building and some exterior landscaping to enhance the west elevation. However, a new enclosure of the whole area outlined in red on the location plan, particularly the areas east and west of the extension, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. To avoid this, details could be secured at reserved matters stage and permitted development rights could be removed for fences, etc.

While large extensions are not generally supported under this policy, in this particular case there would be no harm arising from the development proposed and in itself the new build element occupies a small floor area. With the added potential for enhancement to the building and its setting, this criterion is satisfied.

3. The form, bulk and general design of the building and its proposed conversion are in keeping with its surroundings, local building styles and materials;

Such details are not for consideration in this application but in principle the building could be extended and altered in a sympathetic manner.

4. The proposed use would not harm the countryside by way of traffic, parking, storage, pollution or the erection of associated structures;

Such impacts are unlikely to arise given the small scale of the development and its residential setting. Car parking is addressed separately below.

5. The proposal will not undermine the viability of an existing agricultural enterprise or require replacement buildings to fulfil a similar function.

The existing building is not in agricultural use and the storage function could be provided in other ways elsewhere without adversely affecting the countryside.

For residential proposals it must be established that:

a) the building is no longer required for agricultural use or diversification purposes; and

As above, the building is not an agricultural building.

b) that its conversion will enhance its setting - e.g. through removal of modern extensions and materials, outside storage, landscaping etc.

The proposal has the potential to enhance the setting of the building and details will need to be considered at reserved matters stage.

c) Development is located close to a range of accessible services and facilities to meet the everyday needs of residents

Dunkeswell does not have a built-up area boundary largely because it does not have a primary school or a good public transport service. Since the Local Plan sustainability assessment was carried out, a school has not been provided and the bus service has not improved. While it is unlikely that a small dwelling would be occupied by anyone of school age, opportunities for travel from the site by any mode of transport other than the car are extremely limited. Notwithstanding that, the site is not isolated and the occupants would have good access to the local amenities, which include a shop, doctors, sports facilities, a restaurant and community facilities. On balance therefore, the requirements of this criterion are satisfied.

In summary, this proposal is not typical of rural conversions but has the potential to have a neutral or positive impact on the character and appearance of the area and the building itself. Careful consideration of the details will be needed at reserved matters stage but it is considered, on balance, that the proposal is compatible with the provisions of the policy.

Car Parking

The Parish Council and local residents have raised concerns about access and parking and made reference to Policy TA3 of the Neighbourhood Plan which resists the loss of parking spaces, seeking compliance with Local Plan parking standards. In this case the building is not used as a garage so there would be no loss of spaces. Moreover, there is adequate provision within the site boundaries to provide parking for one car, which would satisfy the car parking guidelines in Policy TC9 of the Local Plan.

With regard to access it is noted that there is a 3m wide gap between the site and the garage belonging to 12 Louis Way. This would allow sufficient space for vehicles to access the garages and dwellings beyond the site and appropriate visibility could be achieved at the access. Some disruption to neighbours is likely during construction but this would be temporary and could be managed with due consideration to the neighbours.

Other Matters

The proposed dwelling would be very small but would provide all the amenities required by one person in a compact space. Essentially it would be a bedsit but it would have a dual aspect and access to outdoor space. In spite of its size it would provide a good level of amenity for the future occupant.

The site is in an AONB but is well within the settlement and development would not undermine the landscape qualities of the area.

Conclusion

The application seeks outline consent to use, and extend, a garage building to provide a small residential unit.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable and complies with Policy D8 of the Local Plan as the proposal is well located close to a range of services and facilities.

Whilst the extension is substantial in relation to the size of the existing garage, it is in itself small and given that the site is enclosed by 2m high fencing, it is considered that a well-designed extension could enhance the appearance of this corner site. Details of a suitable design and landscaping can be secured at reserved matters stage.

The application site has space to provide the required single parking space for the dwelling and as such it complies with the relevant guidance in Policy TC9 of the Local Plan and with Neighbourhood Plan Policy TA3.

At this outline stage, and with the benefit of indicative proposals, it is concluded on balance that development would be compatible with Neighbourhood and Local Plan policies and can therefore be supported.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the details of the layout, scale and appearance of the building, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.
(Reason - The application is in outline with one or more matters reserved.)
2. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
(Reason - To comply with section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.)

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed at the end of this decision notice.
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)
4. The details shown in the block plan in drawing J273/01B shall be treated as indicative only.
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)
5. Application for approval of reserved matters shall make provision for the parking of one car on the site.
(Reason - To ensure that sufficient parking is available for the occupant of the dwelling in accordance with Policy TC9 - Parking Provision in New Development of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.)
6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no fences, gates, walls or other means of enclosure shall be erected within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse without the prior express consent of the Local Planning Authority, other than any approved as part of the approval of reserved matters.
(Reason - To ensure that any enclosures are compatible with the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031).

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 East Devon District Council works proactively with applicants to resolve all relevant planning concerns; however, in this case the application was deemed acceptable as submitted.

Plans relating to this application:

J273/01B	Location Plan	27.09.19
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List of Background Papers

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