

Application Number

P/2011/0796/PA

Site Address

Watcombe Service Station
Teignmouth Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ1 4SW

Case Officer

Mr Scott Jones

Ward

St Marychurch

Description

Construction of new pitched slate roof on the existing flat roof of the 1st floor of the property to provide 2 new dwelling units with access by a rear stairway.

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The proposal is for the addition of two units of residential accommodation on the roof of the existing property. The existing site is an operational urban site with ground floor commercial and upper floor residential uses. The proposed residential units are considered suitable in terms of their scale, layout, form and access, and there is potential to provide on site parking in order to limit the impact upon local parking pressure.

Although the alteration to the roof form would change the character of the building, it would not present a harmful change when considering the quality of the building and the wider context of the surrounding built roof form, which is clearly predominantly pitched in character.

Recommendation

Site Visit; Conditional Approval; Conditions to be delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning to include the schedule listed at the end of this report; subject to the signing of a S106 legal agreement or upfront payment in order to provide for appropriate planning contributions / infrastructure works, to be signed within 6 months of the date of this committee.

Site Details

The site is a prominent corner plot adjacent to the roundabout junction between Teignmouth Road and St Marychurch Road on the outskirts of Torquay. The site currently holds a petrol filling station (PFS) with a covered forecourt, behind which lies a relatively large two-storey flat-roofed building that provides supporting sales/retail shop for the PFS and residential flats over. To the side of the plot near the adjacent roundabout there is also an area of car sales.

In regard to planning designations, the site is adjacent to the St Marychurch Conservation Area and within a level 2 flood risk zone.

Detailed Proposals

The proposal is for the creation of two additional residential studio flats, through the construction of a double-hipped pitched roof in place of the existing flat roof. The flats are to be accessed via a revised metal staircase to the rear of the building that leads to a regressed doorway entrance set in the roof. The proposed structure is to be finished in grey fibre slate and will house a number of rooflights that offer natural light into the two flats. In regard to scale the revised roof is 3.5metres from eaves to ridge. The proposal also includes replacement fencing at first floor level and two parking spaces within the site to serve the new dwelling units.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Highways: No objection; pending formal comment on revised parking arrangements. There are however no objections to the level of parking proposed, i.e. 2 spaces on a 1:1 basis.

Environment Agency: The proposal should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment as the development sits within a flood risk zone, however the Agency do not wish to comment on the scheme as the proposals do not introduce more vulnerable uses to the ground floor on the site. The Agency advises that it would be beneficial to make the applicant aware of the benefit of registering with their Early Warning Alert System.

Summary Of Representations

A number of representations have been received from occupiers within nearby properties. The planning issues raised include the following;

- Loss of light and outlook
- Visual implications
- The proposed roof is too big
- Lack of adequate parking / more parking on adjacent roads
- Drainage issues / flooding
- Loss of privacy to existing flats

These are re-produced at Page T.200.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

Principle and Planning Policy -

The plot sits within a developed urban site that holds commercial and residential uses. The proposal to extend upwards to provide additional units clearly sits with the desire for the more efficient use of land. In regard to whether the proposals are suitable residential units, although they are both relatively small in scale they are not considered overly cramped or undersized.

In addition to acceptability of their basic size the units will also be naturally lit through a number of rooflights, which will provide a degree of outlook for the occupants. These factors support the suitability of the units for occupation.

Finally this urban location is considered acceptable as the site offers a suitable residential environment and access to transport links and local facilities. This is supported by the fact that flats are present within the building with no apparent concern over the existing residential environment. Considering all these matters the provision of additional residential units does not raise any demonstrable concern in terms of general principle.

Neighbour Amenity -

Amenity concerns centre on whether there is a potential for the loss of privacy through overlooking, the loss of light, the loss of outlook and the creation of an overbearing relationship.

Firstly the potential for any loss of privacy would appear limited to two areas, the relationship to the West with the cottages immediately adjacent (off Fore Street) from the sole rooflight proposed towards this aspect, and the relationship within the plot between the existing flats with windows or outdoor space sited near to the proposed stairway. The relationship to the West is difficult to gauge, however due to the pitch of the roof and the closeness of the plots it would appear to at least omit the garden space and lower levels of the properties. There may be a visual link to the upper floor windows, but this could easily be overcome by condition to obscure and fix this rooflight. In the absence of data to clarify matters a precautionary approach is considered appropriate and a condition is therefore deemed necessary.

In regard to the amenity of the existing flat occupiers the proposal would create footfall in an elevated position adjacent to windows and outdoor space that exists (which appears to have evolved organically as amenity space over time). Although the relationship is not ideal it is most practicable as internal access through the buildings lower floors would appear unsuitable. When considering that the small number and size of the units will naturally limit occupancy levels and hence movement to and from the upper floor, and that the stairway is not a structure that lends itself to anything other than brief passing movement, the arrangement is considered acceptable.

In regard to loss of light there would appear no potential for impact or harm on the neighbouring occupiers' amenity, as the roof is hipped on all elevations and is likely to be obscured from view due to the height of the side elevations in relation to the neighbouring properties.

In regard to loss of outlook and the potential for an overbearing nature to the development, again the roof itself is likely to be obscured from close views due to the height of the elevation of the building and the pitch of the roof. As a result it is considered that the structure would not be overbearing to neighbouring occupiers, nor would it affect outlook.

Visual Impact -

The building stands alone as a large flat-roofed structure within an area clearly dominated by pitched forms, be they terraces, Victorian villas or modern housing. Although the building's flat roof is somewhat distinctive as it jars with the predominant local form, it is not considered special in terms of its singular character or appearance. A comprehensive change to the form, from flat to pitched, is therefore not considered overtly sensitive or harmful within the context. In regard to the scale of the roof, although it is appreciated that it is fairly large it would not sit at odds with its surrounds as there are other large and prominent roofs locally. All matters considered the proposal would not negatively affect the character or appearance of the building or the nearby conservation area.

Highway / Parking / Accessibility -

The pedestrian access to the flats is considered acceptable within the context, as access through the rear is established for the existing flats.

The identified parking provision of two spaces is considered inline with policy guidance and comes with the support of the Authority's Highways Department. Further information has been requested in order to ensure that these spaces can be supplied inline with the size guidelines and be accessed and operated independent of each other and the other uses within the site. Providing this can be shown the level of parking proposed is deemed acceptable. It is noted that objections have raised the issue of local parking pressure, however the scheme is considered unlikely to exacerbate matters as there is to be provision on site.

Flooding / Drainage -

Although in a flood risk zone the proposal is for upper floor development and does not introduce a 'more vulnerable' use to those already located on the site. In addition, in regard to surface water run off and urban drainage capacity, the proposal will not add to the level of grey water discharging locally, as it does not decrease the level of soft landscaping and maintains the overriding size of the roof catchment. Considering this context, and the Environment Agency's advice on the matter, flood risk is not considered a significant or sensitive matter.

S106/CIL -

The proposal provides two net additional dwellings, the occupancy of which would increase the burden upon local physical and social infrastructure.

The proposal triggers £4040 in respect to contributions relating to the provision of Sustainable Transport, Greenspace, Lifelong Learning and Waste facilities/infrastructure. The breakdown being;

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Sustainable Transport | £2520 |
| Greenspace | £1100 |
| Lifelong Learning | £ 320 |
| Waste | £ 100 |

A planning approval should be accompanied by a S106 legal agreement to achieve these payments, or alternatively approval should follow an upfront payment of £3838 (which is a reduced 95% figure inline with Council protocol for upfront payments).

Conclusions

The proposal provides an acceptable residential development within a sustainable location with the potential to provide ancillary parking in order to limit the impact upon local amenity. The visual alterations are considered acceptable within the context and the impact upon neighbour amenity is deemed to sit within acceptable limits.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable subject to conditions as laid out and the signing of a S106 legal agreement or the receipt of an upfront payment in order to provide for appropriate planning contributions / infrastructure works.

Conditions

Submission of plans that show a parking provision on a 1:1 basis, acceptable to the LPA.

The rooflight on the Western roof slope to be fixed and obscure glazed to at least Pilkington level 1.

All roof lights to be flush fitting, unless otherwise agreed.

The receipt of an acceptable flood risk assessment that satisfies the LPA on this matter.

Informative

Recommendation to sign up to the Environment Agency's Early Alert System.

Relevant Policies

- HS Housing Strategy
- H4 Conversion and sub-division into flats
- H9 Layout, and design and community aspects
- H15 House extensions
- BES Built environment strategy
- BE1 Design of new development
- W7 Development and waste recycling facilities
- T25 Car parking in new development
- T26 Access from development on to the highway
- CFS Sustainable communities strategy
- CF6 Community infrastructure contributions