

Proposed Residential Development

Downside Motors, Wells Road, Chilcompton

Design and Access Statement



Introduction

This application seeks permission to build seven dwellings on the site of a car-sales and servicing business in the centre of the village of Chilcompton.

History

The Downsides Motors site has for many years been a car sales and servicing centre but prior to that included a petrol filling station.

Originally, in the mid 1920's it was the "yard" for John Golledge who built four pairs of semi-detached houses along the Wells Road. This included a workshop which was later used by his brother as a cycle repair and sales shop, before becoming a garage selling motorcycles.

Various proprietors during the 30's and 40's included R Smailes, Bill Challenger and eventually Reg Bainton who ran it as a garage in the 1940's selling BP petrol.

It was also used as a coach depot for a while before returning to car sales and servicing in the 1950s when it was purchased by Bill Crockett around 1960. For 25 years it was used for car sales and servicing with a petrol forecourt before the forecourt was removed and it became

solely used, initially for new car sales and servicing and then when the Vauxhall franchise ceased, for used car sales and servicing.

During the past 40 years a showroom has been built and the workshops consolidated and extended into a single structure at the rear of the site.

Since 2020 the site has remained vacant.

Proposal

Car sales, in particular, slowly declined on this site – car sales ideally require large sites with modern facilities including showrooms and offices and servicing has become more specialised with modern vehicles requiring less servicing.

The site is located in the centre of the village with residential properties either side and opposite and with the village hall and the St Vigor and St John (CofE) school to the west and behind.

Industrial and commercial premises within the village are now concentrated in three primary locations, New Rock industrial Estate, Broadway and Manor Farm.

The proposal therefore is to demolish the existing showroom and servicing workshop and build a small cul-de-sac of seven dwellings. At the front and replicating the properties found either side of the site would be a terrace of three properties, one two-bed dwelling and two three-bed dwellings. Each would have a low walled front garden, a feature removed from many properties along the Wells Road and an enclosed rear garden with parking beyond.

A short road to the east side of the terrace would give access to a further four dwellings to the rear consisting of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings each a three-bed adjoining a four-bed. All four properties would have a garage and appropriate parking with gardens to the front and rear.

The access road would include a footpath for pedestrian use and a turning head for service vehicles such as rubbish collection and deliveries. Driveways to the rear properties and the parking area for the front terrace would all be accessed from the road. To the east side of the road would be a further two parking spaces for visitors.

The houses would be built of local reconstituted stone and render under a profiled concrete tiled roof to compliment and reflect the traditional materials used in the neighbouring properties. The bay fronts and window patterns also reflect the style of the properties found along Wells Road.

Landscaping

Currently the site is devoid of any trees, hedges or indeed soft landscaping of any kind. The proposal seeks to introduce trees and garden spaces in particular to soften the visual impact

and improve the overall landscape of the site and this part of the village. The site sits on the outside of a bend and can be seen from distance coming from both directions. The trees to the frontage will therefore present a green screen to the front terrace whilst the trees and garden spaces to the rear will create a welcoming and sustainable environment within the site.

Hard landscaping will consist of reconstituted stone walls to the front gardens, close-boarded fencing to the rear gardens, brick pavers to parking areas and tarmac to the access road, drives and footpath.

Access

Downside Motors is a large area of tarmac with a gentle slope up the workshops at the rear. The new access road will follow the existing slope rising at approximately 1 in 30, well in excess of the standards for disabled access. Each dwelling in turn will have disabled access and level thresholds. Parking spaces meet the minimum requirements as set out by Somerset County Council with a generous turning area to rear of the front terrace for disability vehicles.

Policy

Chilcompton is listed in the Mendip District Council Local Plan as a 'primary village' suitable for development due to the various attributes of the village. These include, shops, school, church, two public houses, retail fuel sales forecourt, village hall, sports hall, fields and community activities. In addition, it has numerous businesses based in the village on three principle sites at New Rock industrial Estate, Broadway and Manor Farm as well as Northside Business Park. Additionally, there are several working farms in and around the village. Transport includes bus routes through the village giving access to local towns and cities including, Bath, Bristol and Wells.

The 2011 Census shows a population of 2,062. However, since 2011 two new housing developments have been built at Brinscombe Meadows and Pickford Fields as well as a number of smaller schemes for infill increasing the population by a few hundred.

Core Policy CP1 of the Mendip District Council Local Plan states that: "All new development is expected to contribute positively towards delivering components of the Vision for the district and the associated strategic objections". This policy goes on to state that Primary villages offer key community facilities (including the best available public transport services) and some employment opportunities making them the best placed to accommodate most new rural development.

The local plan goes on to state the number of houses to be built in each primary village but these figures are noted as minimums and as such have been exceeded in many of the villages listed.

Core Policy CP2 states that delivery of new housing will be secured from infill, conversions and redevelopments within Development Limits defined on the Policies Map subject to compliance with the national planning policy and specific policies within the local plan.

DP 1 Local Identity and Distinctiveness: Calls for all development proposals to contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. The proposal follows the form of the street scene and style therein and replicates this in conjunction with materials that will contribute to the existing.

DP7 Design and Amenity of New Development: Requires that new proposals are of a scale, mass, form and layout appropriate to the local context, protecting the amenity of users of neighbouring buildings and land uses. This is achieved by matching the pattern of the blocks of dwellings on either side and setting the new dwellings behind with plenty of space and screening to prevent overlooking and loss of amenity.

This policy also calls for maximising opportunities for sustainable construction techniques, sustainable drainage systems (see DP23 below) Renewable Energy Generation, the use of water efficiency measures, recycling and conservation and new residents to minimise, re-use or recycle waste. Sustainable construction techniques will include the use of blocks made from recycled materials, manufactured eco-joists that reduce on-site waste during construction. Renewable energy will include provision of solar panels on the roofs. Whilst water efficiency measures will include low-flush toilets, and waste water heat recovery systems to all showers. Materials salvaged during demolition will be recycled and provision is made for waste recycling bins for the residents.

DP 8 Environment Protection: Various issues are covered within this policy but the redevelopment of this site would improve ambient noise levels, reduce the potential for water contamination, reduce potential light pollution and improve residential amenity.

DP9 Transport Impact of New Development – addressed in the Transport assessment

DP10 Parking Standards: See Transport Assessment. Each property will also have electric vehicle charging points.

DP14 Housing Mix and Type: The proposal includes a mix of both types and accommodation i.e. One number 2bed semi-detached property, one number 3bed terraced property, 3 number 3bed semi-detached properties and two 4bed semi-detached properties.

DP20 Reuse of Employment Sites: The site itself is a sui-generis class and does not fall within the Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 listed. However, as noted above there are already a number of employment sites within the village with New Rock and Manor Farm in particular being well suited away from residential development. The redevelopment of this site for

business use might be seen as potentially detrimental to the immediate residential neighbours.

DP23 Managing Flood Risk: The site lies outside any Flood Risk Area and as such does not present a flood risk. Storm drainage will be dealt with by means of two separate solutions. The adopted access road will connect to the existing Highway drainage system which currently takes the entire storm drainage from the site due to the lack of on-site storm drain soakaways. The driveways, parking and paved areas along with the runoff from the roof will be dealt with by means of SuDS Sustainable urban Drainage Systems, to include permeable paving and soakaways located beneath the parking and garden spaces.

Finally, the National Planning Policy Framework states that proposed developments will be viewed positively and