

COMMENTS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 2020

Planning application 49/20/0032 - New Road, Wiveliscombe (retention)

As Ward Councillor for Wiveliscombe and District, I wish to make the following comments on this application and the case officer report.

The shooting lodge now proposed and built is very different to the original 2018 application, which stated in the Support Statement:

- The intention is to re-clad the existing barn with a modest number of windows and door openings to be introduced.
- Internally the building will be laid out to provide suitable facilities required by the shoot, including a boot room, wash room facilities, kitchen and reception areas.
- Accommodation will also be provided for workers (such as beaters) and an internal storage area.

This is very different to the new application, retrospectively proposed. Planning enforcement action was necessary due to the actual development being significantly different to that proposed in the 2018 application.

The shooting lodge now consists of a whole additional floor with ten luxury en-suite double bedrooms for shooters (not beaters). On the ground floor, instead of a large store room, there are three reception rooms and more space for shooters (compared to the two rooms originally proposed) and a new mirrored and fully equipped exercise room.

It is clear that this is no longer a simple shooting facility, but a high-end shooting lodge that will be used by shooters to a greater extent than that originally indicated.

Therefore, it should not be accepted that the principle of converting the former agricultural barn to a shoot facility has already been established; due to the shooting lodge now proposed being very different to the basic facility in the 2018 application.

The officer report, under 'amenity', states: "The building lies some distance from residential dwellings, although it is acknowledged there is a dwelling to the east."

In fact, the residential buildings to the east at Culverhay consist of at least seven dwellings. About 250 metres to the north-west of the shooting lodge is Culverhead, where there are at least another seven dwellings.

About 220 metres away is the Wivey swimming pool and recreation ground, which are used throughout the year, including some limited use of the pool in winter months.

These homes and facilities will suffer disturbance from the increased shooting activity at the proposed lodge, which is positioned only just outside the town of Wiveliscombe. There are more dwellings around the recreation ground and on the southern side of town, where there was more disturbance from the noise of shooting last season, when the new shooting lodge was in use.

There has also been a greater impact from alien game birds being released in the area. Pheasants are increasingly found on local roads, including on the main road between Wiveliscombe and Milverton, and in gardens of homes in Wiveliscombe and Waterrow. The large number of pheasants released will also have an impact on the natural environment and local biodiversity.

The creation of local employment in the area is welcome, but the type of economic activity and its downsides should also be taken into account.

It has been stated that the shoot will still create demand for local guest accommodation in the area. However, the creation of ten new double bedrooms at the shooting lodge will reduce the potential demand in the wider area that would have otherwise existed without this new guest accommodation.

To conclude, the new shooting lodge is designed to allow an increase in shooting activity and accommodation in the area. It is therefore different from the originally approved application. It will also bring more downsides to the area, including in terms of more disturbance from noise and game birds.

I would urge Planning Committee to refuse this application, or, at least, to place strong conditions on the new development to limit the impacts on the local environment and community.

Cllr Dave Mansell

Wiveliscombe and District Ward - Somerset West and Taunton Council

31st August 2020