REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SITE INSPECTION GROUP HELD ON MONDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2007

(03/1698/07/F) Erection of 3 Bedroomed House 10 Courtfield, Totnes, TQ9 5RQ

Present: Cllr J Brazil
Cllr G J Fielden (Chairman)
Cllr J D Hawkins
Cllr M J Hicks
Cllr R C Steer

In attendance and participating:
Cllr J Westacott (local Member)
D Kinsella (Senior Planning Officer)
Representative from Berry Pomeroy Parish Council

The Senior Planning Officer (SPO) introduced the application and made particular reference to the design of the dwelling. The SPO advised that the application site fell between two distinct areas; to the north were single storey dwellings, with two storey dwellings situated to the south. Representations had been received from neighbouring properties regarding concerns over loss of privacy, should planning permission be granted. However, the SPO felt that any over looking would be restricted to the first floor lounge window and balcony area. Following a query as to whether a condition could be placed on the application to ensure that it was restricted to having the living accommodation on the ground floor with the bedrooms being sited on the first floor, the SPO advised that he was not aware of any planning policy which could impose restrictions on the internal layout of a property.

The SPO also confirmed that no objections had been received from the County Highways Authority. The location of the proposed driveway which was capable of accommodating two cars, was highlighted to the Group.

The Site Inspection Group proceeded to walk the footprint of the proposed dwelling, in the garden of 10 Courtfield. Members were informed that the two existing ‘outhouses’ currently situated in the garden would be demolished and it was considered that there would be sufficient amenity area at the front and the rear of the property to make the proposal acceptable.

Members then proceeded to view the property from the garden of 11 Courtfield which was situated opposite the site with a separation distance of 21m. In order to determine the approximate height of the balcony, the SPO erected a ladder to demonstrate whether a person standing on the balcony could be seen from the gardens of 11 and 12 Courtfield. As a result of this exercise, Members agreed that there would be a degree of overlooking from the proposed balcony.

The local Member in attendance, who was not a Member of the Group, expressed concern regarding the balcony element of the application and the associated loss of privacy for neighbouring properties. The parish representative also noted concern over the height of the proposed property and felt that it was not in keeping with the street scene.

In comparison, a Member proposed that the application be conditionally approved. However, during discussion, other Members were hesitant to second the proposal, highlighting concern over the proposed balcony and the associated loss of privacy. It was noted that, if the proposal had not incorporated the balcony, Members may have been more inclined to recommend approval of the application. In addition, a Juliet balcony would be deemed acceptable, as it was felt that this would not enhance the peripheral view into the neighbouring properties. Although Members were only able to vote on the application as it was presented, they noted that if revised plans were submitted which took into account their concerns, they may be minded to reconsider their recommendation when the application was presented back to the Development Control Committee at its 12 December 2007 meeting..

Therefore, it was then agreed (by four votes to none, with one abstention):

> **RECOMMENDED**
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> That in respect of application number 03/1698/07/F, the application be refused due to the balcony element of the proposed leading to overlooking and a loss of privacy to neighbouring properties.