

APPLICATION NO.	P12/V1214/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	29 May 2012
PARISH	WANTAGE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Charlotte Dickson, John Morgan, Fiona Roper
APPLICANT	42 Market Place LLP
SITE	42 Market Place Wantage OX12 8AW
PROPOSAL	Erection of part 2 storey part 3 storey extension to the rear to accommodate 6 residential units comprising five flats and one town house, and associated landscaping works, cycle parking and service bay (as amended by agent's letter received 18.09.2012)
AMENDMENTS	Reduction in number of units – received 18.09.12
GRID REFERENCE	439853/187967
OFFICER	Laura Hudson

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to 42 Market Place, Wantage and includes land to the rear of the property. The existing shop unit fronts the Market Place with service access from Grove Street – it was formerly occupied by Woolworths but now contains Cargo homeware. The existing unit is two storeys with retail use on the ground and first floors. The building is utilitarian with a flat roof although the front elevation onto the Market Place has a small parapet and shallow false pitch with Georgian style windows on the first floor and typical shop front on the ground floor.
- 1.2 The application site is to the rear of the existing building and consists of a typical service yard with a number of dilapidated structures proposed to be demolished. There are two access points to the site, both from Grove Street.
- 1.3 The site is located in the Wantage Conservation Area, and 39 Market Place and 2 Grove Street adjacent to the site are grade II listed. A site plan and application drawings are **attached** at appendix 1.
- 1.4 The application comes to committee as Wantage Town Council objects.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a part two and part three storey extension to the rear of the existing building to create six residential properties with partial under-croft parking. The residential units would consist of one x two bedroom town house, three x two bedroom flats and two x one bedroom flats. The application proposes six off street parking spaces (i.e. one per unit), and retains a service access for smaller vehicles for the retail unit.
- 2.2 The plans have been amended from those originally submitted to address concerns in relation to parking and access. The scheme has been reduced by two units which has been achieved by deleting a proposed extension on the roof of the existing building which would have created one flat and creating one house instead of two flats. A previous application is awaiting withdrawal – that application proposes the whole extension in three storeys but is not considered acceptable due to the impact on

surrounding uses.

- 2.3 The extension is proposed in a contemporary style with a flat roof to tie in with the existing building. Given the site arrangements, the building has various projections (including balconies) creating some articulation.
- 2.4 Access to the site would be gained via two separate entrances both from Grove Street. Two parking spaces and the cycle parking would be approached via an existing entrance between nos. 2 and 4 Grove Street which currently serves a garage building. The rest of the parking and service yard would be accessed via the existing entrance further down Grove Street.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Wantage Town Council objects to the original plans stating: “This is overdevelopment of what is already a congested area. The provision of 6 parking spaces for 8 dwellings is considered inadequate. The Town Council has recently received complaints from residents of Grove Street regarding problems arising from the lack of parking within the area. The provision of 4 flats with provision for parking might be acceptable.” Any further comments received on the amended plans will be reported at the meeting.
- 3.2 County Engineer – Initial concerns over the lack of information submitted, the level of parking proposed given the number of flats, and substandard visibility onto Grove Street. Also concerns over the reduction in the size of the service yard without justification. Amended plans have addressed concerns in relation to parking provision by showing one space per unit and the service access is acceptable given the site’s town centre location. No objections subject to conditions.
- 3.3 Conservation Officer – The rear of the Market Place currently has a negative impact on the conservation area. The proposed flats are well designed and will enhance this area and will add to the vitality of the town centre. There would be no impact on adjacent listed buildings. No objections subject to building materials and surface materials.
- 3.4 County Archaeologist – No objections subject to conditions requiring a watching brief during construction and a written scheme of archaeological investigation to be submitted.
- 3.5 Environmental Health – No objections.
- 3.6 Architects Panel – Ingenious and acceptable design – with welcome amendment to the previous proposal. Recommend approval.
- 3.7 Council Waste Team – Original concern over the size and location of the bin store and whether it is for shop and residential waste. Amended plans have been submitted which separate the commercial and residential bins with a residential bin store located adjacent to the cycle storage. This is now considered acceptable.
- 3.8 Two letters of objection has been received from 18 Grove Street, raising concern that the balconies and windows will overlook their garden and intrude on their privacy, and from 21B Grove Street, stating that the parking provision is not acceptable and will lead to additional congestion in the area.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Various alterations to the shop unit.

- 4.2 P12/V1102/FUL - Previous application for eight flats in a three storey extension with an additional unit on the roof of the existing building. Scheme is awaiting withdrawal due to a number of concerns which have been addressed in the current proposal.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

Vale of White Horse Local Plan

- 5.1 Policy GS1 of the adopted local plan provides a general location strategy to concentrate development within the five main settlements within the development boundaries as defined on the local plan proposals map.
- 5.2 The site is located within the Wantage development boundary. Policy H10 states that development within the built up area of the five main settlements of the district, including Wantage, as defined by the development boundaries on the proposals map, will be permitted providing it would not result in the loss of areas of informal public open space, and providing the layout, mass and design would not harm the character of the area.
- 5.3 Policy HE1 refers to development in conservation areas and within their setting, stating that it will not be permitted unless the established character of the area is preserved or enhanced. Development on areas such as gaps between buildings, gardens and other spaces will only be permitted if it can be shown that these areas do not make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area, and views within, into or out of the conservation area would not be lost or damaged as a result of the development. The policy also seeks to preserve features important to the character of the conservation area.
- 5.4 Policy HE4 states that development within the setting of listed buildings will not be permitted unless the proposal respects the characteristics of the building in its setting.
- 5.5 Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.
- 5.6 Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking and suitable access from the public highway.
- 5.7 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 5.8 The Residential Design Guide was adopted in December 2009.
- 5.9 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and supports good design (para. 56).

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main issues to consider in determining this application are; i) The principle of additional residential development in this location; ii) the design of the proposal and its impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area; iii) impact on the

amenity of neighbouring properties; and iv) access and parking considerations.

- 6.2 The site is located within Wantage town centre and is surrounded by existing buildings in a mix of retail, residential and commercial uses. There are limited public views into the site given its built-up context and there are a number of dilapidated structures which would be removed as part of the scheme. Given the location and existing appearance as a rear service yard it is not considered that the site forms an important open space which contributes to the character of the area. It is therefore considered that the principle of additional residential development in this location is acceptable.
- 6.3 The rear aspect of the Market Place in the vicinity of the site is characterised by bulky flat roofed buildings and large areas of car parking and storage. Although within the Wantage Conservation Area this part of the town centre has limited architectural merit. The proposed extension to 42 Market Place would replace the current stark rear elevation of the building with a contemporary addition with articulation and character. Although the site is constrained in size, the proposal has been designed to fit comfortably into the space available whilst providing off street parking and some sitting out space, largely accommodated on balconies. The conservation officer considers that the proposal would enhance the character of this part of the conservation area and the architects' panel considers the scheme to be an "ingenious and acceptable design."
- 6.4 As stated above the site is constrained by existing development on all sides, therefore the proposal sits relatively close to adjacent buildings. The nearest properties to the development are nos. 4, and 6 Grove Street, located to the north-west of the site, and a small bungalow on a very small plot tucked to the rear of the Market Place and located to the south-west of the site. The properties in Grove Street are occupied by retail uses. Although no. 4 has residential use on the upper floors the only rear facing window is on the first floor and serves a bathroom. No. 6 is occupied by a hairdressers on the ground floor with associated beauty treatment rooms on the upper floors. Whilst the hairdressers has a large rear facing ground floor window to the salon on the ground floor the proposed development in this location is only two storeys and set nine metres away. The scheme has been reduced in height compared to the previous application, partially to address the impact on this business, and it is now considered acceptable given the lower height, distance away, and the fact that it is a commercial rather than residential premises. The upper floor window of the unit serves a bathroom associated with the beauty treatment rooms. It is not, therefore, considered that the proposal would have such a harmful impact on the properties in Grove Street to justify refusal.
- 6.5 The most affected property is the small bungalow to the south-west of the site. This is an unusual arrangement as the dwelling is entirely surrounded by existing buildings and has no useable curtilage. The property was formerly used as office space and was granted planning permission to convert to residential use in 2000. The proposed extension would be located to the north-east of the building where there is a small secondary lounge window. This window is currently obscured by an existing single storey pitched roof building located on the property boundary and 2.4 metres from the lounge window. The application proposes the replacement of this existing building with the extension, but located 7.5 metres away from the bungalow. Although the extension is part two and part three storeys in this location, which would not normally be acceptable so close to a habitable room window, it is considered, when compared to the existing situation and the fact that it is a secondary lounge window, that the relationship is not so harmful to justify refusal. In addition a small plant room and lobby to the east of the bungalow's main lounge window would also be demolished, helping to improve light from this direction.

6.6 The application proposes six car parking spaces which would provide each unit with a single space. The application has been amended to reduce the number of units from eight to six in order to address the concerns of the County Engineer with regard to parking. Two spaces would replace an existing double garage accessed between nos. 2 and 4 Grove Street and would not therefore result in any intensification of use of this entrance to the site. The remaining spaces would be accessed from the north end of the site where the existing service yard is currently accessed in addition to various parking areas which serve other units in the area. A small service area for no. 42 Market Place is retained as part of the proposal and the County Engineer has raised no objections to this and the current parking provision given the site's sustainable town centre location.

6.7 Concern was initially expressed by the Council's waste team in relation to bin storage, however amended plans propose a residential bin store adjacent to the cycle parking at the Grove Street entrance to the site closest to the Market Place. The bins, therefore, would be collected from here as opposed to waste vehicles having to enter the site.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development is located within Wantage town centre on a site which is visually contained but physically constrained. The proposal has been designed to fit the space available in a contemporary design approach which would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in this location. The impact on adjacent uses is considered acceptable, and the parking provision and access arrangements meet the County Council's standards for this sustainable location.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions;

1. TL1 - Time Limit

2 : Planning condition listing the approved drawings

3 : Material samples

4 : MC9 – Building details

5 : RE6 – Boundary treatment

6 : MC24 – Drainage details

7 : MC29 – Sustainable drainage system

8 : LS1 – Landscaping scheme (submission)

9 : LS2 - Landscaping scheme (implement)

10 : HY6 - Access, parking & turning in accordance with plan

11: HY20 – Bicycle parking details

12 : Construction traffic management plan

Author: Laura Hudson
Contact number: 01235 540508
Email: laura.hudson@southandvale.gov.uk