

APPLICATION NO.	P12/V2261/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	24 October 2012
PARISH	WANTAGE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Charlotte Dickson John Morgan Fiona Roper
APPLICANT	Taylor French Developments Limited
SITE	Land at Post Office Lane Wantage OX12 8DH
PROPOSAL	Erection of four dwellings with associated garaging, parking and landscaping
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	439937/187845
OFFICER	Robert Mason

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site consists of part of a private car park with access off Post Office Lane in Wantage town centre. It is understood that no occupiers in the vicinity of the site have spaces allocated in the car park.

1.2 The application comes to committee because Wantage Town Council has objected.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposed development involves a terrace of four three bedroom houses which have two storeys at the front and rooflights serving a third storey at the rear. The proposed ridge and eaves heights vary to reflect the local vernacular with half hipped gables on each end. The site lies within the conservation area.

2.2 Following discussions with officers an amended plan has been submitted showing two attached garages at the rear of the proposed houses, instead of three. This has been done to ensure that the internal width of the garages would be 3m so that future residents would be able to use them easily for parking and thus not have to use them only for storage. There would also be six parking spaces thus providing a total of eight spaces or two spaces per dwelling. In addition, the access road has been widened to two lanes to facilitate traffic flows around the corner with Post Office Lane.

2.3 The site plan and application plans are **attached** at appendix 1.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Wantage Town Council objects:

“The access road leading to the property is not adopted highway and is prone to obstruction by parked cars, making access difficult and causing congestion. The property is in the close vicinity to the night club in the former cinema building and residents could be disturbed by noise from this. Any development in this area would need suitable soundproofing. There is concern about the height and massing of the proposed buildings in relation to other adjacent properties.”

3.2 Thames Water - No strong views

- 3.3 County Archaeologist - No strong views
- 3.4 Conservation Officer - No strong views
- 3.5 County Engineer - No strong views
- 3.6 Drainage Engineer - No strong views
- 3.7 Waste Management Team - No strong views
- 3.8 Two neighbour objections have been received raising the following concerns:
 - The houses should be set back from Post Office Lane
 - The entrance should be wider
 - Large vehicles already turn at this point
 - Many pedestrians walk past the proposed entrance including children and the elderly
 - Object to bins in front of neighbours' dwellings
 - Proposed dwellings should not be so high
 - Visibility at entrance questioned
 - Many cars will continue to use the remaining car park

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P12/V1588/FUL](#) - Approved (12/09/2012)
Change of use from offices (B1) to four residential flats (C3)
- 4.2 [P86/V0631](#) - Approved (30/04/1987)
Formation of pedestrian link between rear of Regent Mall and Post Office Lane

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*
Paragraph 6 requires that a wide choice of high quality homes is delivered. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.2 *Local plan policies*
 - DC1 – Design - proposals should be high quality design and make a positive contribution to the character of the locality and take into account local distinctiveness
 - DC5 – Access - relates to highway safety matters
 - DC7 – Waste collection
 - DC9 - Impact of development on neighbours
 - HE1 – Development in conservation areas will only be permitted in the character or appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced.
 - H10 – Development in the main settlements – development is acceptable provided the new dwellings would not result in the loss of facilities or harm the character of the area
 - S4 – Non-retail uses in town centres – residential development is acceptable within town centre subject to details

- 5.3 The *Residential Design Guide* was adopted in December 2009.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Principle
The application site is located in the town centre of Wantage. Local Plan Policy H10 accepts such residential proposals provided they do not harm the character of the surrounding area. It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle subject to the detailed considerations below. In addition, the proposed

development of four dwellings makes a contribution to the Vale's current housing land shortage.

It is considered that the proposal complies in principle with policy H10 of the local plan.

6.2 Design

The proposed dwellings are in a short terrace with the middle two dwellings having a higher ridge but all of the dwellings being three storeys on the rear. The design of the two middle dwellings appears influenced by the Georgian period while the end dwellings are seemingly more Victorian. There would be forecourts with dwarf walls and railings for the boundaries at the front. The proposed car parking is to the rear with two spaces per dwelling, including garaging for two vehicles.

The proposed dwellings would be stepped forward and so would close off the end of Post Office Lane thus providing a more interesting vista from the north to the benefit of the street scene in the conservation area. Although this brings the proposed dwellings closer to the existing dwelling opposite, it is considered the proposed massing and scale would not cause undue dominating or overshadowing effects.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal complies with local plan policies DC1 and HE1.

6.3 Impact on neighbours

The relationship between the proposed dwellings and the existing dwellings along Post Office Lane can be seen on the layout plan at appendix 1. Although the proposed dwellings would be close to the existing dwelling opposite, plot 1 is offset from the front windows of that dwelling and it is not considered there would be a harmful overshadowing or overlooking impact.

Whilst the proposed ridge line is relatively high and close to some neighbours, it would only really cause some overbearing effect to the two nearest dwellings. However being north-facing these windows would not suffer a loss of sunlight.

Whilst there would be some loss of amenity to neighbouring properties, this is not considered to be so harmful to justify refusing planning permission and so the proposed development is considered to comply with local plan policy DC9.

6.4 Impact on conservation area

It is considered that the proposed design is interesting and follows leads provided by the local vernacular. The differing ridge heights are similar to those of existing buildings in the area.

It is considered that the proposed development would enhance the street scene of the conservation area by removing the car park and replacing it with an attractive development which also closes the vista in Post Office Lane. It is considered therefore that the application complies with the local plan policy HE1.

6.5 Access/ loss of car parking

It is considered that the loss of approximately 25 car parking spaces as a result of the proposed development would not be significant in terms of the whole town centre.

It is accepted that the vehicular access is quite narrow, however following negotiations the amended plan shows that the access road into the site has been widened to two lanes on a shared surface with a pedestrian path demarcated. It is considered this is acceptable with a condition requiring details of the proposed surfacing of the shared

surface to be submitted for approval.

The amended plan also shows that two garages would be provided instead of three so that they would be 3m wide in accordance with the highway officer's requirements. There would be a total of eight car parking spaces including the garages which is considered to be acceptable provision in this town centre location.

It is considered therefore that the proposal complies with local plan policy DC5.

6.6 General amenity for future residents

Whilst the application site is close to a night club to the rear, has air extractors near the front of the site, and is on a busy pedestrian walkway, the applicant has confirmed that the proposed dwellings will be well sound-proofed under Part E of the Building Regulations. It is also understood that the night club is insulated to prevent noise breaking out.

In addition, whilst plot 1 would be somewhat enclosed by the proposed garages to the rear and the gable end of 13/15 Post Office Lane to the side, it is considered that future residents would be aware of the setting and local environment before deciding to buy the house and so would accept these disadvantages as part of living in the town centre.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development complies with local plan policy DC10.

6.7 Waste collection

The waste collection point has been moved on the amended plan to a position on the south side of the entrance. It is considered that this is acceptable and complies with local plan policy DC7.

6.8 Residents objections

Set dwellings back to improve visibility around corner

The highway officer has raised no objection to the proposal on highway safety grounds subject to a condition to ensure the proposed visibility splays are provided.

Many pedestrians walk along Post Office Lane

There would be less traffic overall with the removal of existing car parking spaces, but a condition is recommended to ensure the developer finishes the shared surface areas with a suitable material to emphasise its shared nature with pedestrians and to help slow vehicle speeds.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle, it is an acceptable design, will not have an unduly harmful impact on neighbours, will improve the street scene in the conservation area, will have a reasonable environment for future residents, and will have satisfactory parking and access arrangements. Hence it is considered that the proposal complies with local plan policies DC1, DC5, DC9 and H10 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1: TL1 – Time limit

2: MC24 - Drainage details (surface and foul)

3: Planning condition listing the approved drawings

4: Boundary walls and fences

5: Sample materials

- 6: Withdrawal of permitted development (part 1 class A) - no extensions/alterations**
- 7: CN14 - Archaeological watching brief**
- 8: RE11 - Garage accommodation**
- 9: New roads**
- 10: HY3 - Visibility splays (access)**
- 11: HY6 - Access, parking & turning in accordance with plan**

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