

KBA/3105/8 – J McDermott

Demolition of house and garage. Construction of 6 semi-detached houses. Restwood, Faringdon Road, Southmoor.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 Restwood is a large detached house on a substantial plot in Southmoor. As well as the house, the site contains a large outbuilding consisting of a garage, store and first floor office. The proposal is to demolish the house and outbuilding and build 6 semi-detached houses. Extracts from the application drawings are in **Appendix 1**. The layout of the new houses has been designed to retain the existing mature trees at the front of the site and the existing hedges on the side boundaries.
- 1.2 A public footpath lies immediately to the west of the site, connecting Faringdon Road with Fir Tree Close. The nearest neighbour on this side is Silver Glenn, a detached house. The nearest neighbour to the east is Pinewood, one of a pair of stone cottages. To the north of the site is a playground associated with the village school.
- 1.3 The application comes to Committee due to the objection of the Parish Council

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 The detached garage, store and office was permitted in 1986 (ref KBA/3105/4). In 2004, planning permission was granted to convert the outbuilding into a dwelling (KBA/3105/7).

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy H5 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan allows for new residential development in the built-up area of Southmoor provided the scale, density and layout of the proposal is compatible with the size, form and character of the village. Policies D1, D2 and D3 require all new development to be acceptable in terms of design, the effect on neighbours, and highway safety.
- 3.2 Similar policies in the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan 2011 are H10, DC1, DC5 and DC9

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Kingston Bagpuize-with-Southmoor Parish Council objects for the following reason – “The proposal is contrary to Policy H10 which permits development in the larger villages provided the layout, mass and design of the new houses would not harm the character of the area. The footprint of the proposed dwellings would be much larger than that of adjacent dwellings on the Faringdon Road and so the proposal constitutes over-development. Dwellings 1 – 4 are set well forward of the existing building line, dominating the visual impact of developments on this part of the road, and so out of character with neighbouring properties. The two dwellings to the rear would create a cramped and undesirable ‘backland’ development. The development would create additional traffic close to a dangerous curve onto the Faringdon Road. The rooms on the second floor will overlook gardens of neighbouring properties.”
- 4.2 Local Residents – 3 letters have been received making the following objections:-
1. Overlooking
 2. Increased noise and disturbance
 3. Loss of light
 4. Additional traffic close to the footpath to the school
 5. Impact on drains
- 4.3 County Engineer – no objection subject to conditions.

4.4 Arboricultural Officer – comments to be reported at the Meeting

5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 There are three main issues:-

1. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area
2. The impact on neighbours
3. The safety of the access and parking arrangements

5.2 On the first issue, the surrounding area contains a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings. Because the houses in the vicinity were built individually, there is no rigid building line facing Faringdon Road. Instead the houses are set back from the road at slightly differing distances. Thus, the fact that Plots 1 – 4 would be set slightly forward of Silver Glenn and Pinewood is not considered to be harmful to the appearance of the locality. Although they are semi-detached houses, the proposed dwellings on Plots 1 – 4 have been designed to give the impression of being single detached Edwardian-style houses through the use of an asymmetric front elevation, with a gable and bay, and only one door on the front elevation. The submitted street elevation shows the proposed buildings on the road frontage would be set 5 metres apart, and would lie 8 metres from Pinewood and 22 metres from Silver Glenn. Notwithstanding the intention to retain the existing mature trees on the frontage, this proposed spacing of the buildings complements the existing character of the street. The Arboricultural Officer was considering additional information concerning the impact on trees at the time of writing the report. His final comments will be reported at the Meeting, although it is anticipated that he will have no objection subject to conditions.

5.3 The locality also has examples of existing houses occupying “backland” positions (i.e. Nos 1 and 2 South View and Hollyfield House). Members will be aware that backland development can be acceptable, particularly if there are existing examples in the vicinity. The proposed “backland” building containing Plots 5 and 6 at the rear would lie 14 metres from the proposed buildings at the front. This exceeds the Council’s adopted minimum distance for rear wall to gable wall of 12 metres. Officers consider the design of the proposed dwellings and the amount of space between them means the proposal would fit in with the character of the area and does not represent an overdevelopment of the site.

5.4 With regard to the second issue, the impact on neighbours, the main concerns are whether harm would arise from overlooking, noise and disturbance, or loss of light. The principal windows on Plots 1 – 4 would face to the front and rear and should not cause harmful overlooking. The submitted drawings show a side facing first floor bedroom window in Plots 1 and 4 which would look towards Silver Glenn and Pinewood. These windows, however, can be removed by condition. The principal windows in the proposed building to the rear (Plots 5 and 6) would look towards the neighbours’ gardens. However, due to the fact that this building would be set back, these windows would not be directly facing the most sensitive part of the gardens, namely that closest to the rear of each house where amenity should be maximised. Instead, the windows would directly face lower parts of the gardens. An angled line drawn from the proposed windows to the nearest point of each neighbours’ house gives a measured distance of 28 metres in both cases, in excess of the Council’s adopted minimum distance of 21 metres. For these reasons, it is considered no harm from overlooking would arise.

5.5 In terms of noise and disturbance, the main concern with backland development is the potential for noise and disturbance from vehicles serving the dwellings at the rear. In this case, the proposed driveway serving Plots 5 and 6 would lie alongside the public footpath that separates the application site from the neighbours at Silver Glenn. In view of this separation, it is considered the likely level of noise and disturbance would be acceptable. The parking areas serving Plots 1 – 4 would lie at the front of the site. Officers consider there is no reason to assume that noise and disturbance arising from the typical use of the proposed garden areas by residents should be above what could be reasonably expected for a residential area. Given

the proposed orientation and spacing of the dwellings, Officers believe there should be no harm from loss of light.

- 5.6 The final issue is access and parking. The existing vehicular access is set back 6 metres from the carriageway and provides adequate vision along Faringdon Road. Accordingly, there is no reason to assume that use of the access will be dangerous to pedestrians using the adjoining footpaths. Parking has been provided at a ratio of 3 spaces per dwelling. Given the size of the proposed dwellings (4 bedrooms) and the village location, this provision is considered acceptable. The County Engineer has no objections subject to conditions.
- 5.7 Objections have been made in relation to existing drains, but this is a matter dealt with under building regulations.

6.0 **Recommendation**

- 6.1 *Subject to the final comments of the Arboricultural Officer, it is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair subject to conditions including materials, access, parking, boundary treatment, landscaping, tree protection and the deletion of specified windows.*