

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2280/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	16.10.2013
PARISH	ABINGDON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Marilyn Badcock Mike Badcock
APPLICANT	Ms. J. Brown
SITE	9 Masefield Crescent Abingdon, OX14 5PB
PROPOSAL	Erection of two one-bed flats adjacent to 9 Masefield Crescent.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	448353/196374
OFFICER	Mr Peter Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 No.9 Masefield Crescent is a semi-detached 1960s dwelling on a corner plot within this well-established housing estate in southern Abingdon. The building is of brick and concrete tile construction. Garden space is provided to side and rear, with parking within a detached garage and driveway at the rear boundary. Additional hardstanding has been provided to the front of the site.

1.2 This application comes to planning committee as Abingdon Town Council recommends refusal and as eleven letters of objection have been received.

1.3 A location plan of the development site is **attached** as Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The applicant proposes to erect two one-bed flats to the side of No.9. The flats will mirror No.9 itself in terms of design and scale. A small front porch will provide access to the first floor flat, with an entrance on the southern flank wall providing access to the ground floor flat.

2.2 This application is a resubmission of a scheme refused planning permission in July 2013. That application was refused for the following reason: *“That the proposal would represent an over-intensive development of the site that would fail to provide adequate living or amenity space for the future occupants of the new flats. This is contrary to the provisions of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan, in particular Policies DC1 and H14.”*

2.3 This scheme seeks to address this reason for refusal by amending the car parking arrangement to create a larger amenity space for the occupants of the new flats. The existing porch on the front of No.9 itself will be removed. This allows the provision of two car parking spaces on the front of No.9, negating the need for any rear parking for this property. The existing garage will be closed up and will become a storage building for No.9, only accessible from the rear garden. This will allow the existing driveway to serve as one parking space for one flat, and so one additional parking space is required for the parking space for the second flat. This allows for the provision of the larger amenity space.

2.4 The plans for this proposal are **attached** as Appendix 2. The layout plan for the refused application is **attached** as Appendix 3 for members' information.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Abingdon Town Council** – Recommends refusal. *“The committee recommends refusal on the grounds of (i) the application was out of keeping with the area, (ii) concerns about traffic and parking, (iii) overdevelopment”*

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) - No objections subject to conditions relating to access, visibility splays and parking

Drainage Engineer - No objections

Neighbour Representations – Eleven letters of objection received. Main objections can be summarised thus:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Out of keeping with the character of the area, particularly due to creation of terrace in estate of detached and semi-detached houses
- New flats would break long-established building line
- Inadequate living conditions for future occupiers, due to small size of flats and amenity space
- Loss of porch to No.9 would unbalance character and appearance of dwelling relative to rest of street
- Increase in traffic movements would exacerbate existing problems on Tennyson Drive relating to parking and highway safety
- Increased traffic on existing road network, particularly Drayton Road
- Insufficient change from previous application to warrant a change in recommendation
- Loss of value to No.9 itself – becoming part of a terrace
- Two cars parked on front of No.9 would conflict with access to front porch of new development
- Lack of storage space for bins of No.9
- Harm to value of neighbouring properties

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P13/V0743/FUL](#) - Refused (04/07/2013)

Erection of two one-bed flats adjacent to 9 Masefield Crescent.

[P01/V0495](#) - Refused (24/05/2001) - Approved on appeal (10/10/2001)

Realignment of fence. Replace existing larch lap fencing with closeboard and gravel boards.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

H10 - Development in the Five Main Settlements

H14 - The Sub-division of Dwellings

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Vale of White Horse Residential Design Guide (Adopted December 2009)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Principle of development

6.1 Policy H10 of the Local Plan confirms the principle of residential development within the built up limits of the main towns of the district will be permitted. This is subject to typical considerations relating to the efficient use of the land and that the layout, mass and

design of the dwellings would not harm the character of the area.

Design and Character Issues

- 6.2 Masfield Crescent is predominantly a development of spacious detached dwellings. To the east of the application site, Tennyson Drive and Longfellow Drive consist of primarily linked detached dwellings. Thus, No.9 forms part half of one of the very few semi-detached dwellings in the estate. This proposal would create, visually, a terrace of three units.
- 6.3 The formation of a terrace in itself is not a reason to refuse permission. Equally, there are no concerns with the design approach taken. No.9 is typical of the design approach taken in the estate and so mirroring it for the new flats is sensible. The removal of the front porch of No.9, and its replacement with a canopy, would, if done separately, represent permitted development and so would not require planning permission. As such, there can be no objections to the visual impact of this element of the proposal.
- 6.4 No.9 has a prominent corner plot. Masfield Crescent is one of the major roads within the estate. The southern flank wall of No.9 does not project closer to the street than the properties immediately behind on Tennyson Drive. This consistent building line is a key factor in establishing the spacious character of the area. The proposed building would break that line and project close to the junction between Masfield Crescent and Tennyson Drive.
- 6.5 The junction of Masfield Crescent and Tennyson Drive is relatively wide. There is a generous verge on both sides of the road and this is a key component of the character of the area. At the closest point, the new flats will project within one metre of the tapered southwestern boundary of the plot.
- 6.6 In discussions on the previous application, the applicant's agent has drawn officers' attention to examples of other houses in the vicinity that have been extended this close to site boundaries. These generally appear to be extensions, so are subservient to the main house in terms of scale and height. However, they do set some precedent for buildings projecting this close to the site boundary.
- 6.7 These local examples generally do not benefit from the relief offered by the verge here. A reasonable gap would remain within the street scene. Furthermore, it is important to note the character of the area is of 1960s dwellings. The estate does not benefit from any planning designations. There are no long distance views into this part of the estate. Thus, the impact on the character of the area is localised and so harder to resist, given the sustainable nature of the development.
- 6.8 Overall, officers consider this amended proposal will clearly have some impact on the character of the area. However, as before, on balance, this harm would not be sufficient to justify a refusal of planning permission.
- Future living conditions**
- 6.9 Policy H14 of the Local Plan relates to the sub-division of dwellings. Whilst this proposal is effectively the erection of a new dwelling on the side of the existing, the issues are similar, so the policy remains relevant.
- 6.10 The policy requires a subdivided dwelling or site to provide adequate living space and garden space. The two flats do have separate living, bath and bed areas. However, the total space of each flat is around 30 square metres which is small. By means of a guide, the Homes and Community Agency, which runs a National Affordable Housing

Programme, require a one-bed two person flat to be at least 46 square metres in size. Whilst these standards are not appropriate for market housing, and so cannot apply here, they do demonstrate how small the two flats are compared against nationally accepted good practice. This council does not have minimum size standards for market housing but the requirements of Policy H14 are relevant.

- 6.11 Whilst the flats themselves remain the same size as the previous application, the applicants have made efforts to improve the amenity space available to the two flats. Previously, the two new car parking spaces significantly intruded into the remaining rear garden. This proposal removes one of those spaces, freeing up space to the rear for a small patio and lawn.
- 6.12 The council's adopted residential design guide indicates 15 square metres of amenity space should be provided for each bedroom in a flat. Thus, this scheme should provide 30 square metres of amenity space. The removal of the second car parking space ensures the rear amenity space achieves this requirement.
- 6.13 As such, half of the previous reason for refusal must fall away. This means the decision rests on whether the small size of the flats themselves is sufficient to warrant a refusal of planning permission. On balance, it does not. This is primarily because the council does not have minimum size requirements for new market housing. This makes it more difficult to demonstrate material planning harm as there is no standard against which these flats can be assessed. Therefore, whilst the changes made to this application are relatively minor, they are, on balance, sufficient to change the overall recommendation.
- 6.14 *Highway Safety*
A number of objections have focussed on the highway safety implications of this proposal, but officers do not find these significant. There is clearly a long-standing issue in the area regarding on-street parking, but officers can only assess the likely increase in on-street parking from this proposal.
- 6.15 To that end, this increase is likely to be minimal. The amended proposal would maintain the two spaces necessary for the three-bed No.9, at the front of the property, and provide one space each for the two flats. This is in line with county council parking standards.
- 6.16 Objections have also been raised to the proximity of the new dropped kerb to the existing junction. However, it would be no closer to the junction than the dropped kerb on the opposite side of the road, serving No.2 Tennyson Drive. The amendments to this scheme reduce the overall length of dropped kerb to an acceptable degree. Thus, officers conclude this proposal would not endanger highway safety significantly.
- Neighbouring Amenity*
- 6.17 Given the corner plot location and the manner the new building continues the existing building line exactly, there are no concerns this proposal would result in a loss of light or outlook to neighbouring properties.
- 6.18 The owners of 1 Tennyson Drive have previously raised concerns about an increase in overlooking from the new flats. However, the overlooking possible would primarily be of the front garden of this property, with only oblique views of the private rear garden possible. The front garden is part of an open-plan estate so is not a private space. Thus, officers conclude this proposal would not cause material harm to the amenity of the occupants of No.1 Tennyson Drive. No other neighbours would be materially affected.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The principle of this development is acceptable, given the permissive stance of local and national policy. It would provide two new smaller residential units in a relatively sustainable location on the edge of Abingdon. The proposed building would intrude into the open space at this junction. On balance, the harm this would cause would not be sufficient to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

7.2 This amended proposal makes alterations to the parking arrangement to increase the amount of amenity space available to the occupants of the new flats. This amenity space accords with the requirements of the Residential Design Guide, where previously it did not. On balance, this overcomes the previous reason for refusal.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant Planning Permission subject to:

1 : Commencement Three Years

2 : Approved plans

3 : Matching Materials

4 : Access in Accordance with plans

5 : Visibility Splays in accordance with plans

6 : Car Parking in accordance with plans

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