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| APPLICATION NO. | P14/V0942/FUL |
| APPLICATION TYPE | FULL APPLICATION |
| REGISTERED | 25.4.2014 |
| PARISH | ABINGDON |
| WARD MEMBER(S) | Julie Mayhew-Archer Tony de Vere |
| APPLICANT | Twin City Developments Ltd |
| SITE | 83 The Vineyard Abingdon Oxfordshire, OX14 3PG |
| PROPOSAL | Redevelopment and change of use of the site from commercial to residential with part conversion part new build creating 6 flats with associated external works and retention of vehicle access (as Amended by plans received on 30 October 2014) |
| AMENDMENTS | Reduction in depth of third storey, reduction in size of units, amended window location. |
| GRID REFERENCE | 450004/197481 |
| OFFICER | Holly Bates |

SUMMARY

- The application is to erect a building containing six flats as a part-conversion, part-new build of an existing commercial property in Abingdon town centre.
- The application is referred to committee due to an objection from Abingdon Town Council and due to the number of objections from neighbouring residents.
- The main issues are:
 - impact on the character of the area;
 - impact on neighbour amenity;
 - impact on the highway
- The application is recommended for approval.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site, approximately 0.07 ha in size, is located near the centre of Abingdon and is currently used for commercial purposes. The site is accessed off the Vineyard to the south and is located to the rear of an existing shop with flat above which fronts the highway. Residential development is located to the north, east and west of the site. The site plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

1.2 The application comes to committee as Abingdon Town Council objects to the proposal and due to the number of objections from neighbouring residents.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide six flats. The site would be converted from commercial to residential, involving part conversion of the existing building and part-new build. The proposal involves the demolition of the existing single storey garage block along the southern boundary to be replaced with a new building comprising of 2 x 2 bed units that will extend eastwards from the existing commercial building. The commercial building would be converted into 2 x 1 bed units and 2 x 2 bed units, with some additional construction to create the third storey. The maximum height of the building at a three storey level would be 9.4m and

the two storey elements would be about 6.5m high. The development would be of a contemporary design with a white render finish complemented by sections of timber boarding and a flat roof with aluminium fascias. The application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

- 2.2 The application plans have been amended to reduce the depth of the third storey to reduce the impact of the proposal on the properties in Vintner Road and to create a more harmonious relationship between the buildings. The sizes of the units have also been reduced so the proposal no longer incorporates any three bedroom units.
- 2.3 Planning permission was previously granted in 2007 for the erection of 6 flats on the site in a more traditional design, but this has not been implemented.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Abingdon Town Council** – “Recommend refusal. Members considered that the proposed change of use from commercial to residential would generate an increase in vehicular traffic for which could not be accommodated by the development, and that in particular there would not be safe and convenient access within the site and to and from the adjoining highway and that there would not be adequate and safe parking provision, in contravention of retained policy DC5 (access) of the adopted Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2011.”

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – Comments awaited on amended plans; to be reported at committee meeting.

Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse) – No objections, subject to condition on basis of additional information received.

Thames Water Development Control – No objections

Environment Agency (Lesley Tims & Cathy Harrison) – No objections

Natural England – No objections

Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) – No objections

Health & Housing - Env. Protection Team – No objections

Waste Management Officer (District Council) – Comments awaited on amended plans, to be reported at committee meeting.

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – No objections, subject to conditions

Landscape Architect - Vale of White Horse DC – No objections, subject to conditions

Health & Housing - Contaminated Land – No objections, subject to conditions.

Health & Housing - Air Quality – No objections

Archaeology Team – No objections, subject to conditions

Conservation Officer Vale – No objections, subject to conditions.

Neighbour Object (7) – Seven representations from six different properties have been received, objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Loss of privacy;
- Overlooking;
- Loss of light;
- Location of bins;
- Building too high;
- Materials not in-keeping with area;
- Increase in noise;
- Increase in traffic;
- Drainage and soakaway issues
- Foundation concerns (this would be considered by building regulations)
- Access on properties during construction (this is not a material planning consideration)
- Dominance;
- Excessive development for size of site;
- Existing street lighting;
- Access and turning space concerns;
- Inadequate car parking provision.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P07/V1425](#) - Approved (18/12/2007)

Demolition of garage and replacement with 2 no. apartments. Conversion of existing commercial building to 4 no. 1 bedroom flats.

[P84/V0895](#) - Approved (11/01/1985)

Re-development of workshop/warehouse and garaging to provide modern accommodation with office and toilet facilities. (BR 1376/84ABG)

[P83/V0814](#) - Refused (18/07/1983)

Conversion of existing house, shop and workshop to form two one-bedroom flats and four one-bedroomed houses.

[P82/V0737](#) - Approved (03/03/1982)

Remove projecting brickwork on side of shop to widen access. Remove large plate glass window and replace with smaller panes. BR 98/82ABG)

[P77/V0627/COU](#) - Approved (21/10/1977)

Change of use of outbuildings from storage to woodwork and cabinet making workshop.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;**

DC1 - Design

DC13 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off

DC14 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

H10 - Development in the Five Main Settlements

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The NPPF introduced the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development comprises three mutually dependent aspects, economic, social and environmental.

5.3 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

5.4 Residential Design Guide 2009

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in determining this application are considered to be: i) the principle of additional residential development in this location ii) the impact of the proposal on the character of the area; iii) the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties and vi) parking and highway safety issues.

6.2 Principle

The principle of converting the site to residential use is considered to be acceptable. The site is located near the centre of Abingdon, one of the largest settlements within the Vale with relatively good access to services, facilities and public transport. The proposal would make use of a redundant, previously developed site in an area which has seen significant residential development on disused commercial sites in recent times. Consequently, it is considered the proposal is sustainable in terms of its economic and social aspects. The environmental aspect of the proposal also needs to be assessed. These relate to the impact of the proposal on the area, the impact on neighbours and highway safety.

6.3 Character and visual amenity

The development in the form proposed is not considered to be harmful to the character of the locality. The NPPF is clear in paragraph 60 that “planning policies and decisions should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles”. The proposal is of a high quality contemporary design which would utilise high quality materials and finishes, which are to be conditioned. The footprint is largely retained to the existing commercial buildings, and would predominately be two storeys in height apart from two sections rising to three storeys. The building has been designed to incorporate alternative heights and contrasting sections of materials to provide articulation to the design, reducing the massing and balancing the proportions. It is not considered that the proposed building would appear out of place within the urban town centre location, and the character of the immediate neighbourhood incorporates a number of three storey town houses and flats. As such, the proposal is not considered to harm the visual amenity or character of the locality.

6.4 Neighbour amenity

Concerns have been raised by neighbouring residents about the impact of the proposed development on residential amenity. The amended plans have reduced the projection of the third storey element along the western boundary to meet a 40-degree line when taken from the closest window within the neighbouring property, no. 5 Vintner Road. This is considered sufficient to ensure that the proposal would not appear over-dominating or block outlook from the windows. The windows along the south elevation face a car parking area, and so will not result in any harmful overlooking but will create natural surveillance of this area. The windows to the west elevation will similarly face a car park area, serving Vintner Road. Windows to the north are mainly confined to the eastern most section of the building and would therefore overlook the access road and car park area for the site. With the submission of the amended plans, the only window

in the east elevation would be a ground floor en-suite window which is a non-habitable room. It is noted that the windows do appear to be located directly on the boundaries of the site; the agent for the application has confirmed that there would be space within the curtilage of the site to accommodate window openings. The proposed windows should not open over any third party land, but this is not a material planning consideration. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would harm the amenities of the neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or dominance. It is not considered that the residential use of the site would result in any significant worsening of noise levels than those that could be experienced from the site's commercial use; and the environmental health officer has raised no objections.

6.5 Highway Safety

The application proposes to use the existing access to the site from The Vineyard, and would provide one parking space per flat which is considered acceptable in this town centre location. The other three spaces would be retained for the hairdressers at 83 The Vineyard (2 spaces) and 81 The Vineyard (1 space) which is the current arrangement. Vehicle tracking path plans have been submitted at the request of the highways liaison officer which demonstrates that vehicles are able to turn within the site and egress in a forward gear. It is considered that the extant use of the site likely generates more traffic movements than the proposed residential use would. The proposal utilises the same vehicular access and parking location, long the west of the site, as the previously approved scheme in 2007. Cycle parking provision has been incorporated within the scheme, as has a refuse and recycling storage area which has been amended following consultation from the council's waste team. At the time of writing the report further comments from the waste team on the amended plans were awaited, but a condition is attached requiring full details of the bin storage area. It is indicated that some lightning would be installed in the car park area for safety, and as such this is also conditioned to ensure it would not have a harmful impact on neighbours' amenities.

6.6 Other considerations

The forestry officer originally raised concerns regarding the impact of the development on the trees along the east boundary, outside of the site, which are considered desirable to retain as they contribute positively to the character of the area. However, additional information has been submitted to overcome this issue and as such the forestry officer has raised no objections, subject to a condition. The council's drainage engineer raises no objections to the proposal subject to a condition requiring further details of surface water and foul drainage. Thames Water also raises no objections to the proposal.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 It is considered the proposal amounts to sustainable development in terms of the economic, social and environmental aspects. The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable, it will not harm the visual amenity of the area or the amenities of neighbouring properties, and there is adequate parking provision on the site. The proposal, therefore, complies with the provisions of the development plan, in particular policies DC1, DC5, DC6, DC7, DC9, DC13, DC14 and H10. The development is also considered to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:

1 : Commencement 3 years – full planning permission

2 : List of approved plans

3 : Submission of material details

- 4 : Submission of window, door and finish details**
- 5 : Submission of surface water and foul drainage details**
- 6 : Submission of refuse & recycle storage details**
- 7 : Contaminated land risk assessment to be submitted**
- 8 : Submission of an arboricultural method statement include a tree protection plan,**
- 9 : Archeaology Watching Brief/Written Scheme of Investigation – to be submitted**
- 10 : Archeaology Watching Brief/Written Scheme of Investigation – implementation**
- 11 : Submission of details of a rumble strip or boundary markers at entrance to site**
- 12 : Submission of external lighting details**
- 13 : Submission of a Construction Traffic Management plan**
- 14 : Boundary details in accordance with submitted plan**
- 15 : Car parking provision in line with approved plan**
- 16 : Cycle parking to be provided in line with approved plan**
- 17 : No gates to vehicular access, unless otherwise agreed in writing.**

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