

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/V2318/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	03.11.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	WANTAGE
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Charlotte Dickson Fiona Roper Julia Reynolds
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr. Richard Shepherd
<b>SITE</b>	Motorlux, 32 Newbury Street, Wantage, OX12 8DA
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of site to provide 14 no dwellings.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	27/02/2015 - Design and layout amendments
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	439823/187691
<b>OFFICER</b>	Holly Bates

---

### SUMMARY

- The application is referred to committee due to an objection being received from the Town Council and due to the level of objection from neighbouring residents.
  - The proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of 14 new dwellings.
  - The main issues are:
    - The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
    - The impact of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring properties; and
    - The impact of the proposal on highway safety.
  - The recommendation is to approve the application subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement.
- 

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site is located within Wantage town centre, at a prominent location at the signalled crossroads between Newbury Street, Ormond Road and Portway. The site, about 0.14 hectares in size, has an existing use as a commercial car sales and servicing garage which is no longer in use. The site is located within the conservation area, and adjacent to a number of grade II listed buildings to the north and east. A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

1.2 The area is predominantly residential, with neighbouring properties located within St. Annes Mews to the north, Portway to the south and St. Marys on the other side of the road. There are also some other commercial and community uses in the area, including a pub and a dentist, and the site backs onto The Beacon community centre to the west.

1.3 The application is referred to committee due to the number of objections received from neighbouring properties and an objection from the Town Council.

### 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and its full re-development to provide 14 private residential units.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 18 March 2015

- 2.2 The proposal provides a mixture of apartments and houses: 8 x 2 bed houses, 5 x 2 bed flats and 1 x 1 bed flat arranged to provide an active frontage onto Newbury Street with amended vehicular access to the rear of the site to further units fronting a landscaped courtyard which also provides 14 parking spaces.
- 2.3 The proposal has been amended during the assessment process to improve the design and layout of the site, particularly with reference to the key site frontage to Newbury Street and its prominence within the conservation area.
- 2.4 Copies of some of the key application plans are **attached** at Appendix 2.
- 2.5 The applicants and agents have been in discussions with officers and statutory consultees to agree financial contributions towards off site infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development. The following contributions based on 14 dwellings have been agreed:

<b>Contribution Type</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b><i>Oxfordshire County Council</i></b>	
<b>Transport</b>	
Strategic transport infrastructure	£33,199.74
Improved bus service in Wantage	£11,865.00
<b>Education</b>	
Primary School expansion	£59,331.00
Secondary School expansion	£42,238.00
Special Educational Needs expansion provision	£1,637.00
<b>Property</b>	
Library	£2,252.50
Central library	£454.48
Waste Management	£1,696.00
Museum Resource Centre	£132.50
Adult Day Care	£2,871.00
<b>Administration and Monitoring</b>	
Administration and Monitoring costs	£1,500.00
<b><i>Vale of White Horse District Council</i></b>	
<b>Sport and Leisure – all off site</b>	
Swimming Pools	£5,132.00
Sports Halls	£5,962.00
Artificial Grass Pitch	£861.00
Outdoor Tennis	£3,036.00
MUGA	£3,052.00
Health and Fitness	£2,853.00
Football Pitches	£2,381.00
Cricket Pitches	£873.00
Rugby Pitches	£557.00
Pavilion	£6,153.00
<b>Informal open space – off site</b>	
Public open space maintenance	£5,579.70
<b>Other District Requirements</b>	
Waste bins	£2,380.00
Administration and Monitoring	£2,800.00
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>£198,796.92</b>

2.6 As the proposal is under 15 units, there is no requirement by local plan policy H17 to provide affordable housing.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Wantage Town Council** – “Object. This is over development. The buildings are too high and should be no higher than those in St Anne s Mews. The buildings are of poor design and not in keeping with the local vernacular. There is concern about the adequacy of the access sight lines close to the busy Newbury Street/Portway/Ormond Road cross roads. There is insufficient car parking provision for the number and size of dwellings. The amount of garden space is inadequate.”

3.2 **Conservation Officer** – No objections to the amended proposal, subject to conditions.

3.3 **Architects Panel** – Deferred for negotiations on the original scheme regarding design and layout; officers consider that the amended plans are considered to address these comments.

3.4 **County Highway Officer** – No objections subject to conditions and contributions.

3.5 **County Funding Team** – No objections subject to financial contributions.

3.6 **County Archaeologist** – No objections.

3.7 **Countryside Officer** – No objections, subject to conditions.

3.8 **Environmental Protection Team** – No objections.

3.9 **Environmental Health Contaminated Land** – No objections, subject to conditions.

3.10 **Forestry Team** – No objections, subject to conditions.

3.11 **Waste Team** – No objections, subject to storage area for wheeled bins being provided and financial contribution for supply of bins.

3.12 **Drainage Officer** – No objections upon receipt of additional information, subject to conditions.

3.13 **Thames Water** – No objections.

3.14 **Leisure services** – No objections subject to financial contributions for off-site sports provision and public open space maintenance.

3.15 **Neighbour representations**

3.16 *Proposal as originally submitted*

9 letters of objection have been received in relation to the original plans as submitted raising the following concerns:

- Height and proximity of buildings to neighbouring properties;
- Over-development of the site;
- More screening required along the boundary with Portway;
- Poor provision of landscaping;
- Loss of light;
- Loss of outlook;
- Loss of privacy;
- Overlooking;

- Lack of parking provision;
- Increase in traffic onto Newbury Street, significantly higher traffic movements;
- Dangerous access onto Newbury Street;
- Newbury Street frontage too over-bearing;
- Increase in pollution/trapping of pollution at pavement level;
- Loss of security along the rear of properties fronting Portway;
- Lack of clarity over private right of way (this is not a material planning consideration);
- Design, appearance layout not in-keeping with the conservation area;

3.17 *Proposal as amended*

4 letters of objection have been received in relation to the amended plans as submitted stating that the amended plans do not satisfactorily address the previous concerns with the scheme, which are listed above, and that the differences are not clear.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 The car showroom was approved on the site in 1955 by application P55/V0017, and since then there have been five applications made on the site in relation to the business, including advertisement applications and additional office space.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

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

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 – Landscape

DC8 – Provision of infrastructure and services

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

H10 - Development in the main settlements

H15 – Density

H23 – Open Space

HE1 – Conservation Areas

HE4 – Setting of listed buildings

5.2 **Draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1**

The draft Local Plan Part 1 is not currently adopted policy and this emerging policy and its supporting text has limited weight as per paragraph 216 of the NPPF. Greater regard therefore is to be given to the NPPF in line with paragraph 14 and where relevant, the saved policies (listed above) within the existing Local Plan.

1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

3 – Settlement hierarchy

4 – Meeting our housing need

7 – Providing supporting infrastructure and services

15 – Spatial strategy for the South East Vale sub-area

22 – Housing mix

23 – Housing density

33 – Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility

35 – Promoting public transport, cycling and walking

37 – Design and local distinctiveness

39 – The historic environment

40 – Sustainable design and construction

42 – Flood risk

43 – Natural resources

44 – Landscape

46 – Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.3 **National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

5.4 **National Planning Practice Guidance 2014**

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance Design Guide - March 2015**

Responding to Site and Setting

- Character Study (DG6) and Site appraisal (DG9)

Establishing the Framework

- Existing natural resources, sustainability and heritage(DG10-13, 15, 19)
- Landscape and SUDS (DG14, 16-18, 20)
- Movement Framework and street hierarchy (DG21-24)
- Density (DG26)
- Urban Structure (blocks, frontages, nodes etc) DG27-30

Layout

- Streets and Spaces (DG31-43)
- Parking (DG44-50)

Built Form

- Scale, form, massing and position (DG51-54)
- Boundary treatments (DG55)
- Building Design (DG56-62)
- Amenity, privacy and overlooking (DG63-64)
- Refuse and services (DG67-68)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in determining this application are: i) the principle of additional residential development in this location, ii) the impact of the proposal on the character of the area and heritage assets; iii) the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties, and iv) parking and highway issues.

6.2 **Principle**

Wantage is covered by policy H10 of the local plan: Development within the Main Settlements. However, due to the council's current lack of a five year housing supply this policy is not fully consistent with the NPPF. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, the policy has little weight and new housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is made up of three strands – economic, social and environmental.

6.3 Following paragraph 14 of the Framework, applications for sustainable development should be permitted unless the adverse impacts “significantly and demonstrably” outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

6.4 Wantage is one of the largest settlements within the District. The application site is located within the town centre, within easy walking distance of a good range of services and facilities, and access to public transport which connects to various other settlements both within and outside of the District. When compared to many parts of the Vale, residents here have the potential to access employment and services, and to make use of non-car modes of transport, in ways that promise greater minimisation of the use of energy than anywhere else. Consequently, new housing in this area strongly supports the principle of sustainable development in terms of the economic and social perspectives.

- 6.5 However, the environmental aspect of the proposal also needs to be assessed which will be addressed later in this report. This includes an assessment of the impact of the development, the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, neighbouring properties and highway safety.
- 6.6 *Justification for re-development*  
The site is currently within commercial use; although the car servicing and garage business has now ceased operations. The applicant has stated that the town centre location limits opportunities for economic trading when compared with the larger out of town franchises in Oxford and Swindon. Therefore, this franchise has been withdrawn and this would secure the medium term safeguarding of the sister franchise, Motorlux Ford within Wantage and will enable the transfer of existing staff to this alternative site.
- 6.7 The applicant has also obtained advice regarding the re-use of the site for commercial purposes and has sought potential purchasers. However, the advice received (and submitted as part of the application justification) states that the re-use of the site for commercial purposes would not be economically viable given the location of the site; linked with the need for partial, or complete replacement of existing buildings to create an environment suitable for further business use.
- 6.8 Therefore, it is not considered that the site would be economically viable to continue in a commercial use. The redevelopment of this site in a highly sustainable location is therefore supported by the NPPF in its encouragement of effective use of land reusing land that has previously been developed. It would also make a contribution towards the council's five year land supply deficit.
- 6.9 **Visual amenity, character and heritage issues**  
Local plan policy HE1 requires that any development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area; and local plan policy HE4 requires that development does not harm the setting of these heritage assets.
- 6.10 Local Plan Policy H10 seeks to ensure that development makes efficient use of the land and the layout, mass and design of the dwellings would not harm the character of the area.
- 6.11 Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that proposals are of a high quality design and take into account local distinctiveness either in a modern or traditional interpretation.
- 6.12 The Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design including layout and building form as a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 6.13 **Layout and built form**  
The site has been designed in two distinct parts; with a public frontage onto Newbury Street and the interior of the site. Officers consider this to be a successful approach, and development in depth and this L-shaped formation can also be found locally, including directly to the north of the site at St Anne's Mews.
- 6.14 The scheme provides a high density of units that is considered to be appropriate for the town centre context making optimum use of the land, and reflects the mixture of dwelling houses and flats within the vicinity. The units are predominantly two bedroom which officers consider to be acceptable given the town centre location.

- 6.15 The conservation officer raises no objections to the demolition of the buildings currently on the site, and notes the great opportunity to bring about a significant enhancement of the conservation area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.
- 6.16 *Frontage*  
The frontage onto Newbury Street has been carefully designed to integrate into the existing buildings either side in terms of scale and proportions. The height of the façade is at its lowest adjacent to the public house to the south of the site and is of a similar built form to the existing buildings in this location. It increases in height gradually stepping up to form a four storey building (12.2m high) adjacent, and of a similar height to, St Annes Mews (11.7m high) to the north. The built form has been carefully designed to assimilate with the traditional form of the buildings along Newbury Street and provide an active frontage, reflecting the vernacular heights, proportions and spacing found within the vicinity.
- 6.17 *Internal*  
A more contemporary approach has been taken with the interior of the site with an industrial form befitting the site's existing warehousing buildings. The rearward projection of six two bed dwellings has been positioned along the northern boundary of the site, partially replacing the existing warehousing, and with a lower ridge height than the Newbury Street façade, appearing as a subordinate element.
- 6.18 These properties would front onto a landscaped courtyard area providing an area of shared amenity space of approximately 210 square metres, which contributes positively to the layout adding in a softer appearance to contrast with the built form. Plots 1, 13 and 14 (all 2 bed houses) would be provided with private amenity space. The other houses and flats would have use of the shared amenity area, and given the town centre location would be within walking distance of outdoor public amenity facilities. As such, officers do not consider that the small area of amenity space provided would justify refusal of this proposal.
- 6.19 **Architectural approach**  
The design and detailing of the front façade to Newbury Street has been amended following negotiations with the applicant and agents. The design comments from both the conservation officer and the architects panel have been taken on board, and more simple, informal design details have been incorporated to create a more traditional and uncomplicated front façade which creates clear definition to individual elements and variety in height and materials. The proposed materials – brick, stone, tile hanging and plain tile or slate for pitched roofs, as well as glazing and dark stained boarding internally – are considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to full details being provided. The front facing elevation to Newbury Street complements the existing vernacular character, while the internal element provides variety and innovation with its contemporary industrial style.
- 6.20 The proposal is therefore considered to reflect the prevailing character of the area in terms of layout, built form and architectural approach and would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of local plan policies DC1, H10, HE1 and HE4 and the provisions of the NPPF, NPPG and the Design Guide.
- 6.21 **Neighbour Amenity**
- 6.22 Local plan policy DC9 requires that developments do not cause harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of issues such as loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing and noise. The council's adopted design guide 2015 also provides

guidance on standards to avoid harmful impacts, such as the requirement that directly facing upper floor habitable room windows should be more than 21 metres apart to avoid any harmful overlooking or loss of privacy.

6.23 *St Anne's Mews (to the north of the site)*

The rearward element to the scheme would project along the northern boundary of the site, adjoining St Anne's Mews. 1 St Annes Mews would be located about 2 metres away from the row of proposed dwellings, directly to the north of plots 1 and 2. The eaves height of plots 2-6 to the rear would be 4.8m, with the pitched roof then sloping away from the northern boundary (to a height of 9.5m). When comparing the proposal with the existing commercial warehouse currently on the site, which has an eaves height of 4m and a ridge height of 7.5m, it is not considered that this increase in height would appear any more dominant than the current situation. In addition, plot 1 at the end of the row is set further away (4m) has a single storey eaves height of 2.7m and a ridge height of 7.3m, reducing the impact on the rear elevation and amenity area of 1 St Anne's Mews.

6.24 There may be some additional loss of daylight given the slight increase in height of the proposed dwellings to the existing warehouse to the rear garden of 1 St Annes Mews, however this has been mitigated with the smaller scale design to plot 1 which would directly adjoin the site to the south. Officers do not consider that this would result in any harmful loss of amenity to justify refusal of the scheme, given the existing buildings on the site. There are also no side facing windows within the south elevation of 1 St Annes Mews.

6.25 There are no upper floor windows contained within plots 1-6 at all. Plot 7 incorporates four high level windows serving the hallway and kitchen area and would be about 16m away from 10-13 St Annes Mews directly opposite. As such it is not considered that any harmful overlooking would occur.

6.26 *Portway (to the south of the site)*

The front elevations of this rearward element (plots 1-7) would face south, towards the rear elevations of the properties fronting Portway. The distance between the properties would be about 22 metres, which officers consider to be a sufficient distance to ensure no harmful overlooking, dominance or overshadowing would occur, particularly as these properties are located to the south of the site.

6.27 The two proposed dwellings fronting Wallingford Street back onto the rear gardens of the properties fronting Portway. Adjacent gardens are a common feature found locally, and the distance of the rear elevation to the ends of the gardens is about 10m which officers consider to be sufficient to ensure that no harmful overlooking of primary amenity areas occurs.

6.28 *St Marys (to the east of the site)*

The proposed buildings would be located between 10m and 12m away from the buildings on the opposite side of Newbury Street, which include the residential properties within St Marys. This relationship is common within higher density urban areas, and is found directly to the north where the re-developed St Annes Mews buildings are located about 9m away from the properties on the other side of the road.

6.29 The Environmental Protection Team have raised no objections to the proposal in terms of noise.

6.30 These distances, and the proposed dwellings' positioning and orientation on the plot is therefore not considered to harm the amenities of any of the neighbouring properties in



terms of loss of privacy, overshadowing, dominance or noise. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of local plan policy DC9, and the provisions of the NPPF, NPPG and the Design Guide.

6.31 **Highway safety**

Local Plan Policy DC5 requires that proposals for development must ensure:

- safe and convenient access for all users,
- that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development,
- that adequate provision is made for vehicle turning and manoeuvring,
- that adequate and safe parking is provided for vehicles and cycles and,
- that where necessary, off-site improvements to highway infrastructure will be secured.

6.32 The proposals involve moving the existing vehicular access further north and the southbound stop line on Newbury Street further south. The highways liaison officer is of the opinion that these access proposals would represent an improvement to existing arrangements, and that the traffic impact of the development will be negligible as the development is in a sustainable location, and its traffic generation will not exceed that of the existing permitted use.

6.33 The highways liaison officer has also confirmed that the proposed car and cycle parking provisions are adequate, given the site's sustainable town centre location. The amended plans have separated out the bin and cycle store, which is the preference of the local highway authority.

6.34 S106 contributions have been agreed to go towards improved strategic transport infrastructure in the western part of Science Vale, and towards a means of procuring the additional buses and journeys necessary for these routes to operate at an acceptable standard, especially for journeys to work.

6.35 The local highways authority have raised no objections to the proposed access and parking provision, subject to conditions which are recommended below. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of local plan policy DC5, and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.36 **Other material planning considerations**

6.37 **Drainage**

Following receipt of additional information, the council's drainage engineer has raised no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions. Thames Water have confirmed that they have no objections with regards to water infrastructure capacity and sewerage infrastructure capacity.

6.38 **Ecology**

The council's countryside officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to conditions relating to bat activity surveys and details of appropriate mitigation measures.

6.39 **Trees**

There are no trees within the site but several are located immediately adjacent to the Portway, The Beacon and St Anne s Mews boundaries. The tree officer recommends that a tree protection scheme be implemented during construction to ensure the retention of these trees as they contribute to public amenity and will become more visually important to offer some maturity to the development.

6.40 **Contaminated Land**

To ensure that any land contamination is addressed as part of any future planning permission given the site's previous use, the contaminated land offer has recommended applying a contaminated land planning condition.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application is recommended for approval as the development would comply with the relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable as it would make efficient use of the land in a highly sustainable location and contribute towards the five year housing land supply deficit. The proposal would preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area and would not harm the setting of adjacent listed buildings, the character of the area or the amenities of neighbouring properties, and there is adequate and safe access and parking provision for the site. The proposal, therefore, complies with the provisions of the development plan, in particular policies DC1, DC5, DC6, DC8, DC9, H10, H15, H23, HE1 and HE4. The development is also considered to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **That authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the planning committee subject to:**

8.2 **1. Completion of a section 106 legal agreement to secure contributions towards off-site services and facilities; and**

8.3 **2. The following conditions:**

- 1 : Commencement of development three years.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Samples of materials to be submitted.**
- 4 : Boundary treatment details to be submitted.**
- 5 : Bat activity surveys and mitigation measures to be undertaken and submitted.**
- 6 : No commencement on site without either licence from Natural England or confirmation from them that one is not required.**
- 7 : Access, parking and turning space in accordance with submitted plans.**
- 8 : Bicycle Parking in accordance with submitted plans.**
- 9 : Submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).**
- 10 : Residential travel information pack provided prior to occupation for each unit, details to be submitted.**
- 11: Sustainable surface water and foul water drainage details to be submitted.**
- 12 : Provision of fire hydrants - details to be submitted of locations.**
- 13 : Tree Protection Plan to be submitted.**
- 14 : Landscaping scheme – submission.**
- 15 : Landscaping scheme – implementation.**
- 16 : Contaminated land details to be submitted.**
- 17 : Details of slab levels to be submitted.**
- 18 : Removal of permitted development rights (extensions, outbuildings and external alterations).**
- 19 : Removal of permitted development rights for walls, fences and enclosures.**

Author: Holly Bates  
Contact: 01235 547664  
Email: holly.bates@southandvale.gov.uk