

ABG/19058/2 – Mr Simon Drewett

Retrospective application for a summerhouse/games room and raising ground level. (Re-submission). 5 Norman Ave, Abingdon

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This is a retrospective application for a detached outbuilding combining a summerhouse/games room with garden storage. Ground levels adjacent to the summerhouse have been raised by up to 800mm bringing the lower part of the garden level with both No.7 Norman Avenue and the remaining garden.
- 1.2 **Appendix 1** is a site location and block plan, and **Appendix 2** details the elevation and floor plans.
- 1.3 The plans have been amended from those originally submitted following discussions with Officers. The original plans are detailed in **Appendix 3**. The changes are: omitting the balcony, side screens, external stairs and first floor external door and providing a window to the east elevation instead of the door.
- 1.4 The application comes to Committee because of objections received from Abingdon Town Council.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 In June 2006 planning permission was refused for a similar proposal due to the design (incorporating external stairs and balcony), mass and proximity to neighbouring properties resulting in an over dominating and harmful impact on neighbouring amenity. The refused plans are provided at **Appendix 4**. The summerhouse/games room detailed in the current proposal has been re-designed omitting the balcony and external stairs.
- 2.2 The Development Control Committee at its Meeting on 14 August 2006 authorised enforcement action to secure the removal of the unauthorised building.
- 2.3 In May 2005 planning permission was refused for a two storey side and single storey rear extension. A subsequent appeal was dismissed in February 2006.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policies DC1 and DC9 of the adopted Local Plan require all new development to achieve a high standard of design and not cause harm to neighbours.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Following reconsultation on the amended plans, the original issues raised by both Abingdon Town Council and neighbours broadly remain:

Abingdon Town Council objects:

“Contrary to Policy DC9 of the Vale of White Horse Second Deposit Draft Local Plan 2011.”

- 4.2 Two letters of objection from neighbours have been received, raising the following concerns:

* overlooking the adjacent property from the balcony and external stairs (omitted in the amended plans)

* raising ground levels

- * design, size and proximity to neighbouring boundaries particularly 105b Radley Road
- * possible future uses including a separate dwelling and business use

4.3 The County Engineer raises no objection.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 No. 5 Norman Avenue is a 1940's semi-detached house located in a tree lined avenue to the north of Abingdon town centre off Radley Road. As the proposal is located in the rear garden there is no impact on the street scene. The main issue is the impact on neighbouring properties.

5.2 The proposal is essentially a single storey outbuilding with restricted headroom at first floor level. The dimensions of the amended proposal taken from the highest part of the original ground level adjacent to it are: 3.7m wide, 7m long, with an eaves height of 3.4m rising to 4.6m at the ridge. Ground levels have been raised by up to 800mm at the lowest point resulting in the building appearing inset with a sunken patio area to the front. For comparison, the refused scheme measurements (incorporating external stairs and balcony) are 4.7m wide, 8.8m long, with an eaves height of 3.4m rising to 4.6m at the ridge.

5.3 Officers consider that the reduction in the overall mass with the loss of the balcony, external stairs and screen, together with the building being located at least 2m from all adjacent boundaries and in excess of 40m from the rear elevation of 7 Norman Avenue and 4m from the flank elevation of 105b Radley Road, mitigate previous concerns in respect of over dominance and overlooking. It is not considered, on balance, that a refusal based on harm to neighbouring amenity could be justified.

5.4 Members should also be aware that permitted development rights would allow, in this location, the erection of an outbuilding with a ridged roof up to a height of 4m on the boundary. Such outbuilding(s) could cover 50% of the garden area and windows, balconies and external stairs could be built without the need for planning permission. Within this context, the proposed building is considered acceptable. Officers recommend, however, that permitted development rights relating to the insertion of windows or other openings in the rear and side elevations are withdrawn by condition.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-*

1. *RE3*
2. *No additional windows or openings in rear and side elevations*
3. *MC20 Amended Plans*