

NHI/1660/1 – MD Group

Demolition of existing house and outbuilding. Erection of 2 storey replacement building comprising of 6x1 bed flats (fronting Cumnor Hill). Erection of 2x2 bed houses (fronting onto Conifer Close). 3 Cumnor Hill

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a two storey building comprising 6 x 1 bed apartments, and the erection of 2 x 2 bed semi-detached dwellings to the rear with associated parking (1 space for each apartment and 2 spaces for each dwelling).
- 1.2 The property is currently a large detached dwelling sited within a reasonably sized plot located on the south side of Cumnor Hill. The site is bounded by a mixture of two storey and single storey dwellings. To the rear lies the development of Conifer Close, which comprises of a mixture of housing styles.
- 1.3 The application has been amended to take account of the views made by local residents and the Parish Council which are outlined below. It was originally proposed to erect seven flats in the block fronting Cumnor Hill. This has now been reduced to six, with design changes to the building. The design of the dwellings has also been amended to take account of comments made.
- 1.4 A copy of the revised plans showing the location of the proposal, its design and layout together with the design statement are attached at **Appendix 1**. A copy of the originally submitted scheme is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.5 The application comes to Committee because several letters of objection have been received and the views of North Hinksey Parish Council differ from the recommendation.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history in respect of this property.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011*
Policy GS5 (making efficient use of land and buildings) seeks to promote the efficient re-use of previously developed / unused land and buildings within settlements (provided there is no conflict with other policies in the Local Plan).
- 3.2 Policy H10 (development in the five main settlements) enables new housing development within the built-up areas of Cumnor Hill, provided it makes efficient use of land, the layout, mass and design of the dwellings would not harm the character of the area and it does not involve the loss of facilities important to the local community (i.e. informal public open space).
- 3.3 Policy H15 (housing densities) seeks net residential densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare in the five main settlements, provided there would be no harm to the character of the surrounding area or the amenities of adjoining properties.
- 3.4 Policies DC1, DC5, DC6, and DC9 (quality of new development) are relevant and seek to ensure that all new development is of a high standard of design / landscaping, does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours, and is acceptable in terms of highway safety.
- 3.5 PPS3, "Housing", is also relevant and reiterates the presumption in favour of developing previously developed sites within urban areas for housing ahead of green field sites and making the most effective and efficient use of land.

4.0 **Consultations**

Original plans

- 4.1 North Hinksey Parish Council has objected to the application and their comments are attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.2 County Engineer – no objections, subject to 1 space per flat and 2 spaces per dwelling, conditions on parking and accesses and a financial contribution to the Oxford Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 4.3 Drainage Engineer – no objections (subject to conditions).
- 4.4 Environmental Health – no objections
- 4.5 8 letters of objection have been received, which are summarised as follows:

- This is an overdevelopment of a small plot – nine new properties in lieu of one is not acceptable, and exceeds Government target for density.
- The proposal is detrimental to the character and amenity of the existing residential area.
- The two dwellings proposed for Conifer Close would be a complete overdevelopment for this small cul-de-sac.
- The two new dwellings have no landscaping – it is all a car park and will be unsightly.
- Conifer Close has limited parking at present. Two new houses close to the bend in the Close will prove to be dangerous.
- Block of flats is too close to neighbouring properties on either side.
- Flats are bulky and will overshadow and overlook neighbours, leading to a significant loss of light, amenity, privacy and outlook.
- Car parking is inadequate – 5 spaces for 7 flats. On street parking is already congested and the proposal will add to this.
- The lay-by cannot be used as an overflow as it is regularly used for picking up and setting down by school buses.
- The parking area for the flats and general use of the block will lead to unacceptable noise and disturbance to adjoining neighbours.
- The location of the bin store is unacceptable and will affect the use of the front gardens of neighbours.
- The design of the flats is architecturally poor, especially at the rear.
- There are sewage / flooding problems in this area. 9 units will exacerbate this.
- No 3 should be kept and converted to 2 flats only.
- A more suitable development would be 4 flats to the front and a single property to the rear.

Amended plans

- 4.6 North Hinksey Parish Council has not responded to the consultation on the amended plans at the time of writing the report. Any comments received will be reported at the Meeting.
- 4.7 The County Engineer has no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.8 No further letters of objection have been received at the time of writing this report. Any further comments received will be reported at the Meeting.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be 1) the principle of the development in this location, 2) the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, 3) the impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties, 4) the safety of the access and parking arrangements and 5) drainage issues.

- 5.2 On the first issue, Cumnor Hill is identified in the Local Plan as an area that can accommodate new housing development providing the layout, mass and design would not harm the character of the area. PPS 3 'Housing' also makes it a priority to use previously developed land for new housing. Previously developed land includes the curtilage of an existing dwelling. Furthermore, latest Government advice in PPS3 encourages the use of innovative approaches to achieve higher densities within existing settlements. In this respect, Paragraph 10 specifically refers to the planning system delivering 'a mix of housing, to support a wide variety of households at a sufficient quantity to take account of need and demand and to seek to improve choice'. The principle of a development mix of flats and semi-detached dwellings is therefore considered acceptable and an appropriate form of development in this location.
- 5.3 Regarding the second issue, the development in the form proposed is not considered to be out of keeping with the locality. The proposed dwellings to the rear fronting onto Conifer Close are entirely appropriate as an infill proposal, and are considered by your Officers to work well with the character of the street. The proposed block of flats has been designed as a large dwelling that fronts onto Cumnor Hill and is also considered appropriate in terms of the character of the locality. Members will recall No 10 Cumnor Hill, a block of 9 flats that has worked well in this respect. It is considered that this proposal will also fit well with the character of the area. Consequently, Officers consider the visual impact of the proposal to be acceptable.
- 5.4 Turning to the third issue, the impact on neighbouring properties, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to those properties on either side of the site on Cumnor Hill. The new apartment building is sited forward of the existing dwelling to respect the amenity and privacy of these adjoining dwellings and any impact on light or privacy is not considered to be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal. The design of the building with sensitive fenestration detailing such as high level windows and lantern lighting also affords protection to the adjoining neighbours. The two dwellings to the rear have also been sensitively designed to take account of neighbouring amenity and privacy.
- 5.5 On the issue of parking and access, the proposed arrangements are considered acceptable. The parking provision shown provides 1 space for each flat and 2 spaces per dwelling. Adequate visibility can also be achieved at the new access to ensure pedestrian and highway safety.
- 5.6 In respect of other issues raised, there is considered to be no adverse impact arising from this scheme in terms of the sewerage system, provided the surface water drainage system does not drain into the foul sewer.
- 5.7 In terms of density, it is fully acknowledged that the proposal is significantly higher than the 40 dwellings per hectare as outlined in Policy H15. However, the key assessment is the consequences that arise from high density in terms of impact on the character of the area and neighbouring properties. As outlined above the proposal is considered acceptable in the street scene and does not adversely impact upon the amenity or privacy of neighbouring properties. As such it is not considered to be an overdevelopment of the site.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *That authority to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions is delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community strategy) in consultation with the Committee Chair in order to allow the completion of a S016 Agreement to secure the required highways contribution.*

1. *TL1 – Time Limit*
2. *MC2 – Sample Materials*
3. *RE2 – Restriction on extensions / alterations to dwellings (PD rights removed)*

4. *RE8 – Submission of drainage details*
5. *RE7 – Submission of boundary details.*
6. *Access in accordance with specified plan*
7. *Car parking layout in accordance with specified plan*
8. *LS1 – Submission of landscaping scheme*
9. *Notwithstanding the submitted details, no works shall commence upon site until revised details of bin storage, location of bin store(s) and collection facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to occupation the bin store/collection facilities shall be completed in all respects in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such thereafter.*
10. *Prior to commencement of works, full details of site storage areas for materials, plant and vehicles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The site storage area hereby conditioned, shall be constructed and used for the full construction period and removed upon written consent of the Local Planning Authority.*
11. *Full details of cycle parking to be submitted prior to first occupation.*
12. *MC20 – Amended plans*