

CUM/1429/12 – Wytham Ltd.

Creation of courtyard entrance space with 2 x 3 bed linked detached dwelling houses incorporating car ports. 106 Oxford Road, Cumnor.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 linked detached dwellings on the rear garden of 106 Oxford Road, Cumnor.
- 1.2 The property is bounded by Sands Close to the east, Cumnor Primary School to the rear (north), with the vehicular access to the school running along the west side of the site.
- 1.3 The plans have been corrected since the original submission in respect of the upper floor windows. A copy of the plans showing the location and design of the proposed new dwellings, together with the applicants supporting design and access statement are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 The application comes to Committee because several letters of objection have been received, and Cumnor Parish Council objects to the application.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 No 106 was originally a shop with living accommodation above. In 1977, planning permission was granted for the change of use of the former shop and upper floor flat into a single dwelling. Permission was also granted for an extension to the front garden to incorporate a vehicle waiting bay (used in connection with the former shop).
- 2.2 An application to convert no 106 into 2x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed flats was withdrawn on 19 June 2006. An outline application to erect a dwelling to the rear was also withdrawn on 19 June 2006 to enable the applicant to fully consider the impact of the flat proposal on the proposed dwelling. In August 2006, revised proposals for the conversion of the building to 4 x 1 bed flats and an outline proposal for one dwelling to the rear were permitted. In May 2007, a further revised scheme for the flat proposal was approved. A copy of the approved plans for the flats is attached at **Appendix 2**.

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 H11 (development in the larger villages) enables new housing development within the built-up area of the larger villages such as Cumnor, provided the scale, mass, layout, and design of the new dwellings would not materially harm the form, structure or character of the settlement, and it does not involve the loss of facilities important to the local community (i.e. formal / informal open space).
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 PPS3, "Housing", is also relevant and reiterates the key objective of developing previously developed sites within urban areas, where suitable, ahead of greenfield sites and making the most effective and efficient use of land. It also comments on the importance of design, in that proposed development should complement neighbouring buildings and the local area in terms of scale, density, layout and access. Paragraph 12 of PPS3 confirms that good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, whilst Paragraph 13 goes on to

state that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

4.0 **Consultations**

4.1 Cumnor Parish Council has objected to the application. Their comments are attached at **Appendix 3**.

4.2 County Engineer – No objections subject to conditions.

4.3 Consultant Architect – comments are attached at **Appendix 4**.

4.4 Architects Panel – “innovative solution, external materials could be upgraded to possibly render”.

4.5 Five letters of objection have been received from local residents and are summarised below:

- This is a significant change to the original application for one dwelling, and will change the aesthetic and environmental quality for residents in Sands Close.
- Taken with the proposed flat development, the new dwellings are over development, creating a density that is unsuitable for this site and out of character with this part of the village.
- The new dwellings will overlook properties in Sands Close resulting in a loss of privacy. They will also reduce light to back gardens through overshadowing.
- An increase in residents will lead to more noise and disturbance to local residents.
- Oxford Road is a narrow one-way street that suffers from considerable congestion at peak times, due to the school run and deliveries to nearby shops. Two new dwellings will add to this with additional cars being a highway safety hazard.
- The waiting restrictions on the road are largely ignored and residents in the proposed dwellings will find their access frequently blocked by improperly parked vehicles. (This is not a material planning consideration).
- The proposed parking arrangements are inadequate.
- The new access will affect the drains, and with the removal of the trees on the boundary could lead to subsidence of Sands Close.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be 1) the impact on the character and appearance of the area, 2) the impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties, and 3) the safety of the access and parking arrangements.

5.2 On the first issue, the building of two, two-storey dwellings on this site is considered acceptable. Your Officers consider that the footprint of the units proposed and their siting are in keeping with other two storey properties in the locality. There is sufficient private amenity space for the proposed dwellings which is similar in size to that of other properties in the locality. The new dwellings will not appear at odds with the immediate locality and as such, the proposal does not represent an overdevelopment of the site.

5.3 In terms of their design, the proposed dwellings are modern, which is clearly different to the more traditional housing found in Cumnor. However this, in itself, does not make the proposal harmful. Your Officers consider the contemporary design to be wholly acceptable. Furthermore, the Consultant Architect has commented that the design is one which could lead to a very interesting and elegant pair of dwellings. The Architects Panel also positively endorses the scheme, stating that it is an innovative solution to the site’s development. Your Officers consider, therefore, that there would be no justification for a design based refusal.

- 5.4 Turning to the second issue, the potential harm to neighbours, your Officers consider that No. 106 Cumnor Road itself and No. 6 Sands Close are the properties most affected by the proposed dwellings. In terms of privacy, the siting of the dwellings is such that direct overlooking of No. 6 Sands Close will not occur. The access drive to the new dwellings is also considered acceptable. It will be used by the future occupiers of No 106 as well as the proposed dwellings, but it is bounded by the garage buildings in Sands Close, which will mitigate any potential noise and disturbance impact on those residents in Sands Close.
- 5.5 The proposed flats have been designed to mitigate any overlooking of the new dwellings. By using the existing building, existing relationships with neighbouring properties are maintained and are considered acceptable.
- 5.6 On the issue of parking and access, the proposed arrangements are considered acceptable. The parking provision shown of 2 spaces for each dwelling are considered to be sufficient in this location. The County Engineer has no objection to the proposal.

6.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. *TL1 Time Limit – Full Application*
2. *MC2 Sample Materials*
3. *RE14 Car ports to be retained*
4. *RE7 Boundary details*
5. *HY3 Access in accordance with specified plan*
6. *RE3 Restriction on alterations and extensions to dwellings*
7. *LS4 Landscaping scheme*
8. *MC20 Amended plans*