

ABG/20044/1 – Mr & Mrs Watkins

Demolition of a detached dwelling. Erection of two semi-detached houses with on site parking and alteration to vehicular access. 1 Galley Field, Abingdon, OX14 3RU.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission to demolish the existing bungalow on the site and replace it with 2 semi-detached 3 bedroom dwellings. It is a resubmission of a previously withdrawn scheme that proposed 2 larger semi-detached 4 bedroom dwellings.
- 1.2 The site is located on the northwest corner of Galley Field. It is bounded by dwellings on Norman Avenue to the west and north, which are at a higher level than the site, and No.3 Galley Field, a bungalow at the same level as the site, to the east.
- 1.3 A copy of the plans showing the location of the proposal, its design and layout together with the extracts from the design statement are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 The application comes to Committee because a number of objection letters have been received.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 An application to redevelop the site with 2 semi-detached 4 bedroom dwellings was withdrawn in May 2007. A copy of this scheme 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 H10 (development in the five main settlements) enables new housing development within the built-up area of Abingdon, 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 Policies DC1, DC5, 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 the development 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 the neighbouring buildings and the local area in general 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 Abingdon Town Council had not responded at the time of writing this report. Any response received will be reported at the Meeting.

4.2 County Engineer – no objections, subject to conditions.

4.3 Drainage Engineer – no objections.

4.4 12 letters of objection have been received, which are summarised as follows:

- This revised scheme is not significantly different from the previous proposal and does not overcome previous objections to redeveloping this site.
- Galley Field is an attractive residential estate. There are no semi-detached properties here. This will set a precedent.
- The character of Galley Field will be completely spoilt by this development.
- The existing bungalow should be retained.
- The new dwellings are too high, are an overdevelopment of a narrow plot and are not in keeping with Galley Field.
- They appear squeezed into the corner, and with the resultant parking, will result in the loss of the front garden to the detriment of the character of the area.
- The access is on a dangerous bend, and 2 dwellings will result in more traffic and parking problems.
- The slope on the southwest side is much steeper than is shown on the plans. As a result the dwelling closest to it will have little light.
- No. 3 Galley Field will be overshadowed.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

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

5.2 On the first issue, the development in the form proposed is not considered to be harmful to the character of the locality. The semi-detached nature and the design of dwellings are entirely acceptable in the context of Galley Field, a road characterised by a mixture of properties.

5.3 The scheme is not considered to be an overdevelopment of the site. Sufficient outdoor amenity space exists and the building's design and articulation assists in reducing its bulk and massing. The building is in line with other properties along this side of Galley Field and is no higher than No 5. Galley Field – a 2 storey dwelling on the other side of No 3. As such, it is not considered that the dwellings will be unduly harmful in the street scene, despite being prominent at the end of a vista on a bend in the road.

5.4 Turning to the second issue, the impact on neighbouring properties, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to those properties in Norman Avenue that adjoin the site, due to their garden lengths and the fact they are higher than the application site. The property most affected by the proposal is No. 3 Galley Field.

- 5.5 The original scheme was much larger than now proposed and was considered to have an adverse impact on No. 3 Galley Field due to the dominance of the 2 storey element of the dwellings which projected beyond the rear elevation of No. 3. This revised proposal has reduced the 2 storey element to be similar to the building span of No. 3, which your Officers consider has a much more acceptable impact on this property. The single storey projections to the rear are no higher than the existing building. As such, your Officers consider that any dominating impact or overshadowing / loss of light arising from this proposal would not be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal. The side window of No. 3 lights the main bathroom to the dwelling, and any loss of light to this room from the new dwelling is considered acceptable as it is non-habitable room.
- 5.6 On the issue of parking and access, the proposed arrangements are considered acceptable. The parking provision shown provides 4 spaces within the site (i.e. 2 space per dwelling), which is considered sufficient. Adequate visibility can also be achieved at the new access to ensure pedestrian and highway safety. Consequently, the County Engineer has no objections to the proposal.
- 5.7 In terms of precedent, whilst this can be material where other sites suitable for similar development can be identified in the locality, Members will be aware that each proposal must be considered on its own merits. In this case, there are other potential sites in the vicinity that could be the subject of a similar proposal. However, given the thrust of Government guidance on new housing, particularly in terms of making more efficient use of land within settlements, Officers consider that the issue of precedent is not such as to warrant refusal of this proposal.
- 6.0 **Recommendation**
- 6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:*
1. *TL1 Time Limit – Full Application*
 2. *MC2 Sample Materials*
 3. *RE7 Submission of boundary details.*
 4. *RE22 Slab level*
 5. *HY3 Access in accordance with specified plan*
 6. *HY25 Car parking layout in accordance with specified plan*
 7. *LS1 Submission of landscaping scheme*
 8. *RE3 PD Restriction*