

ABG/742/42 – Builders Ede Ltd

Construction of 8 finger moorings to increase the mooring capacity at Abingdon Marina from 100 to 120. Land at Abingdon Marina, Marina Way, Abingdon.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission to construct 8 additional finger moorings within the existing marina development to provide an additional 20 boat moorings.
- 1.2 The site is accessed off Marina Way, a private road, and is located at the eastern end of the marina basin. The marina park (a designated urban open space) and the River Thames lie to the east of the site. The site lies within the floodplain.
- 1.3 A copy of the plans showing the location of the proposal and the applicant's letter explaining the proposal 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 Abingdon Marina has a long planning history, with various permissions for the residential development that surrounds the basin. In 1998, planning permission was granted for the marina facilities, as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the area. As part of this consent a S106 agreement restricted the number of boat moorings to 100, 20 of which are for visitor overnight moorings.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011*
Policies DC1, DC5, DC9 and DC13 (quality of new development) are relevant and seek to ensure that all new development is of a high standard of design; does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours; the development is acceptable in terms of highway safety, and will not result in adverse flood flows, or reduce flood storage capacity.
- 3.2 Policy L2 seeks to protect urban open spaces (as defined on the Proposals Map) from development that may adversely affect their visual amenity, recreational or ecological value.
- 3.3 Policy L17 seeks to protect and where possible enhance the special environmental qualities of the River Thames.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Abingdon Town Council has no objections to the proposal.
- 4.2 County Engineer – “The proposal will increase the number of moorings and probably the number of vehicle movements to and from the car park. A significant length of the road up to the car park access is of a substandard construction and can only degrade further from additional movements. Whilst it is a private road, it would be beneficial to all users for it to be brought up to a suitable standard. It is noted that the applicants

have offered to improve the road in a letter dated 27th June 2007 – it may be appropriate to condition this to be carried out.

4.3 Environment Agency – no objections on flood risk grounds. The use of floating pontoons is acceptable and it has been confirmed that there will be no other works which would result in any impedance of flood flows or loss of flood storage capacity.

4.4 9 letters of objection have been received, which are summarised as follows:

- The applicant has misrepresented the total number of existing moorings, along with the area now covered by the existing moorings. There are regularly more than 100 boats moored in the marina, and 20 moorings that were specifically reserved for overnight stays are let regularly on a more permanent basis. Some moorings are used as permanent residences, contrary to the original planning permission for the marina. 8 additional mooring posts have also been installed without planning permission and existing moorings have been extended without consent. All of this has led to an increase in the number of moorings without planning permission and is in addition to the proposed 8 finger moorings now proposed. The marina management is clearly breaking the rules, and no planning permission should be granted until these breaches are resolved and the original permission is complied with.
- The marina basin is too small to accommodate a larger public mooring area, and the existing on shore facilities are inadequate for additional moorings.
- The additional moorings will exceed the number permitted by the Environment Agency.
- The new moorings will result in an increase in river as well as vehicle traffic and will lead to more car parking. Additional parking spaces must be provided to prevent any on street parking.
- There is an urgent need for double yellow lines along South Quay leading to the marina car park (this is not a material planning consideration).
- The road leading to the marina car park is in a poor state of repair. Extra traffic will only make it worse. This issue needs to be addressed.

4.5 1 letter of support has been received, stating that one of the pleasures of living at the marina is to see the movement of boats.

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 proposed finger moorings in the position proposed are not considered to be out of keeping with the locality, and will not be visually harmful. Boats moored in the proposed location will be seen within the context of the existing moorings, and will appear no different in wider views.

5.3 Regarding the second issue, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to any properties within the marina development as a result of 8 additional moorings. Boats come and go at present at all times of the day, and an additional 20 boats would not be unduly harmful to residential amenity to warrant refusal of this application.

- 5.4 On the issue of parking and access, the existing arrangements are considered acceptable. The additional moorings would not necessarily lead to a requirement for further car parking provision as has been raised by local objectors. Your Officers consider the existing car park is sufficient, as boat owners and other users of the marina arrive at different times of the day. No evidence has come to light to show existing facilities are inadequate, and on street parking directly attributable to the marina has not been proven to date. Furthermore, the County Engineer has raised no objections to this proposal.
- 5.5 In respect of the access drive, your Officers agree that it is in a poor state of repair. Whilst it is a private drive, the applicants have indicated that they would be willing to bring the road up to a suitable standard. A condition to secure this is therefore proposed to be imposed in the event of planning permission being granted.
- 5.6 The Enforcement Team has been investigating the breaches of planning control that have been alleged. To date, no clear evidence of the alleged breaches has been yet found. Notwithstanding this, the proposal for 8 finger mooring posts does not regularise any breaches alleged, and therefore it is considered that it would be unreasonable to withhold planning permission until the various alleged breaches are resolved.
- 5.7 In the event that planning permission is granted for this proposal, the applicant will need to apply to this Council separately to vary the terms of the extant S106 agreement from the original permission for the marina. An informative to that effect would be attached to any permission given.

6.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. *TL1 Time Limit*
2. *Prior to the first use of the finger moorings hereby approved the existing access road to the marina car park shall be repaired and improved to the standard of Oxfordshire County Council for such works, in accordance with a scheme which has first been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the District Planning Authority.*