

WAN/19717/1-X – Mr & Mrs T P Ryland
Erection of two residential dwellings.
Land at rear of Priory Cottage, Church Street, Wantage.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This is an outline application for two dwellings with all matters reserved except access.
- 1.2 The site is located within the built up area of Wantage and is adjacent to the Conservation Area. The site currently forms part of the rear garden of Priory Cottage and is adjacent to King Alfred's School. The site would be accessed from a private drive onto Priory Road, which is within the ownership of King Alfred's School but which Priory Cottage apparently has a right of way over. The site area measures 0.09 hectares.
- 1.3 Extracts from the application drawings are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 The application comes to Committee at the request of the Local Member Cllr Jim Moley.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 WAN/1917-X Erection of two dwellings. Outline application with all matters reserved. Withdrawn September 2006.
- 2.2 Adjacent site: WAN/4593/2-X Outline planning application for residential development on part of the site, demolition of existing building and provision of vehicular access to Portway. Application approved in November 2001, which has since expired.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy DC1 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan requires development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings, and to take into account local distinctiveness.
- 3.2 Policy DC5 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan requires safe and convenient access and parking.
- 3.3 Policy DC9 the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan will not permit development if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment
- 3.4 Policy H10 the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan states that within the five main settlements new housing development will be permitted provided that it would not result in the loss of facilities important to the local community, it would make efficient use of land, and the layout, mass and design of dwellings would not harm the character of the area

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Wantage Town Council raise no objection subject to highway approval.
- 4.2 The local MP Ed Vaizey, comments as follows – “I would like to register my serious concern about the safety issues connected to a current planning application. As an existing one-way system used by hundreds of my very young constituents on their way to school and nursery, the driveway concerned functions mainly as an exit from the school for cars but is also used by hundreds of pedestrians and young cyclists every school day. The driveway is not wide enough for two cars to pass each other and there is no pavement. I would welcome your assurance that the District Council will keep its duty of safety to the public, as detailed in the Local Plan and elsewhere when considering this application.”
- 4.3 The County Engineer raises no objection to the application but raises the comments and recommendations as seen in [Appendix 2](#).
- 4.4 Waste Management comments as follows – I would request that the residents of the 2 proposed properties present their waste at the nearest adopted highway (Priory Road) for collection.
- 4.5 The County Archaeological Officer comments as follows – The proposed development lies on the edge of the historic core of Wantage. Nearby building works during the seventies revealed quantities of Romano British pottery including Oxford ware and several types of mortaria. Medieval pottery was also found. We would therefore recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for ensuring implementation of an archaeological monitoring and recording action (watching brief) to be maintained during the period of construction. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable condition.
- 4.6 Letters of objection have been received from King Alfred’s Educational Charity and King Alfred’s Sports College. Their comments can be summarised as follows:
- Concern is raised with regard to the potential increase in risk faced by vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists at the School’s Priory Road exit
 - Vehicular access to Priory Cottage is only available by exercising a long-standing right of way across King Alfred’s property, and by breaching the one-way system introduced by the school some time ago in order to mitigate the risk
 - The driveway is narrow and has no footpath
 - Concern is raised with regard to the misinterpretation of this complicated situation
 - Hundreds of people would have to change their behaviour because of one household
 - The development should be amended by: widening the driveway to allow segregation of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle traffic; and traffic priority should be given to school traffic
 - The County Engineer’s recommendations must be imposed on any permission granted. The work should be carried out prior to the commencement of development as the most hazardous time will be during construction. It would also be appropriate to restrict access to the building site to avoid busiest times

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The proposed site and the respective plots are considered to be of an acceptable size to each accommodate a detached dwelling. The site is bordered to the south and east by school sites although it is noted the site to the east had outline permission granted in 2001 for residential development. Most of the buildings surrounding the site are relatively low; Officers therefore consider they would not have a significant impact on the amenities of the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings. A larger more imposing school building is located to the south west of the site, however due to the dense vegetative screening it is largely unseen from the site. Furthermore due to its location Officers do not consider it to have any significant harm to any future occupiers of the proposed dwellings. Two barn style buildings which appear to form outbuildings to No.20 Church Street are located close to the northern boundary of the site, however they have no windows looking into the site, and Officers consider any impact from these buildings could be mitigated by a suitable boundary treatment. Officers do not consider that the provision of two dwellings on this site would result in an overbearing or visually intrusive impact on neighbouring uses.
- 5.2 The comments of the County Archaeological Officer are noted. In this regard Officers consider it reasonable to impose a condition on any permission granted requiring an archaeological monitoring and recording action (watching brief).
- 5.3 The principle issue raised by this application is the proposed access into the site, which as stated would require the use of a private drive owned and used by King Alfred's School (which Priory Cottage appears to have right of access over). The concerns of King Alfred's School which relate to the intensification of the access with Priory Road, and the resultant highway safety concerns are noted by Officers. However given the comments of the County Engineer, Officers consider that by the requirement to carry out certain improvements to the shared access this would mitigate the concerns. Furthermore it is noted that the County Engineer states there are good vision splays and low vehicular speeds on the shared driveway. The width is also sufficient for 2 cars to pass each other slowly. Given that the construction of the proposed two dwellings would result in the intensification of the existing access, and that it is considered that the access would otherwise be unacceptable for the proposed two dwellings without the implementation of the improvement works to the shared drive, it is considered reasonable to require the completion of such works prior to the commencement of any other works on the site. Details should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement the improvement works.
- 5.4 It is noted that the Transport Statement proposes a gate at the school's Priory Road entrance. Whilst this may be a request by the school in the interests of security, Officers do not consider it reasonable to condition its requirement in association with the development now applied for, as the development would not otherwise be unacceptable. In addition, it is noted that the County Engineer has requested a condition relating to delivery times within the construction period. However, Officers do not consider this to be an enforceable condition, and it is therefore considered unreasonable to be imposed. This issue can be brought to the applicants' attention by way of an informative.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions.*

1. *TL2 Time Limit – Outline Application*
2. *OR1 Standard Outline ‘details’*
3. *RE7 Submission of Boundary Details*
4. *Detailing of hardsurfacing for the accessway*
5. *LS2 Landscaping*
6. *No development shall commence on the site until the applicant has been responsible for organising an archaeological watching brief, to be maintained during the period of construction/during any ground works taking place on the site. The watching brief shall be carried out in accordance with a written specification and by a professional archaeological organisation that has first been agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority.*
7. *A scheme for highway improvements within the ‘red edge’ of the application site (as amended by the site plan received 2nd November 2007) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The scheme shall be completed before the commencement of any other works on the site.
The scheme shall include details of:*
 - *priority given to school traffic;*
 - *the provision of a rumble strip across the proposed school gate, the access into the site and across the highway boundary (if appropriate to do so);*
 - *and the provision of pedestrian awareness vision splays*
8. *Details of passing bays and a turning area for emergency vehicles within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and shall be completed prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted.*
9. *Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that order) any gates into the site shall be set back a minimum of 5.8 metres from the private drive of King Alfred’s School, and open inwards, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority.*

Informatives

1. It is requested that any hardsurfacing for the proposed accessway should be of a permeable material
2. The applicant should note that King Alfred’s School request the provision of a gate at

its Priory Road entrance (as shown within the submitted Transport Statement) in the interests of security.

3. The applicant is advised that it would be appropriate for construction/delivery vehicles to avoid the busiest times of the day i.e. at the beginning and end of the day when school traffic is at its most prevalent.

Appendix 2

County Engineer comments

The proposed access/egress point for the proposal abuts the school egress, also used by pedestrians/cyclists into the school, onto Priory Road. Although the school operates an 'informal' one way system from Portway through the school this does not appear to be enforced – in any case the applicant appears to have a right of access against the informal one-way system.

The junction of the school egress onto Priory Road, a one-way road, has acceptable vision with vehicles only approaching from the right hand side. The geometry of the highway in the vicinity constrains speeds of vehicles approaching/passing the school egress.

The width of the school egress up to the highway boundary, a length of about 10 metres, is about 4 metres wide. Vehicles (cars) can pass each other in this width albeit slowly. Widening this width to ease passing of vehicles (say to 4.2 metres) may encourage speed where pedestrians/cyclists are to be expected.

The Transport Statement submitted with the application is noted. The Local Highway Authority concurs that the proposal can only add a low number of additional movements to/from the access. The proposed intensification of use may not be desirable, however given the good vision for vehicles egressing onto the school access, the necessary low speed of vehicles due to other traffic (pedestrians/cyclists etc.) it is considered that some improvements in the immediate vicinity are likely to mitigate concerns so as to make the proposal acceptable.

Therefore in the opinion of the Local Highway Authority the proposals submitted in the Transport Statement may be improved by:

- Ensuring priority for school traffic and the use of the rumble strip across the access proposed for the development,
- Similarly a rumble strip across the proposed school gate (and at the highway boundary) can only encourage low speed for vehicles egressing across the school. However, in this the accessibility to/from the school for users of wheelchairs, prams and cycles will need to be taken into account.
- Contributions to public transport infrastructure in the vicinity may be necessary by way of a Unilateral Undertaking – to be advised (informative)
- Given the length of the access to Priory Cottage and the proposed 2 dwelling units it would be appropriate to provide 2/no passing bays
- Any gates to the access should be set back 5.8 metres minimum and open inwards only to ensure no obstruction to the school egress

- Provision for the turning of servicing/emergency vehicles will need to be provided given the distance from the public highway. What is proposed for refuse collection given the vicinity?
- Pedestrian awareness vision splays would be improved by the removal of hedging on top of the retaining wall to the south and replacing with railings
- To ensure that deliveries/works necessary in implementing any permission that may be granted are submitted, in the form of a works/delivery management plan for consideration and approval.