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**PLANNING APPLICATION: ABG/20273-X****CHAMPION HOUSE, WOOTTON ROAD, ABINGDON****Introduction**

Oxfordshire County Council has applied for outline planning permission for the demolition of existing offices known as Champion House, the erection of 10 apartments (comprising 6x1 bed and 4x2 bed flats) with parking and ancillary landscaping, closure of the existing access and formation of new access off Wootton Road.

Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority raised no objection to the application, subject to conditions and the provision of financial contributions towards the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy (£3,440) and public transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the site (£8,000).

The application (reference ABG/20273-X) was recommended for approval by Officers. However, when it was considered by the Council's Development Control Committee on 26 November 2007 the Committee resolved to defer the matter for review by an independent transport consultant.

Glanville Consultants has been appointed by Vale of White Horse District Council to review the application. A site visit was carried out on Wednesday 19 December 2007 to assess the transport conditions that prevail in the vicinity of the site. This statement sets out Glanville Consultants' view on the merits of the application, in particular, whether the proposed access is acceptable and whether a wider footway is required from the access point north to the adjacent school.

**Access Arrangements**

The site is located adjacent to Wootton Road, around 500m to the north-west of Abingdon town centre. Wootton Road is a single carriageway road and is subject to a 30mph speed limit in the vicinity of the site. Traffic calming in the form of speed cushions is provided to reduce the speed of vehicles on Wootton Road.

There is currently no direct vehicular access to the site from Wootton Road. Access to the site is via the entrance to the adjacent John Mason School where separate entry and egress points exist off Wootton Road.

Mouchel Parkman's drawing 782010/3091 Revision A dated 6 August 2007 shows the proposed access scheme and vision splays.

It is proposed to close the existing access to the site via John Mason School and provide a new two-way access direct from Wootton Road. Closure of the existing access would separate traffic movements to and from the residential development from vehicle and pedestrian movements associated with the school and is considered to be a benefit.

The proposal would create an additional access for pedestrians to cross when walking along the footway on the west side of Wootton Road. However, the amount of traffic movements to and from the development would be relatively small, so this is not considered to be a significant issue and would not outweigh the benefit of separating residential and school traffic movements.

A 5.2m wide access is proposed with 6.0m corner radii. This arrangement is considered to be appropriate for the size and nature of development proposed. The proposed access is located on the outside of a gentle bend in Wootton Road where visibility splays of 2.4m x 90m can be provided in each direction on exit from the site. An 'x' distance of 2.4m is considered appropriate for a private access serving 10 dwellings. Although no information on vehicle speeds on Wootton Road is available, it is considered likely that the traffic calming measures in place will help keep the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of vehicles at or below the speed limit of 30mph. Therefore, a 'y' distance of 90m is considered to be appropriate.

The new access would be located approximately 43m to the south of the entry to the John Mason School and approximately 54m to the north of the access to the Resources Centre. These separation distances are considered acceptable.

### **Footway Provision**

There are footways on both sides of Wootton Road. The footway on the western side of the road varies in width across the frontage of the development site. The footway is around 1.1m wide at the southern end of the site frontage and widens to around 1.8m at the northern end.

A footway width of 1.1m would allow two able bodied pedestrians to pass and provide sufficient width to accommodate those in wheelchairs or pushing prams. However, a footway width of 1.8m is the minimum required to allow those in wheelchairs or pushing prams to pass each other comfortably.

The narrow footway width on the western side of Wootton Road is a pre-existing problem. It is not considered essential to widen the footway from the site access north to the access to the school to mitigate the effect of the development. However, the redevelopment of the site offers the opportunity to increase the footway width across the frontage of the site, which would be desirable, particularly given the level of foot traffic to and from the adjacent John Mason School at peak times. The provision of a wider footway could be secured by planning condition.

### **Summary & Conclusion**

The layout of the proposed access from Wootton Road and the visibility splays that can be provided are considered to be appropriate for the size and nature of development proposed. Closure of the existing access would separate traffic movements to and from the residential development from vehicle and pedestrian movements associated with the school and is considered to be a benefit.

It is not considered essential to widen the footway on the western side of Wootton Road to mitigate the effect of the development. However, the development offers the opportunity to widen the footway across the site frontage, which is considered to be desirable and could be secured by planning condition.

In conclusion, the application should be considered acceptable in highway terms.

**ABG/20273/3-X – Oxfordshire County Council**

**Demolition of existing offices. Erection of 10 apartments comprising of 6x1 bed and 4x2 bed flats with parking and ancillary landscaping. Closure of existing access and formation of new access off Wootton Road.  
Champion House, 12 Wootton Road, Abingdon, OX14 1JA.**

**1.0 The Proposal**

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for the demolition of the existing office building and the redevelopment of the site for 6x1 bedroom and 4x2 bedroom flats with associated parking, amenity space and landscaping. Only access is due for consideration under this application, with layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping being reserved matters.
- 1.2 The proposal is shown illustratively as a part 2 storey, part 3 storey building perpendicular to Wootton Road and of a traditional design. The layout plan shows car parking for the flats is to be provided to the side and rear of the new building with a new vehicular access directly onto Wootton Road. The majority of existing landscaping on the boundary with John Mason School and Wootton Road is shown to be retained, although some trees will be removed in relation to the new access. It is likely that trees close to the proposed building will also be removed as indicated on the illustrative layout drawing.
- 1.3 A copy of the plans showing the location of the proposal, its illustrative layout and design, together with extracts from the design and access statement are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 The application comes to Committee because a number of objection letters have been received, and Abingdon Town Council objects to the application.

**2.0 Planning History**

- 2.1 In 1995, planning permission was granted for a change of use of the existing building to a non residential social services resource centre. In 1996 permission was granted for the building to be used by Oxfordshire County Council Education Department and a further change of use of the building to offices was granted in 1998.

**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 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, DC8, DC9 and DC14 (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; suitable social and physical infrastructure exists for the development or can be provided; the development is acceptable in terms of highway safety, and will not result in adverse surface water run-off.
- 3.5 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 objects to the proposal stating "Contrary to Policy DC5 (i) of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Also inadequate parking facilities."
- 4.2 County Engineer –no objections, subject to conditions and a financial contribution towards the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 4.3 County Funding Officer – seeks contributions to education / library / fire and rescue provision and waste management operations.
- 4.4 County Archaeologist – no objections.
- 4.5 Drainage Engineer – no objections, subject to conditions.
- 4.6 Environmental Health – no objections.
- 4.7 Consultant Architect – comments attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.8 Architects Panel – "It is a shame that attractive building is to be demolished – could it not have been extended. The proposed scheme is too bulky for the site. Needs much more thought at the design stage."
- 4.9 9 letters of objection have been received, which are summarised as follows:
- Building apartments with associated car parking so close to a large secondary school is not a satisfactory option. Wootton Road is extremely busy and additional vehicle movements onto this road will compromise pupils' health and safety along with the safety of other road users.
  - The location of the access is considered dangerous. It is on a bend in the road and lacks adequate visibility.
  - The design as proposed will overlook properties in Godwyn Close and Bath Street.
  - The proposed building is too large for the site. It is too close to the road and will be visually dominant in views from Wootton Road.

- The current building should be converted and not demolished.
- The total height of the building should be restricted to 2 storeys.
- Too many trees are shown to be removed. This will expose the school and the new building to the detriment of the locality. At present the site is well screened and cannot be seen from the road.
- Parking is insufficient.
- The change in levels between the site and Wootton Road will lead to vehicle headlights intruding into adjoining residents when exiting the site at night.
- Due to the number of flats, the proposed development will lead to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to local residents.
- This proposal will set a precedent for other buildings along Wootton Road to be demolished and replaced with housing.

### 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 likely impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, 3) the likely impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties, 4) and the safety of the access and parking arrangements.
- 5.2 On the first issue, PPS 3 'Housing' makes it a priority to use previously developed land for new housing and encourages the use of innovative approaches to achieve higher densities within existing settlements. In this respect, paragraphs 9 and 10 of PPS3 specifically refer to the Government's strategic housing policy goal to create sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities in all areas, with 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. In addition, Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan 2011 enables such development. The principle of a development of 10 flats in the manner proposed, therefore, is considered an acceptable and appropriate form of development in this location.
- 5.3 Regarding the second issue, the development in the form proposed is not considered to be harmful to the character of the locality. The proposed extension of the new building closer to Wootton Road than the existing building is considered, in principle, to be acceptable as it would help create a sense of enclosure with the John Mason School buildings (see Consultant Architect's comments). In terms of design, whilst this is a reserved matter, Officers consider that a contemporary design approach would be acceptable as an alternative to the traditional approach shown on the illustrative drawings given the diverse character of the area. Furthermore the Consultant Architect has commented that such a design approach is one which would be more visually interesting. It would also aid a reduction of the bulk of a residential block on the site.
- 5.4 The scheme has a density in excess of 40 dwellings per hectare, which accords with Policy H15. There is on site communal garden space of approximately 370m for use of the residents and 1 parking space per 1 bed flat and 1.5 spaces per 2 bed flat. Officers, therefore, consider that the proposal is not an overdevelopment of the site.
- 5.5 Turning to the third issue, the impact on neighbouring properties, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to those properties directly opposite the site in Bath Street, which are located approximately 35m from the road side boundary of the site. Any windows of the new flats facing across Wootton Road are thus not considered to

## APPENDIX 2

be harmful, given that this is the public side of these dwellings where the level of amenity is expected to be less than that of the private spaces to the rear. Furthermore, the illustrative plan shows that the proposed building would be set further east than the existing building in relation to properties in Godwyn Close. As a result sufficient distance exists (approximately 30m) to avoid any harmful impact on residential amenity. Sufficient distance (approximately 22m) would also exist between the Barnardo's resource centre building to the south. In respect of noise and disturbance, Officers do not consider that any additional impact over the site's existing office use would be unduly harmful to warrant refusal.

5.6 On the issue of parking and access, the proposed arrangements are considered acceptable. The parking provision shown provides 1 space for each 1 bed flat and 1.5 spaces for each 2 bed flat. Furthermore, adequate visibility can be achieved at the new access to ensure pedestrian and highway safety and turning arrangements / gradients within the site are acceptable. Consequently, the County Engineer has no objections to the proposal.

### 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 enable the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the required financial contributions for highways and social infrastructure.*

1. *TL2 – Outline Time Limit*
2. *OL2 – Reserved matters*
3. *The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until the construction of the site access junction has been completed (including footways and verges), in accordance with Drawing 3091 Rev A and to the standard specification of Oxfordshire County Council.*
4. *The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the construction of the estate road serving the development, including footways and verges, has been undertaken in accordance with the standard specification of the Oxfordshire County Council..*
5. *Car parking layout in accordance with Drawing 3091 Rev A.*
6. *Bin storage and cycle parking to be constructed prior to first occupation.*
7. *The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until such time as the existing site access has been closed.*
8. *The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until such time as a sustainable drainage strategy for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority.*

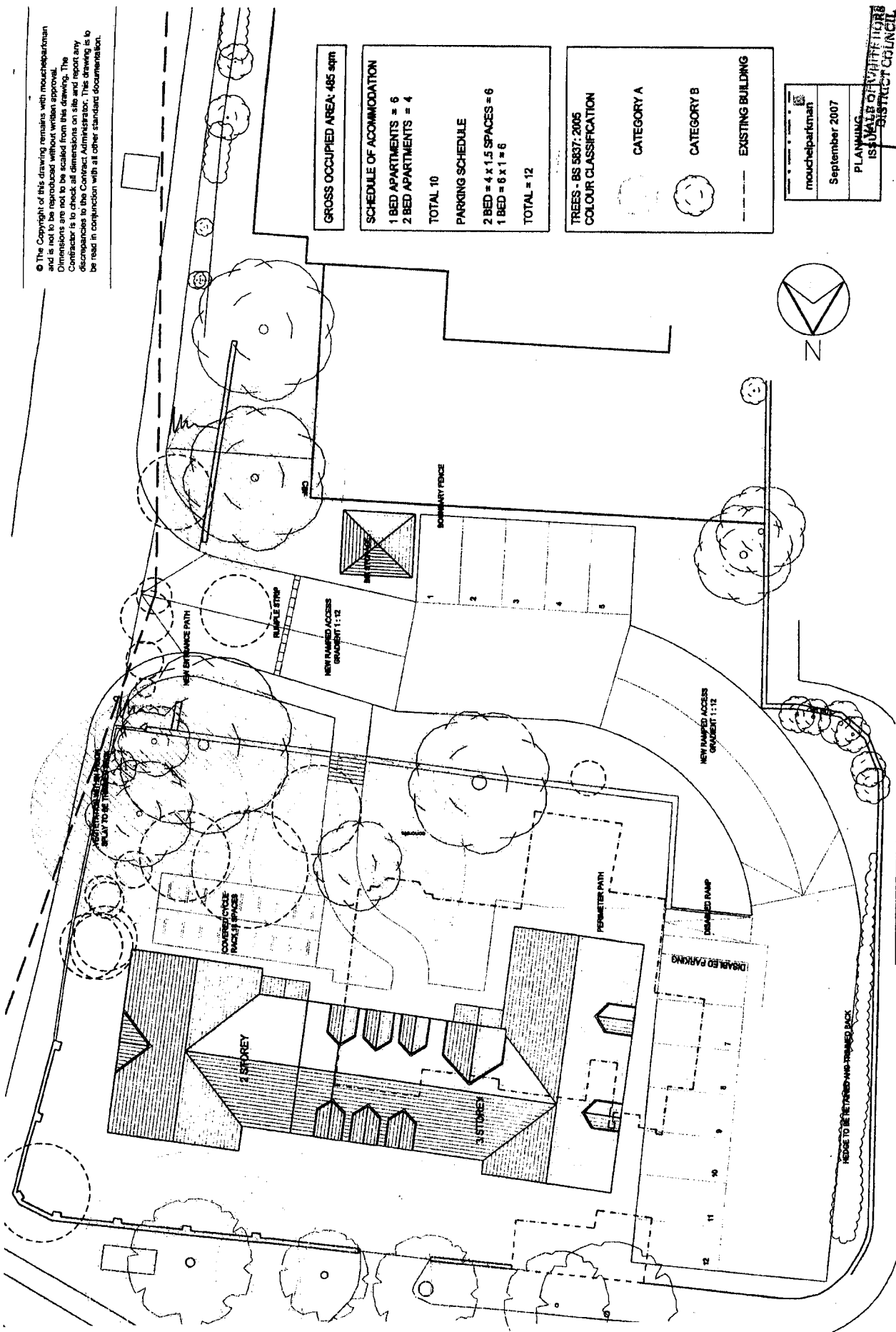
6.2 *That authority to refuse planning permission is delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy) in consultation with the Committee Chair*

*should the Section 106 Agreement not be completed within the 13week period (which expires on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007).*

*The reason for refusal would be based on the lack of necessary financial contributions towards improving local services and infrastructure.*

## **APPENDIX 2**

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<b>GROSS OCCUPIED AREA:</b> 485 sqm
<b>SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION</b>
1 BED APARTMENTS = 6
2 BED APARTMENTS = 4
<b>TOTAL 10</b>
<b>PARKING SCHEDULE</b>
2 BED = 4 x 1.5 SPACES = 6
1 BED = 6 x 1 = 6
<b>TOTAL = 12</b>
<b>TREES - BS 5837: 2005</b>
<b>COLOUR CLASSIFICATION</b>
CATEGORY A
CATEGORY B
EXISTING BUILDING

mouchelparkman
September 2007
PLANNING
ISMAEL DE VENTURA
DISTRICT COUNCIL

REC'D 03 SEP 2007			
Designed: J.F.	Drawn: D.F.	Drawn Date: 03.08.07	Project: CHAMPION HOUSE
Project No: 782010.001.005	Discipline: 10.01	Revision: 1:200@A3	Scale: 1:200@A3
SEEN CONSULT PRODUCTS			

Client: OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
 Project: CHAMPION HOUSE  
 ABINGDON  
 DRAWN SITE PLAN

architects  engineers  surveyors  valuers  
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APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 1

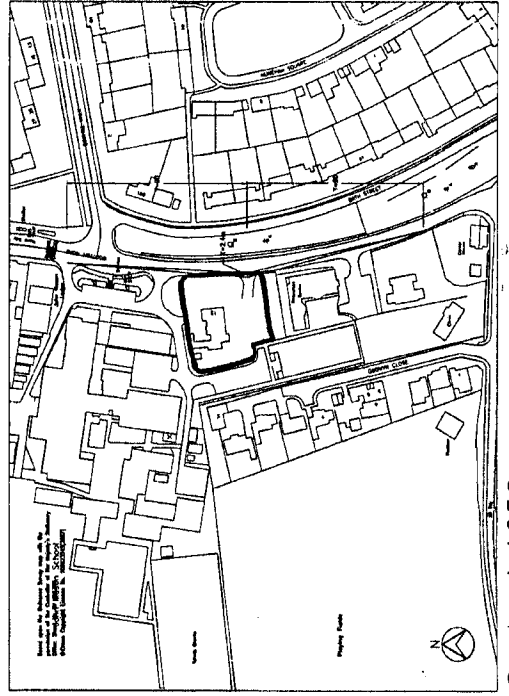
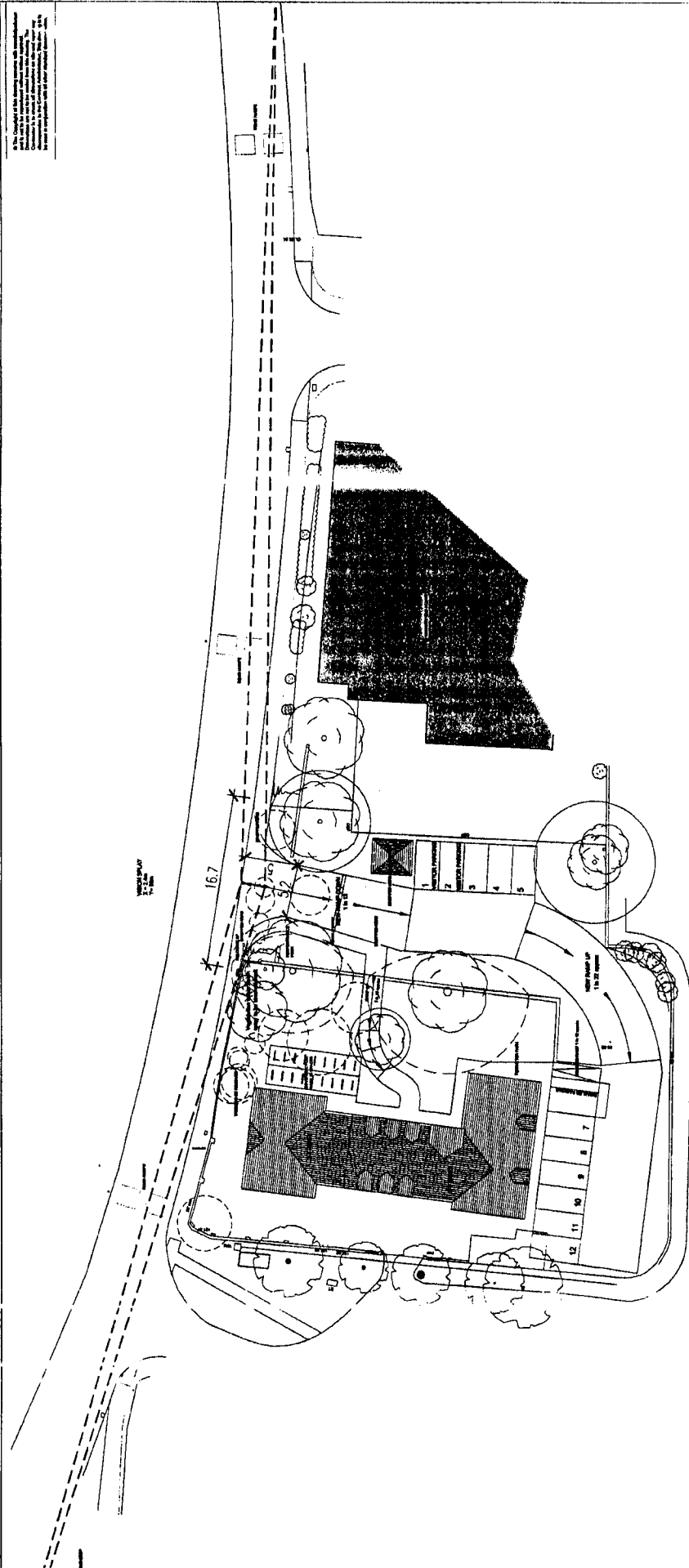
106/20273-X

SITE LAYOUT scale 1:200

07/01447/04



# APPENDIX 2



Scale 1:1250

The drawings to be produced by the Client shall be the responsibility of the Client. The Client shall ensure that all necessary permissions and consents are obtained from the relevant authorities before the drawings are submitted for approval. The Client shall also ensure that all necessary information is provided to the Designer to enable the Designer to produce the drawings to the required standard. The Designer shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions in the drawings or for any consequences arising from the use of the drawings. The Client shall retain the copyright in the drawings and shall be responsible for their safekeeping and for any reproduction or distribution of the drawings.

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION  
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AB6/20273-X  
 07/01/4760T

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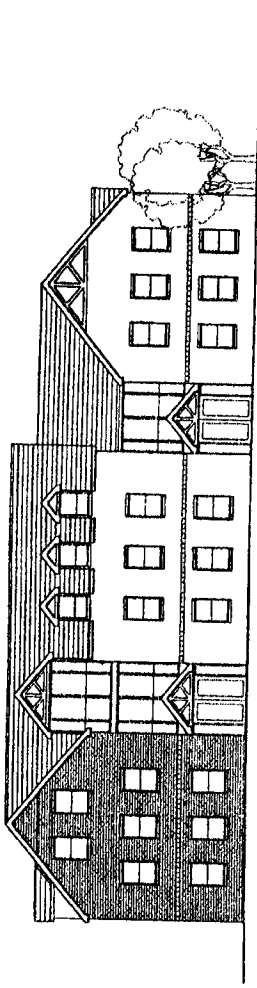
CHAMPION HOUSE  
 PROPOSED ACCESS DRIVE  
 SITE & LOCATION PLAN

COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL  
 COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL  
 COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

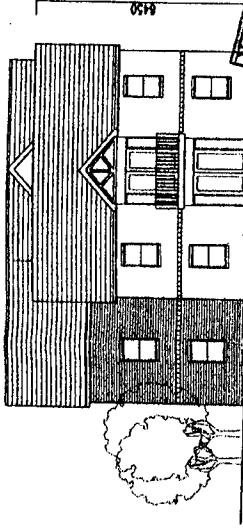
# APPENDIX 1

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# APPENDIX 2

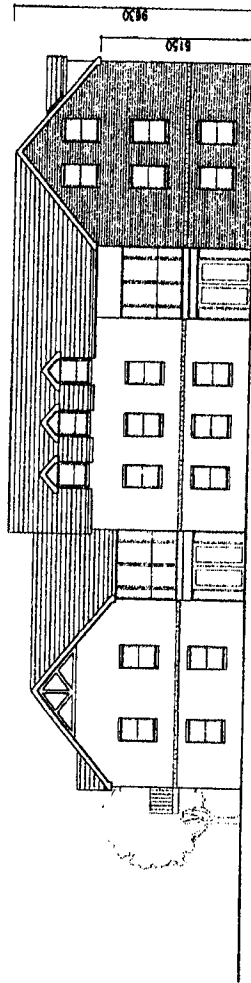


FRONT ELEVATION (TO CARPARK)  
scale 1:200

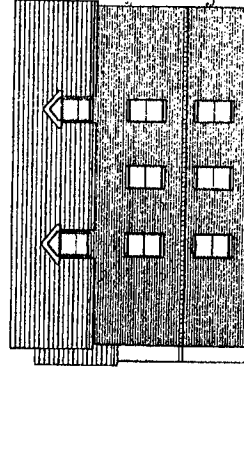


SIDE ELEVATION (TO ROADWAY)  
scale 1:200

REC'D  
PLANNING  
DISTRICT  
CORPORATE  
SERVICES



REAR ELEVATION  
scale 1:200



SIDE ELEVATION  
scale 1:200

ABS/20273-  
07/01447/OUT

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September 2007
PLANNING ISSUE

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Client  
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Project  
CHAMPION HOUSE  
ABINGDON

Revised By Date Details

Designed	Drawn	Checked	Authorised	Date
JF	DF	JF	JF	03.08.07
Project No	Draw No	Revision	Scale	
782010.001.005	12.00	-	1:200@A3	

# APPENDIX 1

## APPENDIX 2

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To the south, the boundary is open and defined primarily by a closeboard fence.

The site contains two distinct areas. The buildings and the northern part of the site are on a level with the road whilst the southern part of the site lies approximately 1 metre below this (and below the level of Wootton Road) separated from the northern part of the site by a retaining wall.

### **Description of Application Proposals**

This application is in outline with all matters except access reserved for future determination. Basic details on the scale parameters, amount of development and proposed use are set out on the accompanying covering letter and are reproduced below.

The proposal involves the redevelopment of the application site for residential purposes to provide 10 residential units with 12 parking spaces and with the formation of a new access off Wootton Road and closure of the existing access off the John Mason School driveway.

The development density would be approximately 55 dwellings per hectare (dph), and is broadly consistent with guidance in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) – Housing (November 2006) Paragraph 47 and with the requirements of policy H15 of the adopted Local Plan.

The dwellings will be a mixture of 1 and 2 bedroom units (6 x 1 bed and 4 x 2 bed), consistent with the guidelines set out in paras 20 to 24 of PPS3 and Policy H16 of the adopted Local which seeks a variety of dwelling size and type in order to meet the housing requirements of the whole community.

It is anticipated that the apartments will be two/three storey in height with the third storey being in the roofspace as with the existing building. This will help to reduce the overall height and massing of the building.

The building height will be typically between 5 and 6m to eaves and between 8 and 9.5m to ridge, although the detail will be determined at the reserved matters stage. The building shown on the illustrative layout ranges from 7 to 13.5m wide and approximately 28m long. The tallest part of the proposed building is to be located to the rear (west) of the site.

Building materials and the general appearance of the development will respect the character of the surrounding area. Regard has been had in particular to Policies DC1, DC2 and DC3 of the Local Plan 2011 in as so far as they relate to the quality of design and relationship with the characteristics of the surrounding area. This approach is supported in paras 12 to 19 of PPS3.

Sensitive and appropriate boundary treatment will be introduced where necessary to augment what is already present and the landscaping of the site will be addressed in detail as part of the reserved matters submissions.

**APPENDIX 1**

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ABEL  
12-10-07

**McCoy A:**  
54 New Street  
Fax: 01491 41081

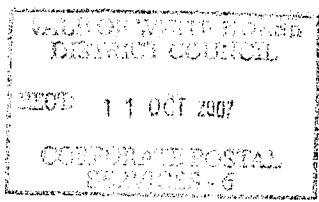
# APPENDIX 2

5 October 2007  
**your ref ABG/20273-X**

Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy)  
The Vale of White Horse District Council  
PO Box 127  
The Abbey House,  
ABINGDON OX14 3JN

For the attention of Alison Blyth

email and post



Dear Sir

**Champion House, 12 Wootton Road, Abingdon  
Demolition of existing offices Erection of 10 apartments comprising 6 x one-bed and 4 x two-bed flats with parking and ancillary landscaping. Closure of existing access and formation of new access off Wootton Road**

Thank you for the drawings of the above project received on 27 September which was discussed at the Architects Panel meeting on 3 October and on which you have requested design comments.

This is an outline application with only the details of the access for consideration at this stage. It did seem to me to be proposed at the optimum point on the frontage, but – as with the parking and circulation area generally – seems rather large for a development of the size proposed.

The design and access statement makes clear the designer's intention to "respect the surroundings". To my mind the surroundings are very diverse, and not particularly distinctive in a way that should dictate a design approach on the application site. Clearly it would not be appropriate to seek to fit in with the school building to the north, nor with the very low building to the south of the site. On the other side of Wootton Road quite majestic trees and a strip of soft landscaping visually separates anything on the application site from the modest two-storey wide frontage houses beyond Bath Street.

In these circumstances I consider the application site could, indeed should, accommodate a rather more interesting and contemporary design than indicated. For instance the roofscape could be made more interesting, and a review of the composition of the roof forms of the present building on the site might offer some inspiration in that direction.

Finally I see nothing wrong in principle for a replacement building to come significantly closer to Wootton Road. Indeed while looking at the area it did seem to me that the school benefits from the rather informal forecourt area between it and the main highway, and an appropriate arranged new building on the application site could consolidate that characteristic.

I shall post your various drawings and papers to you shortly.

Yours faithfully

## APPENDIX 2

**McCOY ASSOCIATES**

This letter refers to drawings 782010.001.005.12.00, 782010.3091, des

Denis F McCoy DiplArch(Oxford) ARIBA FRTPI FRIAI

Christopher R Baker Company Secretary

McCoy Associates Limited, company registered in England no 4457420  
VAT No. 363 3525 59