

GRO/19964/1 – Mr M Smith

Erection of a side and rear extension to facilitate the conversion of a single dwelling into two flats.

33 Glebe Gardens, Grove, OX12 7LX.

1.0 The Proposal

1.1 This application is for a two storey side/rear extension to facilitate the conversion of the dwelling into 2 two-bedroom flats. It is proposed that the rear access would be widened to accommodate 4 car parking spaces, and the rear curtilage would be subdivided to provide amenity space.

1.2 Extracts from the application plans are at **Appendix 1**.

1.3 The application come to Committee as the Parish Council objects, and due to the number of objection letters received.

2.0 Planning History

2.1 GRO/19964 - Erection of a two storey dwelling (Land adj 33 Glebe Gardens). Refused in March 2007 due to of the visually intrusive impact within the street scene and the detrimental impact on the open plan character of the area. Extracts of the plans for this application are at appendix 2.

3.0 Planning Policies

3.1 Policy DC1 of the adopted 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. Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking.

3.2 Policy DC9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.

3.3 Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan allows for housing within the five main settlements providing it would not result in the loss of facilities important to the local community, that the proposal would make efficient use of land, and it would be of an acceptable layout and design.

3.4 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, and PPS3: Housing

4.0 Consultations

4.1 Grove Parish Council objects on the following grounds:

- “Overdevelopment of the site
- The proposed extension would encroach too near the footway
- Off-street parking is insufficient for the two flats
- A precedent would be set if this application was allowed

Councillors have concerns regarding the additional burden these proposals would have on the foul water drainage system, considering that problems already exist in this area. It should be noted that a mature tree was removed when the previous application was submitted, pre-empting the decision.”

4.2 County Engineer – “Parking accords with OCC standards. It is noted that the parking provision is one behind the other for each unit. Egress out of these spaces in a reverse gear is acceptable as the vehicles are not egressing onto a classified road. No objections are raised in principle to the application.”

4.3 Principal Drainage Engineer – No objections to the application, and did not consider a drainage condition would be necessary.

4.4 11 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring occupiers. Their comments can be summarised as follows:

- The proposal would be out of character with the existing open plan layout of the estate
- The proposal would stick out like a ‘sore thumb’
- The proposal would ruin the symmetry of the terraces
- Concerns are raised with regard to the design, size, massing and dominance of the proposal
- This green space is important
- The proposed garage would look an eyesore when viewed from 10 Harlington Avenue
- Concerns have been raised relating to parking, congestion, and highway safety
- The dwelling would be out of line with the rest of the properties fronting Harlington Avenue
- Concerns are raised with regard to the view from other properties
- No information has been submitted relating to drainage works, and concerns have been raised regarding flooding
- If permitted the proposal would set a precedent for other properties in Glebe gardens to do the same
- Concerns have been raised relating to the loss of mature trees
- The original planning permission for the estate required a minimum distance of 20ft from the highway boundary
- The conversion of this house to two flats is unnecessary
- There would be hardly any garden area left with the provision of more on-site parking
- There are restrictive covenants within the area relating to boundary treatments (this is not a planning consideration)
- The applicant does not live in the area (this is not a planning consideration)
- Concerns have been raised with regard to the value of properties (this is not a planning consideration)
- A newspaper article has been submitted entitled “The Garden Grabbers”

5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 Officer’s consider that there are four main issues when assessing the acceptability of this application, 1) the impact of the extension on the character of the area, 2) the

impact on neighbour amenities, 3) the principle of flats, and 4) whether the proposed flats would provide adequate parking and amenity space for any future occupiers.

- 5.2 The previously refused application for a single dwelling to form an end terrace needs to be noted. This was refused due to the visually intrusive impact of the proposal within the street scene, and the harmful impact it would have on the open plan character of the area. This property would have extended up to the southern boundary with the lay-by and had a width of 6 metres. The current application proposes a 3 metre wide extension, which would leave a 3 metre gap remaining between the flank wall and the site's boundary with the lay-by. Whilst it is appreciated that this would extend beyond the front elevation of some properties fronting onto Harlington Avenue, this is not considered to be visually harmful as there would still be 3 metres to the site's boundary. Officers do not consider that extending the built form 3 metres towards the highway would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the street scene, and the extension is considered to be of a design and scale which is in keeping with the existing building.
- 5.3 The proposal would extend into the green area to the south of the existing dwelling, and it is proposed that the existing boundary treatment would be moved further south. In this regard attention is drawn to No.32 Glebe Gardens which benefits from an extensive hedge located up to the highway boundary which encloses an area similar in characteristics to the green space to the south of No.33. The green area in question is not public open space, and in any event the applicants do not propose to enclose the whole of this area. Whilst green spaces within estates such as this can form part of the character of its open plan design, given that No.32 has enclosed a similar area, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to object in this regard. However it is considered reasonable that full internal and external boundary treatments should be submitted for approval in the event that planning permission is granted. This would ensure that a hard boundary treatment, such as a 1.8 metre high fence, is not erected along the southern boundary.
- 5.4 The proposed extension would be a significant distance from the properties on the opposite side of Harlington Avenue. Whilst it is appreciated that they would have a view of the proposal, it is not considered to have a harmful impact on their amenities. The proposed extension would extend the property a further 3 metres to the rear. However it is noted that No.10 Harlington Avenue has only one first floor facing window which serves a hallway, therefore there are no concerns raised concerning any overbearing impact of the proposal on the occupiers of No.10. Furthermore due to the siting of No.10 and the application property, it is not considered the proposed extension would result in any overlooking towards this neighbouring dwelling. The proposed rear extension would be located 3 metres from the common boundary with the neighbouring property, No.31 Glebe Gardens. Whilst the extension would inevitably be seen from this property, amended plans have been received which has reduced the extension by half a metre in width to the rear. This ensures the extension will not intrude within a 40 degree line taken from the nearest first floor window of this neighbouring property, in accordance with the House Extensions Design Guide. Due to the distance to the common boundary and the limited depth of 3 metres to the rear, it is not considered that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the amenities of the occupiers of No.31 Glebe Gardens.
- 5.5 It is appreciated that the surrounding area comprises housing of varying sizes, and that there are no flats within the immediate vicinity. In this regard PPS3: Housing states that

“the specific outcomes that the planning system should deliver are: A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural.” Further to this PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development states that “development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing.” Officers therefore consider that the introduction of flats into the area, notwithstanding any other issues, is a positive contribution towards providing a greater mix of housing within the vicinity. It is also noted that the applicant proposes the properties will be accessible to the disabled.

5.6 The entrance ways to the flats would change the pedestrian access from Glebe Gardens to Harlington Road; however as the property is an end terrace this is not considered to be a cause for concern. In any event such a change does not require planning permission. Whilst the garden layout in terms of how the amenity space is subdivided is not considered to be ideal, cumulatively there is sufficient outdoor amenity space to serve the two flats. It is considered that how it is subdivided, if at all, is not a reason to raise objection to the application. In terms of parking provision, the site plan shows 2 spaces per flat which is in considered to be acceptable in this location. The County Engineer has no objection to the tandem parking layout and the resulting need to reverse onto the highway due to the unclassified nature of the road.

6.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. *TL1 Time limit*
2. *ID1 Matching materials*
3. *MC20 No windows in first floor north elevation*
4. *RE7 Submission of all internal and external boundary details*
5. *MC20 Amended plan*