

**ABG/20606-X – Mr C Wager
Erection of 3 dwellings (one bungalow and 2 x 2 storey houses) and formation of vehicular access (land to rear of 50 Sellwood Road).
50 Sellwood Road, Abingdon, OX14 1PF.**

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of 3 dwellings (2 houses and 1 bungalow) on part of the rear garden of 50 Sellwood Road, with 2 parking spaces for each dwelling. A new vehicular access will be created to the side of the existing dwelling which will result in the demolition of the existing garage. Parking for the existing property will be provided to the front.
- 1.2 The proposal is an outline application with access, layout and scale due for consideration at this stage. The matters of appearance and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval should permission be granted.
- 1.3 The plans have been amended to take account of comments received from the County Engineer.
- 1.4 A copy of the plans showing the location of the development and its layout are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5 The application comes to Committee because numerous letters of objection have been received and Abingdon Town Council objects to the proposal.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history for this site.

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, DC6, 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 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.

4.0 **Consultations**

- 4.1 Abingdon Town Council objects to the proposal and their comments are attached at **Appendix 2.**
- 4.2 County Engineer: Original plans – “For the size of development, 6 spaces are sufficient. However, the HA raises doubt over the practical use of the parking area for the dwelling furthest west. It is recommended that the parking layout is changed.” Revised Plans – no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.3 Drainage Engineer – “Holding objection – Insufficient drainage information has been provided to demonstrate an acceptable means of Foul and Surface Water disposal. The property also borders on, but is outside the EA flood extents and flooding was reported to have affected the road in July 2007 in the near vicinity of this property. Furthermore, there is a 225mm diameter public foul sewer running across the site which may have severe implications for the proposed development. This issue needs to be addressed with Thames Water prior to the application being determined.”
- 4.4 Environmental Health – No objections.
- 4.5 Environment Agency – We have assessed this application as having a low environmental risk.
- 4.6 Thames Water – “There are public sewers running through the site, and no building works will be permitted within 3m of the sewers without Thames Water’s approval. Should a building over / diversion application form, or other information relating to Thames Waters assets be required, the applicant should be advised to contact Thames Water Developer Services on 0845 850 2777. Thames Water recommends the following informative be attached to any planning permission: There is a Thames Water main crossing the development site which may/will need to be diverted at the Developer's cost, or necessitate amendments to the proposed development design so that the aforementioned main can be retained. Unrestricted access must be available at all times for maintenance and repair. Please contact Thames Water Developer Services, Contact Centre on Telephone No: 0845 850 2777 for further information.”
- 4.7 26 letters of objection have been received from local residents stating the following concerns:
- Flood risk. In July 2007 the River Stert overflowed and Sellwood Road was flooded. New dwellings with their associated hard surfaced parking areas will only increase the risk of flooding.
 - There is no provision within the plans for adequate drainage of the site.
 - The houses will increase traffic onto an already congested road with a dangerous corner, to the detriment of highway safety.
 - The property is close to the rear entrance into Dunmore School. As such there are a lot of school children who walk past the site. Any increase in traffic will affect their safety.
 - This part of Abingdon is one of the few areas to have large gardens. To develop these is out of keeping with the area, and will cause harm to local wildlife.
 - The creation of a new access will disrupt the visual harmony of the area.

- The proposed dwellings will be of a different design and scale to existing dwellings and will be harmful to the character of the area.
- There would be a lack of privacy resulting from three new dwellings. They will overlook bedrooms and gardens.
- Should this be successful, it will set a precedent for other similar developments to occur.
- Construction noise and activities will be a nuisance. There should be a restriction on working hours.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The main issues are considered to be 1) the principle of redevelopment in this location 2) the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, 3) the impact of the proposed development on the amenities of neighbouring properties 4) highway and parking issues, 5) risk of flooding and drainage issues.
- 5.2 The principle of developing this site for residential use is considered to be acceptable. It is a previously developed site that is located within an established residential area of Abingdon.
- 5.3 On the second issue, the building of a pair of link-detached dwellings and a bungalow on this site is considered acceptable. A mixture of house types and styles exists in the area. Consequently, Officers consider that the layout and scale proposed is in keeping with other two storey properties in the locality, and the private amenity space together with the proposed orientation of the new dwellings complements the immediate locality. The siting of the access is not visually harmful.
- 5.4 Turning to the third issue, the impact on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings is not considered to be so harmful to justify refusal. Whilst the dwellings are located in the rear garden of no 50 Sellwood Road, they are located 21m away from the rear elevations of no 50 and no 52 Sellwood Road. The unit adjoining the boundary with no 48 Sellwood Road is single storey and due to its orientation, no direct overlooking will occur. The properties in Beech Lane to the rear are similarly not adversely affected by this proposal to an extent to warrant refusal. Consequently, Officers consider the proposal to be acceptable in residential amenity terms.
- 5.5 In terms of highway and parking issues, the proposal provides 2 parking spaces for each of the new dwellings. Parking for no 50 is proposed at the front of the site. The new access, between nos. 50 and 48 Sellwood Road is considered not to cause harm to the safety and convenience of highway users or to the amenities of local residents. The County Engineer has raised no objections.
- 5.6 With respect to flooding, Officers are aware that part of Sellwood Road flooded last summer. However, it is understood the application site itself did not flood, and it is located outside the Environment Agency's flood zone. Officers have consulted the Environment Agency in respect of this proposal, who confirm that this application has a low environmental risk. Whilst Officers understand the concerns of residents in this regard, in the absence of an objection from the Environment Agency, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission on flooding grounds.
- 5.7 Similarly, the fact that a public sewer crosses the site is not a reason to withhold planning permission. Thames Water has indicated that their approval is required

should development fall within 3m of the pipe. They have suggested an informative is added to any permission to highlight this. Should Thames Water not agree to the proposed layout the applicant would need either to seek approval from Thames Water to divert the sewer, or resubmit a fresh planning application for further consideration showing a revised layout that has Thames Water's approval.

- 5.8 Whilst the Drainage Engineer has raised a holding objection to the application, the lack of detailed information on drainage is not unusual at the outline stage and details can be submitted for consideration with the reserved matters. However, to ensure the development can be adequately drained, Officers would suggest the imposition of a Grampian style condition to secure the provision of an adequate drainage system prior to the commencement of development. Such a condition would ensure that should the drainage system proposed be unsatisfactory, that development cannot be commenced.
- 5.9 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 application.

6.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. *TL1 – Time Limit*
2. *MC2 – Sample Materials*
3. *RE7 – Submission of boundary details*
4. *HY3 - Access in accordance with specified plan*
5. *Car parking layout showing 2 spaces for each dwelling (new and existing) to be submitted and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority.*
6. *LS1 – Submission of landscaping scheme*
7. *RE3 – PD Restriction*
8. *No development shall commence until drainage details have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the District Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby approved shall be occupied until the approved drainage details have been constructed and are fully operational.*