

UPT/18307/3 – Mr D Curran
Erection of a detached two-storey dwelling (re-submission)
1 Beeching Close, Upton OX11 9JR

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 The application proposes the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling which would be sited to the south west of No.1 Beeching Close (Station House). A new access is proposed from Station Road. The application site is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2 Extracts from the application plans are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The application comes to Committee as the Parish Council objects.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 Outline permission for the erection of a single detached dwelling and alteration of the existing access to the highway on land adjacent to 1 Beeching Close with access from Beeching Close, permitted in June 2006.
- 2.2 A full application for the erection of a 2 storey dwelling with access from Station Road was refused in July 2008 by reason of the proposed access drive to the serve the new dwelling failing to provide adequate visibility splays at its junction with Station Road, to the detriment of highway safety. In addition, the provision of adequate visibility splays in this location would be likely to result in the loss of further trees along Station Road which would have a harmful impact on the appearance and rural character of the area.

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. Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking.
- 3.2 Policy DC6 requires development to include hard and soft landscaping measures to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and its surroundings and to maximise the opportunity for nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.
- 3.3 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 3.4 Policy H12 restricts new housing developments to be within the built up areas of the smaller villages, and on sites suitable for not more than 4 small dwellings.
- 3.5 Policy NE6 seeks to ensure that development within the AONB would conserve/enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Upton Parish Council objects to the application. Their comments are at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 County Engineer – “The proposal is similar to the previous refused application

UPT/18307/2 except that the plans demonstrate improved vision splays of 2.4m x 45m at the new access driveway (the minimum recommended by the County Engineer) instead of the previously shown 2m x 33m. An earlier application UPT/18307/1-X was permitted involving access to the proposed site from Beeching Close, a private driveway serving 4 dwellings. Use of the existing access of Beeching Close is preferable rather than creating a new access only 13m away from the junction with Beeching Close, however I understand that the applicant does not have owner's permission to use Beeching Close. The new access would be located approximately 50m from the junction of Station Road with the A417, a busy classified road. The footpath along the A417 terminates at the junction of Station Road, hence pedestrians must walk on the road. Station Road is also part of a Sustrans Network route and is well used for recreational purposes and by commuting cyclists to/from Harwell/Chilton campus. A new access would necessitate the removal of a tree and vegetation, and would also be steep in nature. The proposed gradient of the new access road is 8 per cent (1 in 12), the maximum permitted in Department for Transport's 'Inclusive Mobility'. A gradient of 5 per cent (1 in 20) is generally preferred to minimise difficulties for manual wheelchair users. It is not possible to determine whether visibility splays as shown on plan 05089-P01 will be achievable hence I recommend a condition that the access is constructed to OCC standards and visibility is demonstrated prior to the commencement of construction of the dwelling. It is unclear how construction vehicles would access the site."

- 4.3 Landscape Officer – "It seems a real shame that the existing entrance cannot be used to access this new development. It is difficult to understand how the new access road will be constructed and graded." Further to this a new section plan was provided, and the Landscape Officer has added the following comments. "I have looked at drawing Nos. 05089-P06 and 05089-P02A, proposed sections and site layout. I am concerned about the proposed gradient of the slope from the new access road down to the existing ground level which in some areas is proposed to be as steep as 1:12. We will require more details regarding the finished gradients and the measures to be taken to stabilise the slope. This could be a mixture of engineering and planting." The Landscape Officer was asked whether this could be addressed by way of a condition, and has stated "the engineering works mentioned were possibly the use of Netlon, plastic netting to stabilise the slope prior to the planting. This could be detailed as part of the planting plan."
- 4.4 Principal Drainage Engineer – "Planning consent should be made conditional on the provision and approval of sustainable drainage systems being incorporated into the proposed driveway and parking areas particularly as tarmac has been specified in the application. This is in addition to details of surface water and foul sewerage drainage details which should be submitted."
- 4.5 7 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents. Their comments can be summarised as follows:
- The construction of another access onto Station Road between Beeching Close and the A417 would make the highway situation dangerous for pedestrians and traffic
 - Station Road is the main access route into the village and is on the main bus route
 - Moving back the visibility splay by 0.4m will make little or no effect
 - Station Road is the only safe exit from the village and can be quite busy during peak times
 - Concerns are raised about the difficulties afforded for delivery vehicles

- Concerns that the Highway Department has reversed its decision. It had been established that no other entrance onto Station Road except an improved entrance at Beeching Close would be accepted
- The property is too large for the plot and too close to Station House
- The proposal would be harmful to the character of the area
- The access requires the removal of several mature trees that provide an attractive approach to the village
- The previous refusal did not consider the disparate appearance of the new building to relative to Station House
- The original development was reduced from 5 houses to 3 after it was considered that Station House had a value to the village
- There are very few changes when compared to the previous application

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The key issues to be considered are: impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the AONB; amenities of future occupiers and those of surrounding residents; and highway and drainage matters. Outline permission for the erection of a dwelling on this site with access from Beeching Close has already been granted in 2006; therefore, notwithstanding the amended access, the principle of a dwelling on this site has already been established. This application is submitted further to the outline permission granted in 2006, and the refusal of a full application for a detached dwelling with access taken from Station Road, which was refused in July 2008.
- 5.2 Officers acknowledge that the proposed dwelling is large; however, it is noted that the neighbouring dwellings within Beeching Close are also large. In this regard it is not considered that, comparatively, the proposed dwelling would look out of keeping in terms of its size and massing, especially when viewed in the context of Station House. It is considered that the plot could easily accommodate a large dwelling, such as that proposed. Officers also appreciate that the proposed dwelling would in part be constructed of timber boarding. Whilst this is not a characteristic of the surrounding properties, this material would only form a small proportion of the front elevation. The remainder of the design of the dwelling appears to reflect that of Station House, and its relatively low eaves height would reduce the overall bulk of the dwelling. It is not considered that the proposed design and materials of the dwelling would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and the AONB. Furthermore, it is not considered that the dwelling would have a harmful impact on the amenities of the occupiers of Station House, or any other dwelling within the vicinity. It is noted that the fence line surrounding the site has been set further within the site compared to the previously refused application. This is considered to help retain the rural character of the area. In any event, boundary treatments and a landscaping scheme can be conditioned in the event of planning permission being granted.
- 5.3 The previous application on the site was refused due to inadequate visibility splays being proposed, to the detriment of highway safety. Furthermore, it was considered that by reason of the provision of acceptable visibility splays this would result in the loss of further trees which would have a harmful impact on the appearance and rural character of the area. Plan No.05089-P01 Revision B indicates that visibility splays of 2.4 x 45m would be provided. The County Engineer considers that the splays as shown on this plan are acceptable in this location; and therefore raises no objection to the application providing that these splays are provided, and that the access is constructed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) standards. In

accordance with the plans submitted the proposed visibility splays do not result in the removal of any more trees compared to the previously refused application. Officers, therefore, consider that the applicant has now demonstrated that acceptable visibility splays can be provided (if these are constructed in accordance with the plans provided and to OCC specifications) and that this increase in visibility splays would not result in the further loss of trees. The Landscape Officer's comments relating to the preference for the previously approved access are noted, however this application must be assessed on its own merits. Whilst it is appreciated the driveway entrance would be visible from the lane, much of the driveway would be set down due to the gradient of the land. It is considered that a landscaping/planting scheme which would provide new planting and retain the trees and vegetation as shown on plan No.05089-P01 Revision B, together with the submission of details of the hardstanding and retaining walls would mitigate the provision of an access in this location sufficiently so that it would not be harmful to the rural character and appearance of this lane and the AONB.

5.4 Sufficient parking would be provided within the site, therefore no objections are raised in this regard.

5.5 The Principal Drainage Engineer is of the opinion that any concerns relating to surface water run-off and drainage issues can be controlled by condition.

6.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. *TL1 Time Limit – Full Application*
2. *MC1 Submission of all external materials (including doors and fenestration, hardsurfacing of the driveway/parking/turning area and the retaining walls)*
3. *No windows in the first floor north east elevation*
4. *RE7 Submission of details of all boundary treatments*
5. *RE8 Submission of drainage details (surface water and foul sewerage, and to include sustainable drainage systems)*
6. *LS3 Planting/landscaping scheme (incorporating existing trees and vegetation as shown on plan No.05089-P01 Revision B)*
7. *RE21 Finished floor/slab level (for dwelling and whole site)*
8. *HY16 Parking, turning and manoeuvring in accordance with plan, and retained as such thereafter*