

GFA/19230 – Tetronics Ltd
Demolition of existing commercial buildings and construction of 24 dwellings
Tetronics, 5B Lechlade Road, Faringdon

1.0 **The Proposal**

1.1 The Tetronics company occupies a site stretching between Lechlade Road and Canada Lane in Faringdon. A site location plan is in **Appendix 1**. This application seeks permission for a complete redevelopment of the site for residential use. The proposal is for 24 dwellings, as follows:-

16 x 2-bedroom flats
7 x 2-bedroom maisonettes
1 x 1-bedroom flat

1.2 Extracts from the application plans are in **Appendix 2**. Currently there are two vehicular accesses to the site, one from Lechlade Road and the other from Canada Lane. In this proposal, the Lechlade Road access would be restricted to pedestrians only, leaving the Canada Lane access as the sole vehicular access to the site. Formal parking is proposed at a ratio of 1.5 spaces per dwelling, with additional informal parking areas contained within hard landscaped areas of the site.

1.3 A detailed contextual analysis and design statement have been submitted with the application and computer generated three-dimensional drawings of the scheme will be presented at the Meeting. The site lies adjacent to the Faringdon Conservation Area, and the Duke of Westminster PH, a Grade II listed building, sits immediately to the west on Lechlade Road. The site is surrounded by a variety of uses, including other houses, the Faringdon Bowls Club, and a cemetery. Faringdon Infants School lies on the other side of Canada Lane.

1.4 A preliminary contamination report has been completed following pre-application discussions between the applicants and the Assistant Director Environmental Health. A legal agreement is being prepared between the applicants and Oxfordshire County Council to secure financial contributions to meet additional demands on social infrastructure such as schools and the Town library.

2.0 **Planning History**

2.1 The site is a well-established commercial site, and was formerly a gas works. There is no relevant recent planning history.

3.0 **Planning Policies**

3.1 From the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan Policy H4 allows for new housing development in Faringdon. Policies D1, D2, D3 and D4 require all new development to be acceptable in terms of design, impact on neighbours, highway safety and landscaping. Policy DC14 requires the de-contamination of polluted sites.

3.2 Similar policies from the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan are H9, DC1, DC5, DC6, DC9 and DC10. Other relevant policies include Policy H14, which requires the density of new housing development in Faringdon to be at least 40 dwellings per hectare provided there is no harm to the character of the area or to neighbours' amenities, and Policy H15, which requires at least 50% of new housing on sites of four or more dwellings to be 2-bedrooms or less.

4.0 **Consultations**

- 4.1 Faringdon Town Council – does not object, but requests that “the Vale negotiates, under Section 106 agreement, a contribution towards traffic calming in Canada Lane, especially considering the location of the Infants School nearby. Please note that the Town Council’s decision has been taken on the basis that the change from industrial to residential use will be carried out properly and that any contamination of the site will be removed before any new building takes place.”
- 4.2 Local Residents – 1 letter of support and 4 letters of objection have been received. The grounds for objection are:-
1. Overlooking
 2. Loss of light
 3. Added traffic to school peak hour congestion on Canada Lane
 4. Noise, disturbance and damage during construction
- 4.3 County Engineer – no objection subject to conditions, including the extension of the parking restrictions along Canada Lane.
- 4.4 Police Architectural Liaison Officer – no objections but suggests that the pedestrian access from Lechlade Road should be gated.
- 4.5 Thames Water – no objections.
- 4.6 Consultant Architect – supports the proposal (see **Appendix 3**).
- 4.7 Architects’ Advisory Panel – supports the proposal (see **Appendix 4**).
- 4.8 Assistant Director (Environmental Health) – comments to be reported to the Meeting.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 Residential development on this site is considered to be acceptable in principle. aside from this, four main issues arise. The first is the impact of the proposal on the area, including the setting of the Conservation Area and the listed building; the second is the residential quality of the scheme; the third is the effect of the proposal on neighbours; and the fourth is access and parking. With regard to the first issue, the proposed buildings have the form of traditional terraced dwellings. The buildings are mainly two storeys in height, with some three storeys, and the scheme has been designed with a varied and attractive roofscape. The design and scale of the proposal reflects that of the surrounding housing. Within this traditional form, however, are novel features such as roof patios, and “chimneys” that double as ventilators and light pipes. The proposed external wall materials, wood and render, are also innovative, but are supported, along with the design of the scheme as a whole, by the Consultant Architect and the Architects’ Advisory Panel. Officers consider the impact of the proposal on the area would be acceptable, and consider the setting of both the Conservation Area and the listed building would be preserved.
- 5.2 In terms of the residential quality of the scheme, it should be noted first that the site will be subject to de-contamination prior to the construction phase. Amenity areas for residents are treated in an innovative way. Ground floor flats will have integral patios accessed directly from the flats, while the first floor flats and maisonettes will have roof patios, designed within the form of the pitched roofs. A communal garden area is also provided, as are integral cycle and bin stores. The layout of the proposal has been the subject of further discussion with the aim of defining the carriageway and parking areas more precisely. Overall, Officers consider that the scheme will produce a high quality environment for its residents.

- 5.3 The third issue is the effect on neighbours. Bearing in mind the proximity of neighbouring properties, particularly No 35 Gravel Walk to the east, the scheme has been carefully designed to avoid harmful overlooking by the use of high level windows and rooflights where necessary. As the proposed dwellings are replacing existing buildings of similar scale, no harm from loss of light or dominance should occur.
- 5.4 Finally, on highway safety, the closure of the Lechlade Road access to vehicles is welcomed by the County Engineer. The use of the Canada Lane access for the site is considered acceptable, subject to the extension of the double yellow lines to restrict on-street parking in the vicinity. Formal parking is provided by a mixture of integral garages and open bays, at a ratio of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. Additional hard landscaped informal parking areas are also provided. Overall, there is no objection to the access and parking arrangements.

6.0 **Recommendation**

- 6.1 *It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, subject to:-*
1. *The completion of a Section 106 Obligation with Oxfordshire County Council on financial contributions to social infrastructure such as schools and libraries, and to amend the parking restrictions on Canada Lane*
 2. *Conditions, to include external materials, details of the buildings (doors, windows, bays, lintels, cills, eaves, verges, vents, flues, chimneys, and the open roofing over the patio areas), the cill heights of windows and rooflights, de-contamination, road surfacing, details of the revised Lechlade Road access, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatments, street furniture, visibility splays, parking, cycle parking, bin storage, and the design of any sub-station.*