

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V1044/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
REGISTERED	24.5.2013
PARISH	WANTAGE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Charlotte Dickson John Morgan Fiona Roper
APPLICANT	Churchill Retirement Living
SITE	Thames Valley Police, Police Station, Church Street Wantage, OX12 8BW
PROPOSAL	Demolition and rebuild of boundary wall on new alignment in matching materials
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	439763/187793
OFFICER	Mr Peter Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application sits in a site of just under 0.3 hectares on the southern side of Church Street. The site contains the former magistrate's court and police station. Vehicular and pedestrian access is provided along the northern boundary, directly onto Church Street.
- 1.2 The existing buildings on site are a mix of single and two-storey brick structures, with both flat and pitched roofs. The magistrate's court sits at the front of the site and is a two-storey flat roofed building. The front portion of the site falls within the Wantage Town Centre conservation area
- 1.3 The site slopes sharply upwards from the road, with all the buildings appearing elevated from Church Street. The site is almost completely covered by hard standing or buildings. Wrapping around the eastern side and rear of the site is a public car park that primarily serves the town centre and the civic hall. To the west lies a school, which currently has a right of passage over the application site.
- 1.4 This application relates to the boundary wall that runs along the western boundary of the application site. It separates the site from The Woolpack public house (no.16 Church Street), a grade II listed building. The application site was used as a brewery in the 1800s, with a three or four storey range built right up to the western boundary of the site. It is believed the boundary wall is the surviving remnants of that building. Given its relationship with The Woolpack, the wall is curtilage listed
- 1.5 It is important to highlight this application was submitted in parallel with the recently refused planning application to demolish the buildings on the site to allow the erection of a three-storey building providing elderly people's apartments (P13/V1049/FUL). The application was refused on the basis the scale of the proposed building was harmful to the character of the area, that no affordable housing was proposed and on issues relating to car parking and landscaping. It is likely this refusal of planning permission will be appealed by the applicant.
- 1.6 This application for listed building consent is assessed on the relatively narrow merits of the importance of the heritage asset. It is an assessment that is independent of the merits of the planning application.

1.7 The application comes to committee as Wantage Town Council objects to the grant of listed building consent. A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The infants school benefits from a right of access over the application site, which has allowed vehicular access to the school site on an occasional basis. This access will be closed as part of the applicants purchasing and redevelopment of the application site.

2.2 Consequently, the applicant needs to provide an alternative vehicular access to the school. The works necessary to achieve this are creating an access through the existing car park at No.16, demolishing the boundary wall, repositioning a number of parking bays and re-building the boundary wall on a new alignment.

2.3 The new wall will step away from the current alignment, into the application site by approximately five metres. This will allow the existing parking spaces to be moved east the same distance, with an improved, wider, vehicular access running through the central part of the site into the northern part of the school grounds. Approximately half the wall will be realigned to create the new, wider, vehicular access and allow for the repositioning of the parking spaces.

2.4 The applicants propose to build the new wall in a brick to match the existing, and that the wall will be of a comparable height. Due to the topography of the site, and the need to provide ramped access to the school, the new wall will, in part, be a retaining wall

2.5 Extracts from the applications plans are **attached** at appendix 2. Documents submitted in support of the application, including the design and access statement, are available on the council's website. Committee members should be aware that the building shown on the proposed site plan is not an accurate reflection of the scheme refused planning permission. The building was amended prior to the council refusing the scheme

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **Wantage Town Council** – Recommends refusal – *“The existing wall is in keeping with the conservation area and the adjoining listed building. Any relocation of the wall should require re-use of the existing materials. The proposal would remove car parking spaces from the Woolpack property. When the Woolpack was in use all the car parking spaces were fully occupied. The proposal would adversely affect the future use of the Woolpack building. The Town Council is extremely concerned about the prospective shortage of town centre public car parking when housing developments in the area in the Local Plan proceed. The loss of car parking space in the town centre is undesirable. The application indicates that the purpose is to provide a new access to the school property other than through the former police station site. Given the period over which the access will have been provided, rights of way will have been established. We would welcome the conservation officers comments on this application.*

3.2 **Conservation Officer** - No objections, but expresses the desirability of having an associated planning permission in place before the proposed works take place

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P13/V1050/CA](#) - Refused (13/08/2013)

Demolition of existing buildings on site to allow development to form 45 sheltered apartments for the elderly including communal facilities (Category II type accommodation), access, car parking and landscaping (As amended)

[P13/V1049/FUL](#) - Refused (13/08/2013)

Development to form 44 sheltered apartments for the elderly including communal facilities (Category II type accommodation), access, car parking and landscaping (As amended)

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

HE1 - Preservation and Enhancement: Implications for Development

HE5 - Development involving alterations to a listed building

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Listed building matters

6.1 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states, *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be.”*

6.2 Therefore, the central issue in the assessment of this application is the significance of the wall to be demolished. As outlined above, the wall is curtilage listed, and is believed to be the remnants of the brewery building that was once present on the site. It is important to note that the wall is not listed in its own right, but benefits from a similar level of protection due to its historic association with 16 Church Street, a grade II listed building.

6.3 The wall was not built as an integral part of the site of no.16 Church Street, but of the adjacent brewery. Nonetheless, it remains to delineate the historic curtilage of the listed building.

6.4 From observations on site, the eastern face of the wall, facing into the application site is in reasonable repair. However, there are more signs of wear on the west, facing no.16. It appears that the wall has undergone a number of remedial repairs, with a smaller, more modern retaining wall, immediately abutting it on this side. Thus, the façade of the wall adjacent to no.16 Church Street has a diminished historic integrity and interest.

6.5 Furthermore, the section of wall closest to the road appears to have been rebuilt relatively recently. There is a clear distinction between the brickwork in this section and the older brickwork behind. There are other small sections of the wall that have undergone repair.

6.6 Overall, these factors weigh against the historic interest of the wall and, consequently, its importance as a heritage asset. For this reason the conservation officer has confirmed the wall is not so significant that it warrants retention in its current form or on its current alignment. He has highlighted it is desirable for the re-alignment of the wall to be granted consent in parallel with planning permission for the redevelopment of the site. However, in isolation, there is no objection on listed building grounds to the proposed works.

6.7 To ensure the quality of the development, two conditions are proposed. One requires the demolition of the wall with hand tools. This will ensure those bricks that are still sound can be salvaged and re-used. The second requires a sample panel of the wall to be erected on site for inspection before work begins on the wall proper. This will ensure that appropriate new bricks are used, as well as a good quality mortar appropriate to the location.

6.8 Part of Wantage Town Council's objection to this proposal relates to the loss of car parking at No.16 Church Street. However, committee members will be aware that this is not material to the listed building application. The Town Council has also raised the historic access rights the school has over the application site. Similarly this is not a material consideration for this application and it will be for the parties involved to reach a mutually acceptable agreement outside the remit of the planning process.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 This curtilage listed wall is not of such significance that its part removal and re-alignment can be resisted. The proposed works will enable the creation of a new access for the infant school and allow, subject to the granting of planning permission for an acceptable scheme, the redevelopment of the disused magistrate's court site. Accordingly, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal complies with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

To grant listed building consent subject to:

- 1 : Commencement three years
- 2 : Approved plans
- 3 : Demolition with hand tools only
- 4 : Panel of wall materials to be agreed

Author: Peter Brampton
Contact Number: 01491 823751
Email: peter.brampton@southandvale.gov.uk