

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V1454/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	4.7.2013
PARISH	ABINGDON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Angela Lawrence Helen Pighills
APPLICANT	Mr Ian Burles
SITE	61 Oxford Road Abingdon, OX14 2AA
PROPOSAL	Subdivision of the main house and the former garage structure at 61 Oxford Road to create two detached family homes complete with garage/car ports and private gardens (As amended by Drawing No: 13022-P01 Revision A and Tree Survey Report accompanying agent's email of 18 July 2013).
AMENDMENTS	One - As above
GRID REFERENCE	450358/198245
OFFICER	Mr Peter Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 No.61 Oxford Road is a large detached dwelling set well back from the street frontage. It is accessed via an existing drive in the northwestern corner of the site. The property currently benefits from a generous rear garden, although there is an extant planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling on the easternmost part of the site. A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.
- 1.2 Next to No.61 is a large link-attached garage. The plans provided demonstrate this garage has been converted into two flats, a 1-bed and a 2-bed. No planning permission has been granted for this conversion, but the works have become lawful through the passing of time.
- 1.3 The site sits on higher ground to the street, with a gentle west to east upwards gradient evident across the site. The house itself is of red brick construction under a plain clay tiled roof. It is two-storey with a hipped roof structure on a north-south axis, with gabled projections to east and west. The garage is a more modern brick and tile structure, under a pitched roof.
- 1.4 It is important to note that No.59, immediately south of the site, is a comparable building in age, design and materials. This site has recently benefited from the erection of a detached dwelling on its rearmost part, in a similar arrangement to that approved here.
- 1.5 The application comes to committee as Abingdon Town Council objects to the proposal.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the removal of the single storey link between the house and garage to allow the creation of two detached family homes. The main house will be a 5-bed dwelling, whilst the garage will be a 3-bed dwelling. Each building will benefit from single storey rear extensions, whilst a single storey front extension to the garage is proposed. Each property will have a private garden to the rear. To the front, two detached garages will provide parking for the new dwellings.

2.2 The proposed extensions and garaging are faced with a combination of vertical weather boarding, brickwork and glazing underneath a flat roof. The garaging will have a sedum roof.

2.3 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

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Abingdon Town Council** – Recommends refusal – *“The committee considered that the proposed development represented an overdevelopment of the property which would harm the character of the surrounding area and also that the proposed development would not provide adequate living accommodation for those residing in the units. Consequently, the application was in contravention of Saved Policy H14 (Sub-division of dwellings) of the...Local Plan 2011.”*

3.2 **Neighbour Representations** – None received

3.3 **Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)** - No objections subject to conditions relating to garage accommodation being retained, access, parking and turning.

3.4 **Waste Management** – General comments on the council's waste collection contract provided

3.5 **Forestry Team** – Views to be reported to the planning committee as a verbal update

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V1708/FUL](#) - Approved (13/09/2012)

The application is for a new two storey family dwelling and alterations to No.61 Oxford Road.

[P12/V0997](#) - Approved (18/06/2012)

Erection of a family dwelling on land to the rear of No. 61 Oxford Road and new vehicular access. Demolition of a single storey side extension to existing dwelling.

[P11/V1255](#) - Refused (27/03/2012)

Erection of a family dwelling on land to the rear of No. 61 Oxford Road and new vehicular access.

[P11/V0006](#) - Refused (17/03/2011) - Refused on appeal (17/01/2012)

Erection of two dwellings within land to the rear of No. 61 Oxford Road and new vehicular access. (Re-submission)

[P10/V0904](#) - Refused (08/07/2010)

Erection of two new dwellings and sub-division of the existing site. (Land rear of 61 Oxford Road)

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

H10 - Development in the Five Main Settlements

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Residential Design Guide – 2009
Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Principle of development

- 6.1 Policy H10 confirms that the principle of residential development within the built up limits of Abingdon is acceptable. This is provided the character of the area is preserved and there is no loss of facilities.

Character and appearance

- 6.2 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan states that development will be permitted provided that it is of high quality and inclusive design. The layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials and relationship to adjoining buildings should not adversely affect those attributes that make a positive contribution to the character of the locality. Policies DC5, DC6 and DC9 seek to ensure that all new development is acceptable in terms of highway safety, include hard and soft landscaping measures and does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours.
- 6.3 Section 4.2 of the adopted Residential Design Guide states the key factor in the subdivision of plots is that the sites context should dictate the approach for designing and laying out the new buildings. New buildings need to fit comfortably within the street, and there should be a positive relationship between the built form and the street. Section 4.5 of the guide deals with development in lower density areas, including Oxford Road Abingdon, and confirms that such areas are characterised by residential properties, set in relatively large landscaped grounds. The established form and character of these areas should provide the context for the layout and design. New developments should be set back from the road to respect adjacent building lines and visual gaps that reflect the general character of the immediate area should be retained.
- 6.4 The Town Council contends the scale of this development represents an overdevelopment of the site that has a harmful impact on the character of the area. Officers do not agree with this assessment.
- 6.5 Oxford Road is a main route into Abingdon, and is flanked by traditional frontage housing. Buildings along the road are a variety of single, one-and-a-half, and two-storey dwellings. The linear plots and the parallel siting of dwellings along this part of Oxford Road establish a lower density pattern of development. Mature landscaping screening at the front, with generous rear gardens, is typical of this low-density character.
- 6.6 The application site is typical of the area, with significant planting along the western front boundary provided substantial screening of the front of the main house. The house sits amongst the mature planting, and the site has a verdant suburban character. The ratio of building footprint to plot size is small, even allowing for the substantial link-attached garage.
- 6.7 Officers consider that, if the existing garage was not on the site and had not already been converted to two small flats, the subdivision of this site in the manner proposed here would be unacceptable. The small gap between the two houses is not reflective of the character of the area. In this respect, the proposal is contrary to Section 4.2 of the Design Guide. However, the garage does exist, and does provide two additional residential units on the site. Therefore, the key to assessing this proposal is whether the increase in built form has a material impact on the character of the site and the

surrounding area.

- 6.8 Turning to the garage first, this will remain largely as existing, providing the entirety of the proposed first floor accommodation under the existing roof. The only additions are two single storey flat roof extensions, one to the front and one to the rear, and a small dormer window. Combined, these extensions will add around 31 square metres to the existing structure, which has a footprint of around 60 square metres. Given the low form of these extensions, which are subservient to the main building, officers are satisfied the building can accommodate this level of development. The mature planting fronting the road means that views of the converted garage as a dwelling will be extremely limited from the public realm. Therefore the impact of the increase in scale on the character of the area will be very minor. Moreover, the resultant building will retain the scale and relationship of the existing garage relative to the main house and will not appear out of keeping even when fully converted into a dwelling.
- 6.9 The proposed extensions to the main dwelling are also single storey in nature and do not significantly exceed what could be achieved under permitted development. There is no objection to these elements of the proposal.
- 6.10 Overall, officers are satisfied these proposals do not result in a significant increase in the bulk of either building, particularly given the removal of the existing link between the two. Given this, there is no harm to the character of the area from this proposal, despite the rather close relationship between the two buildings.
- 6.11 The proposal makes use of the deep frontage on the site to erect two detached double garages at the front of each property. Often, forward garages can have a harmful impact on the character of the area, particularly when they break forward of a linear building line such as this. In this instance, officers conclude again that the harm caused does not warrant a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.12 Each garage is a single enclosed bay and a single car port. They reach only 2.7 metres in height, with a sedum roof helping them to blend into the densely planted nature of the site. They project only around 2 metres in front of the adjacent no.63A, which lies to the immediate north, and sit nearly 20 metres back from the front boundary. Thus, the depth of frontage is still generous, and respects the character of the area. For these reasons, officers do not consider the garaging will cause material planning harm.
- 6.13 The proposed site layout provides 174 square metres of private amenity space to the 3-bed dwelling and 252 square metres for the 5-bed dwelling. Whilst these gardens are small, relative to the size of gardens seen elsewhere in the area, officers consider they are acceptable for units of this size and it would be harm to demonstrate any material planning harm. This is another factor in officers' conclusion that this proposal does not represent an overdevelopment of the site.
- 6.14 Overall, officers consider the increase in built form from this proposal is relatively minor and so no material harm to the character of the area will occur. However, given the relatively compressed nature of the development, it is necessary to restrict permitted development rights for future extensions to the two buildings, and outbuildings within their curtilage.

Future living conditions

- 6.15 The second element to the Town Council objection is that the overdevelopment of the site will lead to poor living conditions for the future occupiers of the new houses. As explained above, officers accept that the garden sizes are small relative to the area, but

are still generous for the types of dwellings proposed. Each house will benefit from sufficient amenity space, and this is a key factor in securing good quality living conditions for future occupiers. The two units, by being set on a building line consistent with the area, will enjoy an acceptable level of privacy, not overlooking each other, or being unduly overlooked by neighbours, or the new property to be built at the rear. Overall, officers are satisfied that this proposal will provide acceptable levels of amenity for future occupants.

Relationship to surrounding properties

- 6.16 The proposal will not have a significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. The low level nature of the proposed extensions ensures they will not block undue amount of light to the rear of No.63a to the north, or No.59 to the south. The only window that would allow a direct increase in overlooking of neighbouring land is the dormer window within the converted garage. As this window serves a bathroom, it is reasonable to obscure glaze and fix it shut by condition to preserve the amenity of the occupants of No.63a. With this condition in place, the proposal will preserve the amenity of neighbours.

Highway Safety

- 6.17 With the detached garaging, each house will benefit from appropriate parking. The 3-bed dwelling will benefit from two spaces, whilst the 5-bed will benefit from four, given the extra hardstanding available at the front of the dwelling. The highways liaison officer has identified the overall level of parking provision is acceptable, but that the internal dimensions of the garages are marginally too shallow. This minor increase in size can be accommodated by a condition, which will also ensure the garages are retained for the parking of vehicles.
- 6.18 The site provides adequate turning and manoeuvring space so that cars can enter and exit the site in a forward gear. The existing access will be closed up, and a new access provided in the southern corner of the site. This access was approved as part of the previous application and will provide adequate visibility at the point it meets the public highway. With the recommended conditions in place, this application will have an acceptable impact on highway safety.

Other issues

- 6.19 A detailed tree protection scheme was agreed in respect of the previous application for the new dwelling to the rear, given the proposed new driveway, which runs close to some of the largest trees on site. The retention of these important trees, particularly those on the front boundary, is paramount to the success of this scheme. Previously, the protection of these trees was secured by a pre-commencement condition. The additional building works required to implement this new scheme will largely take place away from the larger trees. Therefore, it is reasonable to carry the same pre-commencement condition across to this new application. A verbal update on the forestry officer's views on this aspect of the proposal will be given to the planning committee.
- 6.20 A pre-commencement condition will cover matters of drainage, including SUDS and ensuring no surface run off water discharges onto the highway. Adequate bin storage is proposed for the front of each dwelling, to meet the requirements of the council's waste contractor.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The principle of residential development in this location is acceptable. The proposed alterations and extensions to the main house and garage are acceptable, as they will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. The overall amount of

development proposed is not significant and does not represent an overdevelopment of the site. Sufficient parking, turning and manoeuvring space will be provided for the new dwellings, which will not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity. The future occupiers of the houses will enjoy a good level of amenity and privacy. The retention of the mature planting within the site, particularly along the front western boundary, is vital and will be secured by condition. Accordingly, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal complies with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant Planning Permission subject to:

- 1 : Commencement Three Years
- 2 : planning condition listing the approved drawings
- 3 : Materials as per plan
- 4 : Boundary Details to be agreed
- 5 : Access, Parking & Turning in accordance with plan.
- 5 : Existing Access to be closed
- 6 : Garage Accommodation to be retained
- 7 : Tree Protection to be agreed
- 8 : Drainage Details to be agreed
- 9 : Restriction on permitted development – extensions, roof extensions and outbuildings
- 10 : North facing first floor window on garage to be obscure glazed and fixed shut

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