

**APPLICATION NO.** P07/W0171  
**APPLICATION TYPE** FULL  
**REGISTERED** 23.02.2007  
**PARISH** DIDCOT  
**WARD MEMBER(S)** Mrs Margaret Davies  
Mrs Eleanor Hards  
**APPLICANT** David E Mcdowell Ltd  
**SITE** 9 Park Road Didcot  
**PROPOSAL** Demolition of existing bungalow and retail unit. Erection of a three storey building, retail units and apartments over, associated parking and landscaping  
**AMENDMENTS**  
**GRID REFERENCE** 451962/189876  
**OFFICER** Mrs S Crawford

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application is referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Town Council. Planning permission has already been granted for a very similar proposal on 24 May 2006 when the application was considered by Planning Committee. The siting and footprint of the approved building is the same as the building now proposed. The internal arrangement of the flats is different with an additional flat being included and the mix of units has slightly changed. The previous scheme provided for 2 X 1 bed flats and 3 X 2 bed flats. The allocation of parking spaces at the rear has also changed with the number of spaces reduced from 10 to 8. There are also minor changes to the communal garden area and position of washing and bin storage facilities. The main difference is the height of the building where an increase in the eaves and ridge height on the return wing from 5.3 m at eaves and 8 metres at ridge to 6.7m and 9 m is proposed. On the gable wing, the height would rise from 6.7m at eaves and 8.6m at ridge to 7.3m and 9m respectively. The return wing would increase approx 1m in height, with the gable wing increasing by approx 40cm.
- 1.2 The site is located just off the Georgetown roundabout, at a major road junction within the town. The area comprises a number of commercial properties to the north and opposite side of the road side, with a block of flats and other residential properties to the south and rear. Most of the properties in the area are two storeys in height with a variety of ages, design and materials. There are several commercial properties with "Dutch" gables in the vicinity. In the case of 9 Park Road, the existing property is rather run down; its single storey form could also be

said to be out of keeping with the general character of the area. The existing bungalow and a range of single storey, flat roof garages in the rear garden on the site would be demolished as part of the proposal. The site area is 0.08 hectares in size. The site lies just within the Didcot Town Centre boundary

1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow, retail unit and garages on the site and construction of a three storey building with 2 retail units at the front and 1 X two bed flat to rear on the ground floor, 2 X one bedroom flats and 1 X two bed flats on the first floor and 2 X one bedroom flats on the second floor (A total of six flats in a mix of 4 x one bedroom flats and 2 X two bedroom flats). The second floor would be provided within the roof space and each flat on this level would benefit from a roof top sitting out area. A communal, private amenity area would be provided to the rear of the building with an area for drying washing and a bin and recycling store; a 2 metre high, brick wall would be provided along part of Edmonds Court to screen this area from public view. Two parking spaces per two bed flat and one parking space per one bed flat would be provided in allocated parking spaces to the rear of the proposed building and six stands provided for bicycle parking. Access to the parking area would be provided opposite the turning head at the end of Edmonds Court. Three parking spaces for the retail units with a further 3 bicycle stands would be provided on the frontage together with other access improvements on to Park Road. Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application together with the design and access statement are **attached** at Appendix 2. Reduced copies of the scheme approved under application P06/W0305 are **attached** at Appendix 3 for information.

## 3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 3.1 OCC (Highways)              | No objection subject to contributions to secure yellow line painting for parking restrictions in Edmonds Court and subject to conditions to provide access and parking as per approved drawing.  |
| Public Amenities, Manager/Engnr | Comments regarding accessibility and storage for waste facilities.   |
| Environmental Health            |  |
| Didcot Town Council             | Refuse; Overdevelopment  |
| Neighbour Objectors (1)         | Concern about height of building in comparison with Edmonds Court and possible privacy problems with properties to the rear. There is ample parking for the flats. Any commercial vehicles and parking should be confined to the frontage. |

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P06/W0305 - Demolition of existing bungalow and retail unit. Erection of a three storey building, retail units and apartments over, associated parking and landscaping (2 retail units with 5 flats) - APPROVED

#### 5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

##### 5.1 Adopted SOLP Policies

G1- direction for most growth, G2 – Protection of District’s resources, G3 – traffic generation, G5 – making best use of previously developed land, G6 – Quality of design and local distinctiveness, EP4 – Protection of water resources, EP6 - Surface water drainage requirements, EP8 – Contaminated land, D1 – Principles of good design, D2 – Parking for vehicles and cycles, D3 – Provision of private amenity areas, D4 – Privacy for new dwellings, D5 – mix of compatible uses, D7 – access for all, D8 – Conservation and efficient design, D9 – Renewable energy, D10 – Management of waste, D11 – infrastructure improvements, H4 – New housing within larger villages, H7 – Mix of units, H8 - density, H9 – affordable housing, CF3 – retention of retail uses in neighbourhood centres, T1 – safe and convenient access and parking etc, T8 - parking, TC1 – mixed use developments in town centres, TC2 – redevelopment in town centres

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPPS3 – Housing

PPG13 – Transport

#### 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- whether the principle of residential development on the site is acceptable
- H4 criteria considerations
- Development within town centres
- affordable housing
- density and mix of units
- provision of amenity areas
- Affordable housing

6.2 **Principle.** Planning permission has already been granted for a similar form of development. The footprint and siting of the proposed building is the same as that approved; the only differences are that the building currently proposed differs in the internal arrangement providing 6 rather than 5 flats and also have a slightly

different and higher profile. The overall height at the eaves and the ridge is higher to allow for more accommodation within the roof space using a Mansard roof form.

In general terms, Didcot is one of the towns in the district where residential development on sites of up to 1 hectare will be allowed on appropriate sites subject to the criteria specified in Policy H4 of the Local Plan.

### 6.3 H4 criteria issues.

- i. That an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost;

The site is currently occupied by a bungalow which has an inappropriate flat roof extension across part of the frontage and a range of dilapidated garages to the rear. At present the site represents an inefficient use of land and due to its dilapidated state, detracts from the character of the area; the proposal to redevelop the site is an opportunity to enhance the character of the area and would not conflict with this part of policy H4.

- ii. Design, height and bulk in keeping with the surroundings;

The application is a full application with details of design, scale and form to be considered at this stage. The site is prominent due to its location near to a roundabout and views of all sides of the proposed building would be readily available. The design, heights and scale of the buildings in the vicinity is very varied but thirties style architecture characterised by built up walls at the gables, (Dutch gables), where the gables front onto roads are quite common and a feature that has been picked up in the town centre redevelopment. The scale of the building is considerably larger than that currently on the site, but the existing building could itself be described as out of character with the area (see para 6.3 iii). The plans show the proposed development in relation to the scale of the neighbouring property to the north. Whilst the wall plate is built up above the line of the eaves of the neighbouring building, the ridge would not be significantly higher. The general massing of the building is broken up by the use of a projecting gable and the mansard roof. Whilst the building now proposed would be higher than that approved it would not be at odds with the surrounding development.

- iii. That the character of the area is not adversely affected;

In the case of 9 Park Road, the existing property is rather run down; its single storey form could also be said to be out of keeping with the general character of the area. There is a dilapidated range of flat roof garages in the rear garden, the garden is overgrown and the fence to Edmonds Court is falling down. The principle of redeveloping the site is acceptable and there is significant scope for improvement and enhancement of the area.

iv. Amenity, environmental or highway objections; and

**Highway issues.** The Highway Engineer has acknowledged that on street parking occurs in Edmonds Court and has noted the problems currently experienced by refuse lorries. He has suggested that the applicant contributes to funding parking controls on Edmonds Court via a unilateral undertaking to secure double yellow lines along this section to prevent parking in this area. The applicant has agreed to this provision.

**Parking provision.** Two parking spaces per two bed flat and one parking space per one bed flat would be provided in allocated parking spaces to the rear of the proposed building and six stands provided for bicycle parking. Three parking spaces for the retail units with a further 3 bicycle stands would be provided on the frontage which meets the Council's parking standards and is acceptable.

**Neighbour impact.** The scheme proposes a building larger in scale than the existing single storey building on the site; the footprint, however, is not significantly larger and the building line would relate well to 7 Park Road and the flats on the Edmonds Court/ Park Road junction. Whilst accommodation is proposed on 3 floors, the second floor would be provided within the roof space. 7 Park Road is a two storey semi-detached property with a commercial premises on the ground floor with a flat above; there is one clear glazed window and one obscure glazed window in the side elevation that currently look onto the roof of the bungalow. The proposed building would affect these windows as the parapet wall would be higher than the existing roof but the effect would not be dissimilar to many side on relationships where the principal elevations are to front and rear; there were three small windows proposed in this side elevation that served an ensuite bathroom, kitchen and living room. Your officer was concerned about overlooking from the kitchen and living room window which would not reasonably be expected to be obscure glazed to prevent any overlooking. Amended plans have been received that remove these windows and create a kitchen /dining room at first floor using the light from a large window on the front elevation and this alternative is acceptable. The impact of a larger building on the use of the garden would not be unduly oppressive in your officer's view because of the range of outbuildings to the rear of

number 7 which extend along this boundary. As such this relationship would not give rise to an unneighbourly form of development.

With regard to the impact on the residents of the flats on the corner of Edmonds Close and Park Road; this building comprises two blocks. There are three windows at first floor in the side elevation of the proposed building looking towards the flats; these windows serve kitchens and a stairwell. These windows would look directly onto the flank wall of the block fronting onto Park Road, where there is a high level window serving a living room; there is also a rear wing to the flats which has a glazed wall to the stairwell lobby; an obscure glazed bathroom window and a clear glazed bedroom window looking onto the proposed building; these windows are over 13 metres away from the proposed building and the relationship would not be unusual for overlooking across a road and in this case would be at an oblique angle. In this respect the relationship would not involve unneighbourly overlooking.

v. Backland development issues

In this case, the site fronts onto both Park Road and Edmonds Court and is not backland development.

**6.4 Development within town centres.** The Council aims to promote mixed use developments in town centres (Policies D5, TC2 and TC6) and this would include the redevelopment of individual plots as they become available where there is no conflict with other policies in the Local Plan. In this case, the site lies just within the town centre boundary but is not within the primary shopping frontage. The existing premises provides 1 small retail unit and one residential unit, which does not represent an efficient use of land. The current scheme proposes the same uses at a greater density and would provide two small retail uses with 6 flats. Your officers consider that this mix of uses is compatible and a more efficient use of land.

**6.5 Affordable housing.** Policy H9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to achieve a provision of affordable housing on proposals for new residential development. Within settlements with over 3000 population the thresholds are; sites which are greater than 0.5 ha in size; or would provide more than 15 dwellings. In this case, both the site area and the number of units are below the threshold but you officers have considered whether the site is capable of providing more units. However, given the constraints on the size of the site and the scale of surrounding buildings it would be difficult to provide more residential units than the number proposed. As such there is no requirement to provide affordable housing in this case.

**6.6 Density and mix of units.** PPS3 seeks to ensure that proposals for housing are provided at a density of forty dwellings or more per hectare within town centre locations and this is reflected in Policy H8 of the local plan. The proposal would

equate to a density of 75 dwellings per hectare which is relatively high but not unusual for a scheme for small flats. Your officers consider that the proposal is in line with Government recommendations and represents an efficient and sustainable use of land.

Policy H7 of SOLP 2011 seeks to ensure a mix of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the District's Housing Needs Survey. With smaller scale developments it is difficult to secure a mix of units but in the case of this proposal provides one and two bed units which are most needed within Didcot and in this case the mix is acceptable.

**6.7 Provision of amenity areas.** A communal amenity area of just over 150 square metres for the 6 flats would be provided to the rear of the building with privacy achieved for this area by a two metre high wall along part of Edmonds Close. The two top floor flats would also have a small roof top patio as an additional amenity area. The Design Guide seeks to provide a minimum of 25 square metres per unit where the space would be communal and the proposal would comply in this respect. The site is also within walking distance of a large park and other town centre amenities.

The scheme includes bathroom facilities for the shops and bin, recycling and cycle storage for the flats in accordance with the council's standards.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 Officers recommend that planning permission be granted because Didcot is a town that is targeted for growth and the proposal represents an efficient use of land with an appropriate mix of uses to provide interest and vitality to this peripheral town centre location. The proposal has been carefully designed to avoid an unneighbourly impact and there are no highway objections. Your officers consider that the scheme proposed is acceptable and would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to receipt of a unilateral agreement to secure contributions to establish parking restrictions on Edmonds Close and the following conditions:**

**1. Commencement 3 years**

**2. Schedule of materials - walls and roof of building.**

**3. Windows, external doors and rainwater goods to specification**

**4. Provide access onto Edmonds Court prior to occupation**

**5. Close existing access onto Park Road and provide new access prior to occupation**

**6. Parking provision to be as shown on drawing reference A05/017/100B**

**7. Details of surface water drainage works to be approved**

**8. Landscaping scheme (trees and shrubs, access road and hardstandings, boundary fencing and screen walling)**

**9. Management plan for the communal gardens and soft landscaped areas**

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