

SUBJECT **DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS** **ITEM 7**
REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO. P07/E0024
APPLICATION TYPE Full
REGISTERED 25.01.2007
PARISH Henley-on-Thames
WARD MEMBER(S) Mr Terry Buckett

Ms Roswitha Myer
APPLICANT Caxton Court (Freehold) Limited
SITE Caxton Court, St. Marks Road, Henley-on-Thames
PROPOSALS Conversion of existing ground floor residents store to form new dwelling
AMENDMENTS None
GRID REFERENCE 476248/182074
OFFICER Mr T Wyatt

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the Officer's recommendation conflicts with the views of the Town Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is located approximately 500 metres to the south of the centre of Henley-on-Thames. The wider site comprises two four storey blocks of flats dating from the 1970s, which dominate the site and the surrounding built form, particularly having regard to the site's visual prominence in both Reading Road and St. Marks Road. The site is also located outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the St. Marks Road Conservation Area.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal seeks to convert an existing residents' store at ground floor level in the block of flats with a frontage to St. Marks Road (Numbers 12a to 24). The area of floorspace to be converted amounts to approximately 70 square metres with the proposed accommodation consisting of one bedroom, bathroom and kitchen with combined living area.

2.2 The access to the site off St. Marks Road would not be altered as a result of the proposals and relatively minimal alterations to the external appearance of the building are proposed with the main alterations being the enlargement of existing windows on the north west and south west elevations of the building to improve the amenity of the future occupiers of the flat.

2.3 A copy of the proposed plans is **attached** as Appendix B.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – The Town Council has recommended the application for approval subject to the views of neighbouring occupiers.

Henley Society – The site of the flat adjacent to the car parking area is questioned.
3.2

OCC Highways Liaison Officer – Objects due to the lack of off street parking provision for the flat. This raises a highway safety concern as it is likely vehicles associated with the flat will park and manoeuvre on St Marks Road, which suffers from on-street parking congestion. Such additional movements will be detrimental to highway safety and will cause inconvenience to other public highway users.
3.3

Neighbours – Two letters have been received.
3.4

- The proposal is a good idea but there is concern regarding where parking might be provided.
- The occupiers of the flat would have to use visitor parking spaces.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P73/H0339 - Erection of two three-storey blocks of flats. Planning Permission on 08 November 1973.

P71/H0780 – Outline application – Demolition of no's 78, 80 and 82 and erection of two blocks of 12 flats each. Alteration to access. Planning Permission on 24 January 1972.

5.0 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:

- G1 – General Policies for Development
- G2 – Improving the Quality and Design of Development
- EN4 – Historic and Cultural Heritage
- T2 – Car Parking
- T8 – Development Proposals
- H1 – The Amount and Distribution of Housing
- H3 – Design, Quality and Density of Housing Development

5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):

- G1 – General Restraint and Sustainable Development
- G2 – Protection and Enhancement of the Environment
- G3 – Locational Strategy
- G6 – Promoting Good Design
- CON7 – Proposals Affecting a Conservation Area
- D1 – Good Design and Local Distinctiveness
- D2 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking
- D3 – Plot Coverage and Garden Areas
- D4 – Privacy and Daylight
- D6 – Design Against Crime
- D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design
- H4 – Towns and Larger Villages Outside the Green Belt
- T1 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

5.3 Government Guidance:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3 – Housing
- PPG13 – Transport
- PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide December 2000 (SODG)

6.0 PLANNING ISSUES

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to these applications are:

- The principle of the development
- The impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
- The impact on the living conditions of the future occupiers of the development
- Highway considerations

The Principle of the Development

6.2 The application site is located within the built up area of Henley-on-Thames where the principle of new residential development is acceptable with regard to Policy H4 of the SOLP.

6.3 The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

The proposed development is acceptable in principle in relation to Policy H4 of the SOLP. However, further assessment against this Policy is required with regard to the criteria listed under the Policy. These criteria are listed below with an assessment of the development under each criterion.

6.4

- i. that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, not an important public view spoilt.

The application consists of the conversion of part of an existing building. No new building is proposed and the only change to the external appearance of the building is as a result of the enlargement of existing windows. Therefore, the proposal complies with this Criterion.

6.5

- ii. that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings.

6.6 As the proposal does not include new buildings, the above criterion is complied with. The size of the proposed residential unit would be in keeping with the character and general size of the existing flats at the site.

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

6.7

The existing building is not particularly attractive and is generally at odds with the scale, and design of the surrounding built form. However, this proposal would not have any significant impact on the external appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the area would therefore be preserved.

- iv. That there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

6.8

The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and against highway considerations is outlined later at paragraphs 6.10, 6.13 and 6.14.

6.9

- v. That if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.

6.10 The proposal does not constitute backland development.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the St Marks Road Conservation Area

6.11 Given the minimal alterations to the external appearance of the building and the substantial brick wall forming the boundary of the site with St Marks Road, which effectively screens the application site from St Marks Road and views into the site from the adjacent conservation area, it is not considered that the proposal would have any significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

6.12 The proposed flat is on the ground floor of the building and it is not considered that its use would cause any significant additional impact on neighbouring amenity through noise and general disturbance. There are already 12 flats in the block and the addition of one additional flat would not result in a significant intensification of the use. Indeed no objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers regarding possible noise disturbance.

The Impact on the Living Conditions of the Future Occupiers of the Development

6.13

Policy D3 of the SOLP states that a private outdoor garden or amenity space should be provided for all new dwellings. Guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2000 seeks to ensure that one bedroom dwellings are provided with either a minimum of 35 square metres of external amenity space or are provided with at least 25 square metres of communal amenity space per flat. In this case there is no external amenity space to be provided with the development.

The existing flats do not have any significant area of amenity space with the only external amenity areas generally consisting of small corner balconies. No communal amenity space is provided at ground level as the majority of this space
6.14 is taken up by the existing car parking area. In light of the established situation with regard to the existing flats, it is not considered that the lack of amenity space associated with the proposed flat would be a sustainable reason to object to the proposal.

Highway Considerations

6.15

No off-street parking is to be provided for the flat. The applicant has sought to rely on Government guidance contained within PPG13 to justify the lack of parking provision. PPG13 seeks to encourage the reduction in the use of the private car, and at the same time encourages other modes of transport such as walking, cycling and bus travel. The guidance explains that reducing parking provision is a mechanism that can be used to promote other sustainable means of travel.

However, every site needs to be assessed on its own merits with regard to parking provision, and in this case the Highway Authority objects to the proposal. The Highway Liaison Officer is concerned that the lack of parking associated with the flat would be detrimental to highway safety as it is likely that vehicles associated with the unit will park and manoeuvre on St Marks Road, which already suffers from on-street parking congestion. Additional movements within the public highway would be detrimental to highway safety and would cause inconvenience to other public highway users.

In light of the above the proposal fails to accord with Policies T8 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and Policies D2, T1 and T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, which seek to ensure that development is provided with safe and sufficient access and parking in the interests of highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

- 1. The residential unit of accommodation would not be provided with any dedicated off-street parking. As a result the occupiers and visitors associated with the unit are likely to park and manoeuvre on St Marks Road, to the detriment of highway safety and the convenience of other public highway users. As such the development is contrary to Policies T8 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and Policies D2, T1, and T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, which seek to ensure that development is provided with sufficient and safe access and parking.**

Author: Mr T Wyatt

Contact no: 01491 823154

Email: planning.east@southoxon.gov.uk