

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

APPLICATION NO. P06/W1008
APPLICATION TYPE FULL
REGISTERED 07.11.2006
PARISH DORCHESTER
WARD Mr John Cotton
MEMBER(S) Mr Philip Cross
APPLICANT Central properties Limited
SITE The Chequers Public House, 20 Bridge End Dorchester-on-Thames
PROPOSAL Demolition of existing garage building and construction of a new 4 bedroom house.
AMENDMENTS
GRID REFERENCE 457856/193932
OFFICER Mrs S Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The planning application has been referred to the Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council. This application, and two others on the same site, was deferred from the Planning Committee on 21 February 2007 after a site visit.

1.2 Since February the new owner of the site (not the applicant in this case) has approached Davey and Co who specialise in the valuation and sale of pubs and bars, hotels and inns, restaurants and retail businesses. Davey and Co have assessed the premises with the demolitions proposed and with the development plot taken out of the site which removes existing parking facilities. They have confirmed that, in their view there is a market for the use as a Public House and will market it as such when instructed. This application, however, does not involve any works to the public house and there is no related application for listed building consent.

1.3 The Chequers Public House occupies a prominent corner plot on Bridge End in

Dorchester; it has not been used for trading for a number of years and is unoccupied. The pub benefits from a large garden to the rear with a gravelled parking area to the frontage; upon which, stands a pent roof, double garage constructed in concrete blockwork. There is a single storey, flat roof extension to the side of the pub that was added in the late 1960's to provide toilets to serve the public house. The property is a grade II listed building and lies opposite the grade II* church of St Birinus; it is also within the Dorchester Conservation Area. Dorchester lies within the Oxford Green Belt.

1.4 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 detached garage and the construction of one 4 bed dwelling in a cottage style. A parking space for 2 cars in tandem is proposed to the side of the dwelling. The dwelling would be constructed in brick under a slate roof and the first floor would be accommodated within the roof space, with bedrooms being lit by dormer windows. The ridge height would be some 7.3 metres above ground level. The building has a T-shape plan form with a 1 ½ storey wing at the rear. The application has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions. Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

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| 3.1 OCC
(Highways) | The proposed 4 bed dwelling will be provided with two off street parking spaces, which is below the recommended standard of 3 spaces; the layout is also undesirable but neither points are such that a refusal of planning permission could be supported. No objection subject to conditions. |
| Conservation Officer. | No objection to principle and design is acceptable. Comments and conditions recommended regarding the materials. |
| OCC
(Archaeology) | A pre-determination report on another application relating to this site has shown that this area has been quarried out previously to a depth of 2 metres circa 17 th -18 th century. The quarrying has removed all traces of earlier occupation and no further archaeological constraints need to be attached to this planning determination. |
| Forestry Officer | Objections to a previous scheme on the location of the parking spaces to the rear of the public house. |
| Parish Council | Refuse. Adverse impact on 18 Bridge End. The design does not fit happily in the conservation area. Selling off the garden and developing the car park will affect the future viability of the pub. |
| Neighbour Objectors (4) | Concern regarding the impact on south facing balcony at first floor of 18 Bridge End. The balcony serves a first floor living room and the plans do not show extensions to 18 such that the distance |

between the buildings is not accurately reflected.

Removal of a large area of the garden to the public house will compromise its use as a pub.

Overdevelopment of site.

The Chequers is a village pub and should be retained.

The location of the car park is impractical and unneighbourly.

Sewer system is inadequate.

Neighbour
Supporters (1) No objection to the application but concern about loss of parking for the pub.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P06/W0116 – Demolition of existing garage and erection of a detached 4 bed house – Withdrawn
- P07/W0030/LB – Demolition of existing garage and 20th century extensions to listed building and alterations – Current
- P07/W0031 – Demolition of garage and erection of two, three bedroom dwellings – Current.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted SOLP Policies

G2 – Protection of District's resources, G4 – Development in the countryside, G6 – Quality of design and local distinctiveness, GB2 – New buildings within the Green Belt GB4 – Visual amenity in Green Belt, C1 – Landscape character, C8 – Species protection, CON5 – Setting of listed buildings, CON7 – Development within conservation areas, 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, D8 – Conservation and efficient design, D9 – Renewable energy, D10 – Management of waste, H4 – New housing within larger villages, H7 – Mix of units, H8 – Density, H9 – Affordable housing, CF – Protection of community facilities.

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPS3 – Housing

PPS7 – Sustainable Development In Rural Areas

PPG13 – Transport

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

PPS22 – Renewable Energy

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- H4 Criteria
- Viability of public house
- Plot coverage, density and provision of gardens
- Affordable housing
- Mix of units
- Tree issues
- Sustainable design issues

6.2 **Principle.** Dorchester is one of the smaller villages in the Green Belt where infill development on appropriate sites may be acceptable in terms of Policy H5 subject to the criteria specified in Policy H4. In this case, the site is a small gap in a built up frontage and the principle of development is acceptable.

6.3 H4 criteria issues.

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

Whilst part of the site is currently the garden to the Public House and is open, the area to the front of the site presents a gravelled area for parking with a flat roof extension to the listed building, a close boarded fence and a large, pent roof double garage. The area does not contribute positively to the character of the area and appears neglected. The removal of the garage and its replacement with development of an appropriate scale and design would enhance the character of the area and the setting of the listed building.

With regard to environmental value, the site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area. A pre-determination archaeological evaluation of the site provided on another current application relating to the site has revealed that the site has been disturbed to such a degree that there are no deposits of archaeological value and there is no objection to the development proposed.

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

The application has been the subject of detailed pre-application discussions following the withdrawal of an earlier application. A photograph accompanying the application shows the proposed new dwelling super-imposed on the site in relation to the public house and shows a building that is subservient to the listed building and maintaining adequate spacing between the two buildings. The plans indicate that the roof would be covered in slate; in your officer's view the use of plain clay roof tiles would be more appropriate and this could be covered by an appropriate condition. The design of the proposed dwellings is in line with the Design Guide principles and is acceptable.

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

The Chequers Public House is a grade II listed building that is located on the junction of Bridge End and Watling Lane in the Dorchester on Thames conservation area. Poorly conceived extensions and inferior quality outbuildings compromise the appearance of the building and its setting at present. There are long views to the building along Bridge End in both directions and across the site.

The demolition of the garage would enhance the setting of the listed building and the character of the conservation area. In this scheme, the 20th century additions to the public house would be retained.

iv. Amenity, environmental or highway objections; and

Highway issues. Whilst there is some concern expressed about the number of parking spaces and their arrangement, these are not so strong as to merit a refusal of planning permission. The Highway Engineer is happy with the parking arrangement shown to the rear of the public house as a satisfactory replacement for the displaced parking. However, as this is unacceptable for other reasons consideration should be given to the lack of any on site parking for the public house. Whilst this is a legitimate concern, the public house is within 75 metres of the public car park on Bridge End and a refusal on the displacement of parking facilities for the public house when other parking is available within easy walking distance can not be justified.

Parking provision. The proposal provides for 2 on site parking spaces to the side of the dwelling, this provision is below the Council's standard, which would normally require 3 parking spaces for a 4 bed dwelling. A refusal on these grounds alone would not be justified given the maximum standards for parking that OCC standards and Government advice recommend.

Whilst the application shows that parking facilities could be provided to the rear of the pub within the remaining garden this is not included in the application description nor with the application area and is indicative only. This would not be acceptable in terms of the setting of the listed building, neighbour impact or the impact on an important tree.

Neighbour impact. The site is surrounded by other residential development numbers 16 and 18 Bridge End and 5 and 6 Samian Way.

16 and 18 Bridge End are unusual in that they are three storey buildings with the main living rooms being at the front of the properties at first floor. 16 has a first floor conservatory at the front and 18 has a first floor balcony leading onto a living room; both are at an oblique angle to Bridge End and 18 is in a backland location to the rear of 16. The new dwellings would sit well forward of 16 Bridge End and would present a flank wall with two small windows; one at both ground and first floor level serving a utility room and bathroom respectively. The impact on 16 would be acceptable in your officer's view subject to a condition requiring these windows to be obscure glazed.

With regard to 18 Bridge End; the new dwelling would sit well forward at an oblique angle. The neighbours at 18 have expressed concern about overlooking to their first floor living area, particularly from the bedroom window in the rear wing. The neighbours have pointed out the block plan is inaccurate, in that it is based on the Ordnance Survey map base that does not give the accurate location of 18 in relation to the new dwelling. In effect 18 is approximately 2 metres closer to the proposed dwelling than shown. The boundary between the properties is currently marked with a line of deciduous trees that provides an effective screen in the summer. This screening would be kept as part of the current proposal but would not be as effective in winter months. Given the orientation of the buildings, there would not be a direct line of overlooking and having regard to the distance between the buildings and the screening given by the existing trees this relationship is acceptable in your officer's view.

With regard to 5 and 6 Samian Way, there would be more of a direct back to back relationship but there would be a distance of some 27 metres between the buildings and this is in excess of the Council's minimum standard.

v. Backland development issues

The site provides a frontage onto Bridge End and there is no backland development involved.

6.4 Viability of the public House. The planning application involves the loss of part of the garden to the public house, and the loss of parking facilities. Consideration must be given to whether The Chequers could still operate successfully as a public house without these amenities or whether alternative facilities exist that would overcome these concerns. The issue of the displaced parking facilities has already been considered at para 6.3 iv) highway issues. If parking is not provided in the land to the rear of the pub then there is sufficient land remaining for a garden to serve the public house.

In this proposal the unsympathetic flat roof extensions to the side of The Chequers, which house the toilets, amongst other things, are retained.

The Chequers Public House has been closed for a number of years and before the premises closed it was not open regularly in the way that most public houses operate. The current owner would like the property to continue in use as a pub and is marketing the property as such. In this case, other than the loss of part of the garden and some limited parking facilities this application does not compromise the use of The Chequers as a public house. In any event, planning permission would be required for any change of use of the premises to a dwelling and would need to be accompanied with all the relevant data recommended in the CAMRA guidelines.

6.5 Plot Coverage, density and provision of gardens. Minimum standards for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in policies D3, H7 and H8 of the Local Plan. These standards seek to ensure that sites are not overdeveloped.

- **Provision of garden areas.** The proposed dwelling would have a garden well in excess of the Council's minimum standards and the proposal is acceptable in this respect.
- **Plot coverage.** The plot coverage is just over 10% which is well below the maximum standard specified in the Design Guide of 30% for detached housing.
- **Density.** PPS3 seeks to ensure that proposals for housing are provided at a density of 30 or more dwellings per hectare (dph) within villages and this is reflected in Policy H8 of the local plan. The density is below the

recommended 30 dph; it would be possible to provide a higher density with the provision of two small dwellings on the frontage, which would be a more efficient use of land, but a higher density involving development in depth would not be appropriate in terms of neighbour impact and setting of the listed building.

- 6.6 Provision for affordable housing.** Policy H9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to achieve a provision of affordable housing on sites capable of accommodating more than 5 dwellings in settlements where the population is less than 3000. In this case, the number of units is below the threshold but your officers have considered whether the site is capable of providing more units. Whilst the site may be capable of providing one more unit, this would still be below the threshold and there is no requirement to provide affordable housing in this case. There are also constraints on the width of the site, the relationship with surrounding houses and the setting of the listed building which would prohibit more development.
- 6.7 Tree issues.** The indicative layout plan for the land to the rear of the pub shows an area for the displaced parking for the public house. Given the existing levels at the rear, which rise up to the neighbouring properties, the provision of a level surface for parking would involve the removal of an earth bank. Such earthworks would undermine the long term vitality of a large sycamore tree that lies on the southern boundary and would not be acceptable. The planning application does not relate to the continued use of the Chequers as a public house and the provision of parking for the pub is not included in the description of development. For the avoidance of doubt, the addition of an NB on any decision notice which clearly specifies that no planning permission is given for the parking area would be sufficient in this case.
- 6.8 Sustainable design issues.** Policy D8 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to encourage the use of sustainable materials and forms of buildings that incorporate design solutions to increase water and energy efficiency. Whilst none are specifically mentioned the proposal will need to meet the standards specified in Part L of the Building Regulations regarding the conservation of fuel and power. The proposal does provide chimneys to either gable of the proposed dwelling which have internal stacks and are more efficient than external stacks.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The provision of a cottage style dwelling would positively enhance the character of the conservation area, the setting of the listed building, would not be unneighbourly or cause highway problems. The loss of the large area of the garden of the Public House or the parking facilities when other parking facilities are in easy walking distance would not in itself undermine the long term viability of the public House and would be acceptable in my view.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**
- 1. Commencement 3 years.**
 - 2. Samples of all materials.**

3. Use of plain clay roof tiles for roof.

4. Prior to the occupation of the proposed dwellings the parking and turning areas for the dwellings and the garages shall be provided and shall be constructed, laid out, surfaced (bound material), drained and completed, and shall be retained unobstructed except for the parking and turning of vehicles at all times.

5. Prior to the occupation of the proposed dwelling the means of access onto Bridge End for the dwelling is to be formed, laid out and constructed to the approval of the Highway Authority strictly in accordance with the highway authority's specifications and that all ancillary works specified shall be undertaken.

6. Exclude Permitted Development – extensions, alterations and new windows.

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

8. Windows, external doors and rainwater goods to specification.

9. Slab levels.

10. Windows in flank walls to be obscure glazed.

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