

APPLICATION NO.	P07/W0875
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	31.07.2007
PARISH	CHOLSEY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs Pat Dawe Ms Felicity Aska
APPLICANT	Mrs Freeman, Mrs Kinnersly & Mr C Boshier
SITE	The Meadow Land off Papist Way & Reading Road Cholsey
PROPOSAL	Change of use of former builders storage yard to residential with the erection of 4 no.2 bed dwellings 4 no.3 bed dwellings, 2 no.2 bed flats and 3 no.1 bed flats. New access.
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	459432185868
OFFICER	Mr M.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Cholsey Parish Council.

2.0 THE SITE

- 2.1 The site, which extends to some 0.26 hectares is shown on the **attached** Ordnance Survey extract. It lies at the junction of Papist Way with Reading Road in Cholsey. The site is generally level with a hardened earth base and is in use as a builders yard for low key storage for building materials and site huts. There are some storage silos for sand and gravel with retaining walls approximately 1.5 metres in height. Otherwise, the site is clear of buildings. In addition, the site includes a portion of land to the rear of Nos 132 and 134 Papist Way currently in use as a garden area in association with those properties. The two road frontages of the site presently accommodate a substantial hedge and public views of the site do not reveal the extent of the storage behind. The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.2 The site has been in use in association with the adjoining builders business for a considerable number of years.
- 2.3 Adjoining the site in Papist Way are a line of terraced properties constructed at the turn of the last century. Immediately to the south of the site, in a backland location, is an existing builders yard including a number of substantial workshop buildings. The frontage contains Victorian/Edwardian properties which front onto Reading Road. Opposite the site in Reading Road, is Fairmile Hospital, and associated

buildings.

3.0 THE APPLICATION

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a new access onto Papist Way and the construction of thirteen new dwellings. Eleven of them are in the form of a terrace fronting onto Reading Road and Papist Way with vehicular access obtained from the rear of the properties. In addition, a semi-detached pair of properties is proposed on the garden land to the rear of Nos 132 and 134 Papist Way. The scheme provides a mixture of two storey properties including 4, 2-bed dwellings, 4, 3-bed dwellings, 2, two-bed flats and 3, 1-bed flats. A total of 21 parking spaces is proposed in a parking court to the rear of the properties.
- 3.2 A design and access statement was submitted with the application and is **attached** to this report. It includes proposals for energy efficiency and water conservation. Reduced copies of the layout and elevations are **attached** to this report.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P05/W0472 was an application for 9 new dwellings on the site which was refused by Planning Committee on 15 June 2005. A copy of the decision notice is **attached** to this report. Concerns were:

- i. The site was an employment use and insufficient efforts had been made to market the site,
- ii. The design was considered to be inappropriate
- iii. No offer was made for the payment of contributions towards infrastructure; and
- iv. No provision was made for affordable housing

4.2 P07/W0016 was submitted earlier in the year for a similar mix of dwellings to the current scheme. It included a feature building at the apex of the site including a round tower. Following representations from the Cholsey Parish Council against the design of the tower, the application was withdrawn prior to determination on 5 April this year.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 Cholsey Parish Council - Objection – they consider it is an overdevelopment of the site, they have expressed concerns about the access with insufficient turning areas and it is close to a bus stop.
- SODC Housing Enabling Manager - No objection provided affordable housing provision is made.
- SODC Conservation Officer (Design) - Acceptable in principle requires materials and window specifications.
- SODC - No objection.

Environmental
Protection Team

OCC (Highways) - No objection.

OCC Developer
Funding Officer - Requires funding for education, libraries, waste management,
museum resource centre and social and healthcare
provision.

Police Architectural
Design Advisor - No objection.

Neighbour (1) - Objection – Concerns about the loss of employment land, the
design and layout of the development, the lack of car parking,
the lack of any comprehensive development for the
remaining part of the builders yard and access.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:

G2 – Protect district from adverse development

G6 – Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings

C1 – Development would have adverse impact on landscape character

C2 – Harm to the AONB

D1 – Principles of good design

D2 – Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D4 – Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

D8 – Conservation and efficient use of energy

D10 – Waste Management

H4 – Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

H7 – Mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet district need

H8 – Density of housing development in and outside town centres

H9 – Provision of affordable housing

E6 – Loss of employment uses

EP6 – Sustainable drainage

EP7 – Impact on ground water resources

EP8 – Contaminated land

PPS1 – General policies and principles

PPG3 – Housing

PPS7 – Rural areas

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The principal planning considerations in respect of this application:

- i. Is housing acceptable in principle?
- ii. Loss of employment/open storage
- iii. Design and layout
- iv. Impact on neighbours
- v. Affordable housing and mix
- vi. Access and parking issues
- vii. Infrastructure

Is housing acceptable in principle?

6.2 The site lies within the well defined confines of existing built development at Cholsey, which is a settlement with an adequate range of facilities. There is a shop and public house nearby although the other facilities of Cholsey are more distant. Policy H4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan permits developments of up to about 0.5 hectares and, as such the principle of development on this site is acceptable in accordance with housing policies, subject to the following criteria.

- i. The site is not an important space
- ii. The design is satisfactory
- iii. The character of the area is not affected
- iv. There are no other objections
- v. If backland, no problems are created

Loss of employment/open storage

6.3 Policy E6 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan requires the retention of land or buildings in employment or service trade uses. This is to maintain a reasonable balance of employment and housing uses within settlements, which then reduces travel to work distances. However, the policy makes it clear that it cannot be used to maintain sites operating at a loss. The applicant has advised that the site has been advertised for sale for a period of at least a year and there would appear to be no demand for an employment site in this particular location. In terms of people employed at the site, the main part of the builders yard and consequently the employment use, will be retained. It is quite apparent, that no people are directly employed as a result of the low key open storage which currently occurs at the site. The applicant has advised, that in the past, Boshers

kept their own building supplies on site. With changes to the building industry over the last 20 years, most materials are now delivered from a builders merchants direct to site. The land the subject of the current application has been used for storage of excess materials from sites.

- 6.4 It has been offered for sale for a period in excess of 12 months with no success. The application site is not fundamental to the continuation of the remaining builders yard. Approval of this application therefore, would not result in the loss of employment opportunities in Cholsey.

Is the design and layout compatible with its surroundings

- 6.5 Much of the surrounding development is Victorian and Edwardian terraced and semi-detached properties. Many were built at the time of the construction of the Fairmile Hospital for use by the relevant health authority. There is an architectural cohesion about the whole area. The application site is not considered to be an important open space, although the frontage hedge is an important local feature.
- 6.6 As has been demonstrated by the previous applications on the site, it is proving difficult to get a layout which 'turns the corner' in a satisfactory fashion. It is considered to be important that the development does not turn its back on Papist Way and Reading Road. However, frontage development would not be appropriate given the difficulties of achieving satisfactory vehicular access. Officers consider that the layout which has now been submitted, does, visually, give frontage development and turns the corner in an appropriate fashion. The proposed layout as indicated on layout plan BS094/52 is considered acceptable in relation to the existing development in the area and by giving a frontage to Reading Road/Papist Way, would enhance the area.
- 6.7 There is an architectural unity about the type and style of development now proposed and the concave curve at the apex of the site allows a feature building at the junction without it being over dominant or fussy. Some mutual overlooking of the new properties would occur but it is considered that the angle is sufficiently acute to not be an overriding consideration.
- 6.8 The buildings have been designed to be energy efficient and the applicant proposes the use of photovoltaic cells and solar panels on the south facing roofslopes, which will not be prominent in views into the site.
- 6.9 Taken overall, it is considered that, with the choice of appropriate materials and window details, the development will reinforce local distinctiveness and, with the retention of the frontage hedge, the development will be successfully integrated into its surroundings within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Impact on neighbours

- 6.10 The distances involved to existing surrounding properties, that the development is unlikely to result in an unneighbourly form of development sufficient to justify a refusal of planning permission.

Affordable housing and housing mix

- 6.11 Policy H9 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan requires 40% of the units to be affordable. At the time of drafting this report, an appropriate Section 106 agreement or unilateral undertaking has not been completed. However, the applicant has indicated a willingness to enter into a Section 106 agreement to

secure 5 affordable units (Plots 4 to 8 at the apex of the site) and negotiations are continuing with the applicant and the Housing Enabling Manager to secure compliance with the policy.

- 6.12 In terms of the housing mix, Policy H7 seeks to secure a preponderance of 1 and 2 bed dwellings rather than 4 and 5 bed dwellings. As can be seen above, the proposals are for 3, 1-bed units, 6, 2-bed units and 4, 3-bed units. It is considered that this mix would assist in meeting the local housing need in compliance with Policy H7.

Highways and parking

- 6.13 The Highway Authority has examined the proposals very carefully and has raised no objection. The proposed new access will be a sufficient distance from the Reading Road/Papist Way junction to not result in confusing traffic movements. Although there is an existing bus stop close to the new access, it is not considered that this in itself would justify a refusal of planning permission. The vision splays will require the setting back of the existing hedgerow. It is considered that the replanting of this should be secured through an appropriate condition. The access and parking area has been designed to take dustbin lorries and, although it will involve tarmac, officers consider that it is sufficiently sinuous to not detract from the visual amenity of the area.
- 6.14 Twenty one parking spaces are proposed which are considered adequate for the type of development in accordance with Policy T1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Infrastructure

- 6.13 At the time of writing this report, no agreements are in place concerning the provision of infrastructure. However, negotiations are well advanced in respect of the requirements of the Developer Funding Officer of the County Council to secure the contributions towards education, libraries, museums and social and healthcare provision.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 There is no objection in principle to development of site, in accordance with housing and employment policies of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The design and layout of the proposals are considered satisfactory in relation to the surroundings, the housing mix is acceptable and the developer will be making appropriate contributions towards affordable housing and other infrastructure. The development otherwise complies with the provisions of the Development Plan.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **It is recommended that the grant of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 planning obligation with the County Council to ensure infrastructure payments are made towards education, libraries, waste management, a museum resource centre and social and healthcare provision and with the District Council to ensure 40% of the development is affordable housing and the following**

conditions:

- 1. Commencing date 3 years**
- 2. Samples of all materials**
- 3. Windows and external doors to specification**
- 4. Landscaping scheme to include the provision of a new hedge on the northern boundary**
- 5. Protect hedgerow**
- 6. Surface water drainage scheme**
- 7. Foul drainage scheme**
- 8. Scheme for energy and water conservation to be generally in accordance with the design and access statement**
- 9. No construction works outside the hours of 07.30 – 18.00 Monday to Fridays and 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturdays. No work on Sundays or Bank Holidays**
- 10. Scheme for lighting**
- 11. Measures to control contamination**
- 12. If contamination found scheme for remediation**
- 13. Layout parking areas**
- 14. Estate road specification**
- 15. Scheme for rubbish collection**

In the event that the required legal agreements are not in place by 29 October 2007, then planning permission should be refused for the following reasons:

- 1. That the development will place additional strain on existing community infrastructure contrary to Policy D10 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011**
- 2. That the development fails to make any provision for affordable**

housing contrary to Policy H9 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

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