

## REPORT 4

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	P07/E1323 and P07/E1324/LB
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	Full and Listed Building
<b>REGISTERED</b>	18.10.2007
<b>PARISH</b>	Thame
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Mr David Dodds Mrs Ann Midwinter
<b>APPLICANT SITE</b>	Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd 13 Priest End, Thame
<b>PROPOSALS</b>	Demolition of outbuilding. Conversion of existing buildings, including single storey extensions to annex building and ground floor apartment, to provide a total of 5 residential units. Alterations to garden wall.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	Drawing numbers O.297.PH.PL.02 A; PL.04 A; PL.05 A; and PL.10. Arboricultural Method Statement.
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	470194/206200
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mr T Wyatt

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) 1.2 comprises an existing building (13 Priest End) already converted to three self contained units but currently vacant, and single storey structures extending to the rear, which bound a small courtyard area accessed via Oxford Road. The site lies immediately adjacent to the former Rycotewood College site, which is being redeveloped to provide 98 units of residential accommodation. The site lies within the Thame Conservation Area.

### 2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal seeks planning permission and listed building consent for various works to facilitate the provision of five units of residential accommodation. The proposed works are outlined below.

- Demolition of a detached wooden shed within the garden area of 13 Priest End. The shed has a footprint of approximately 28 m<sup>2</sup> and a volume of approximately 75 m<sup>3</sup>.

- The shed would effectively be replaced by a single storey brick built extension to the side of Number 13 Priest End, which would provide a kitchen and dining area to the two bedroom ground floor flat. The extension would be 5.8 metres wide, 3.8 metres deep and 4 metres high.
- The roofspace of 13 Priest End is to be converted to form a second bedroom and ensuite bathroom to the first floor flat. As part of the loft conversion, 3 rooflights would be inserted in the rear roofslope of the building.
- The existing single storey building attached to the rear of 13 Priest End would be converted to form 2 two bed units. To enable the provision of such accommodation, an extension would be constructed to the south west elevation of the building running along the full length of the building, which is 20 metres. The extension would increase the depth of the building by 3.5 metres and would extend to a height of 2.7 metres. The extension would be contemporary in design with a single ply membrane flat roof. The external walls would consist of render and larch timber horizontal boards.
- An existing barn running along the rear boundary of the site would be converted to a 2 bed unit. The largely open frontage of the barn would be infilled with glazing panels whilst a new dormer window would be constructed in the end elevation of the building facing south west.
- The development would be served by four parking spaces within the courtyard area to serve the converted barn and the two flats within 13 Priest End. Four further parking spaces would be provided outside the courtyard on an area of land immediately to the north of the development. Access to these spaces would be via the entrance to the Rycotewood College development, and pedestrian access would be provided into the courtyard area of the site through a timber gate.

## 2.2

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

## 3.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **Thame Town Council** – The Town Council considers that the application should be refused due to overdevelopment, traffic generation and not being sympathetic to the character of the area.

3.2 **Thame Conservation Area Advisory Committee** – There are concerns regarding the increase in vehicular activity especially as the vehicle volumes may clash with the adjoining Rycotewood College development.

3.3 **Conservation Officer** – No objections

**English Heritage** – No comments

3.4

**OCC Highways Liaison Officer** – The parking and access arrangements are deemed to be acceptable. No objections are raised subject to conditions to ensure that the access and parking are provided prior to the first occupation of the

3.5 dwellings. In addition a financial contribution of £3000 is requested towards public transport infrastructure.

**Forestry Officer** – No objections subject to conditions.

3.6

**OCC Archaeologist** – The proposal does not appear to affect any presently known archaeological sites. However, if archaeological finds occur during construction, the applicant should notify the County Archaeologist.

3.7

**Neighbours** – One letter of support has been received. The scheme will bring back into beneficial use a derelict barn that it deteriorating and becoming an eyesore.

3.8

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P07/E0770/CA - Demolition of annexe wing and outbuilding. Refusal of Conservation Area Consent on 9 August 2007.

P07/E0717 - Demolition of annex wing and outbuildings. Erection of two terraced cottages, conversion of barn to dwelling. Ground floor extension to existing dwelling, skylights in loft conversion to 1st floor apartment. Erect new garden wall. Refusal of Planning Permission on 9 August 2007. This application was refused for the following reasons:

‘The application site lies in a prominent position within the Thame Conservation Area. The proposed development, due to its siting, size, design, bulk and massing would result in a form of development that would fail to respect the character and appearance of the street scene, the adjacent built form and the wider conservation area. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies G2, G6, CON6, CON7, D1 and H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2000 and PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS3: Housing, and PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

From the available evidence, it is the Local Planning Authority's opinion that the

buildings within the site are listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of the principal listed building known as Rycotewood College. No justification for the demolition of the curtilage listed buildings or for works to the retained buildings has been provided. In the absence of such justification, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CON1, CON2, CON3, and CON5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, and guidance contained within PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

4.3 The development fails to provide appropriate off-site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of the development on local infrastructure, services, or amenities. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy D11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.'

4.4

A copy of the plans associated with this development are **attached** as Appendix C.

As well as the above recent history, the site has formed part of the wider Rycotewood College site in respect of several applications relating to the educational use of the site. As such it does appear that the site has had a strong functional connection to the former college in the past.

## 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
- G3 – Infrastructure and Service Provision
- T1 – Sustainable Travel
- T2 – Car Parking
- T8 – Development Proposals
- EN4 – Historic and Cultural Heritage
- 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
- G6 – Promoting Good Design
- CON2 & 3 – Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings
- CON5 – Setting of Listed Buildings
- 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
- D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design
  
- D10 – Waste Management
- H4 – Towns and Larger Villages Outside the Green Belt
- T1 & T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments
- THA4 – Rycotewood College

### 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 AND LISTED BUILDING ISSUES

### 6.1 The issues that are relevant to this application are:

1. The principle of the development
2. The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
3. The impact on neighbouring amenity
4. The impact on the listed buildings
5. Highway considerations
6. Impact on adjacent trees
7. Other material considerations

#### The Principle of the Development

6.2 The application site is located within the built up area of Thame where the principle of new residential development is broadly acceptable with regard to Policy H4 of the SOLP. Policy H7 of the SOLP requires that 45% of units in schemes of two or more units are provided as two bed units. In this case, the proposal consists of 5 two bed units. The number of proposed units is under the threshold for the provision of affordable housing.

### 6.3

The site is in a highly sustainable location close to the amenities and services within the centre of Thame. In light of this the site should in theory be developed to

its maximum potential in the interests of the efficient use of brownfield land. In this regard, the proposal represents a density of approximately 60 dwellings per hectare, which is acceptable in principle providing that the development respects the various constraints upon the site, which are discussed below.

#### 6.4 The Impact of the Development on the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

The site lies in a prominent street frontage position within the Thame Conservation Area. Policy CON7 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that all development within conservation areas conserves, or where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area. This requirement is reinforced by the general requirements of Policy H4 where it states that the design, height, scale and materials of development should be in keeping with the surroundings.

#### 6.5

The appearance of the main front elevation of 13 Priest End would not be affected by the proposals apart from through the demolition of an existing detached wooden garden shed, and its replacement with a single storey side extension. The extension would be visible above the high brick wall forming the boundary between the former Rycotewood College site and Oxford Road, however, only the roof of the extension would be visible and as such the extension would not be a prominent feature in the street scene. The existing shed is of no architectural or historic merit and its loss is not detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area. Indeed, the extension would project a lesser distance from the side elevation of 13 Priest End than the shed and would be sited slightly further back from Oxford Road, and as such would have a lesser impact and be more subservient to the main building of 13 Priest End than the existing structure.

#### 6.6

Unlike the previous refused application, which sought to demolish the annex building and replace it with a substantial two storey building, the current proposal seeks to retain the existing annex but extend it to the rear (south west). The extension would be of a contemporary design, which would clearly contrast with the existing building, which is of traditional construction. It is not considered that such a contrast would be detrimental to the building or the surrounding area. The design of the extension would complement the existing and allow the original form of the building to remain clearly evident and would also enable the extension to be kept low in height with a height of only 2.7 metres compared to the ridge height of the existing building at slightly under 5 metres. The low height of the extension would mean that it would not be visible from Oxford Road.

#### 6.7

The extension to the annex building would be visible from the access road into the Rycotewood College site, which will serve 98 dwellings. However, a large open grassed area exists between this access road and the site, and it is proposed to construct a 1.8 metre high brick wall to define the south western boundary of the site. This wall will obscure a large part of the extension and allow the roof of the existing building to remain the dominant feature. As such the extension would not have an adverse impact on public views from within the former Rycotewood College site.

The works to the barn at the rear of the site are generally internal with the main alterations to the external appearance being the insertion of a dormer window in the south west elevation, the insertion of 4 rooflights in the rear roofslope and infill glazing to the front elevation. The building is largely screened from views from Oxford Road by the existing buildings on the site, and only a fleeting glimpse of the building is possible when passing the vehicular access into the site. The proposed works to the building are considered to be sympathetic to the form and character of the building and do not result in the over-domestication of the building.

Overall the proposals represent a sensitive conversion of existing unused buildings that would preserve the integrity, and value of the buildings to the Thames Conservation Area and the wider surroundings. In this regard the proposal has addressed the first refusal reason attached to application P07/E0717.

### The Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

No objections from neighbouring occupiers have been received, and indeed one letter of support has been forthcoming. The site adjoins one dwelling to the north east, 14 Priest End. This dwelling has a relatively short rear garden that is bounded by the site on two sides. The parking and turning area of the development lies adjacent to the garden area and the small courtyard garden attached to the front of the barn conversion to the rear of the site adjoins the rear boundary of the garden.

The proposed parking area is already used for this purpose, and indeed has had an intensive use in the past with regard to the previous educational use of the site. It is not considered therefore, that the parking and turning area would result in a material increase in noise and disturbance to the neighbouring occupiers. The wall bounding the garden area of 14 Priest End is to be raised from 2.1 metres to 2.4

metres as part of the proposal. Although this increase in height is not considered to be strictly necessary, it will help to screen the development from the garden area of Number 14 Priest End. In addition, the height of the wall would prevent overlooking into the adjoining garden area from the garden area or ground floor windows associated with the barn conversion. The only additional views into the garden area of Number 14 would be from an existing dormer opening at first floor level in the front elevation of the barn. This opening would serve a landing area and would only provide oblique and infrequent views into the neighbouring garden. However, given the proximity of the window to the garden area (5 metres), it is considered appropriate to require this window to be glazed with obscure glass. There would be no material increase in overlooking from the rear of 13 Priest End into the garden of 14 Priest End.

The converted barn lies immediately adjacent to a terrace of new dwellings associated with the redevelopment of Rycotewood College. The dimensions of the barn are not being increased, save for the proposed dormer window in the south west elevation, and as such the development would cause no additional overshadowing or overbearing effects compared to the existing situation. However, four rooflights are proposed in the rear roofslope of the barn conversion. These windows would relate to bedroom and bathroom accommodation and should be obscurely glazed by condition. The development would not adversely affect any other nearby existing or future occupiers.

#### The Impact on the Listed Buildings

None of the buildings within the site are listed in their own right. However, at the time that the main Rycotewood College building was listed (20 May 1989), it is apparent that the site was in ancillary use to Rycotewood College. As such it is considered that the buildings within the site are protected through the Grade II listing attached to Rycotewood College. Indeed, the second refusal reason attached to application P07/E0717 relates to this issue and the lack of justification for the demolition of the existing buildings.

Unlike the previous proposal, the only building now proposed for demolition is a wooden shed of no apparent historic or architectural interest. The existing buildings are to be retained and sympathetically adapted for residential accommodation by retaining the basic integrity of the form and appearance of the buildings. The Conservation Officer has not raised an objection to the proposals. The buildings no longer have a direct relationship with the principal listed building, and are at some distance (30+ metres) from this building. The buildings face onto a small courtyard with the main frontage being directly onto Oxford Road. As such the main elevations of the buildings face away from the Rycotewood College



building further diluting the visual and functional relationship with the main listed building.

The need to preserve the setting of the main listed building is an important consideration with regard to Policy CON5 of the SOLP. In this regard the approved  
6.16 redevelopment of the College site retains the open grassed areas between the front of the main listed building and Oxford Road. The setting is further enhanced by the two lodges and brick walling either side of the vehicular entrance. The proposed development would not intrude into the open area to the front of the main listed building and would not affect the boundary walling to Oxford Road. The only significant external additions to the buildings are the extensions to the side of Number 13 Priest End and its annex. These buildings are entirely subordinate to the existing development, and would not result in an overdevelopment of the site, or the intrusion of the development into the open setting of the main listed building.

#### 6.17 Highway considerations

The development would utilise an existing access into the courtyard area from Oxford Road. Parking (four spaces) for Plots 1, 2, and 5 would be provided in the courtyard. The parking spaces for Plots 3, and 4 would be provided on an area of  
6.18 existing grass immediately adjacent to the garden area of Plot 4. This parking space would be accessed via the existing entrance serving the Rycotewood College site. It is not considered that the net increase of 3 dwellings as provided for by this application would result in a material increase in traffic generation to the site, particularly when compared to the likely traffic generated by 98 dwellings on the Rycotewood College site and the traffic likely to have been generated by the former educational use of the site.

#### 6.19

The Highway Authority considers that the level and location of the parking and turning areas are acceptable in relation to the development. Conditions would be imposed to ensure that the parking and turning areas are provided prior to the occupation of the dwellings.

The Highway Authority requested a sum of £3000 towards public transport  
6.20 infrastructure. This contribution has now been paid to the County Council and a Unilateral Undertaking has been completed to this effect.

## Impact on adjacent trees

### 6.21

There is an existing yew tree within the main Rycotewood College site, which is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order, but is protected due to its position within the Thame Conservation Area. The proposed parking for Plots 3 and 4 would be in close proximity to this tree and the Forestry Officer raised concerns regarding the impact of the car parking surface on the root protection area of the tree. Further concerns were raised in respect of the original plans in relation to the proposed brick wall on the south western boundary of the site again due to the impact on the root area of the tree.

Amended details have been submitted to show the replacement of the wall with a close board fence where it lies within the root protection area of the yew tree. An arboricultural method statement has also been submitted to outline special 'no dig' construction details for surfaces within root protection areas.

### 6.22

## Other Material Considerations

Private gardens are being provided to Plots 1, 3, 4 and 5. These garden areas are at least 50m<sup>2</sup> with the exception of the garden area of Plot 5, which is approximately 40m<sup>2</sup>. These gardens, which are well defined by brick walling and close board fencing are considered acceptable for the size of dwellings proposed having regard to guidance contained within the SODG. No garden area is being provided for Plot 2, however, it is not considered that this is unacceptable as the site lies close to the extensive amenities within Thame and within reasonable walking distance of open areas.

The proposal offers little scope for large scale energy and water conservation measures as it relates to the conversion of existing buildings in a sensitive historic setting with little external space. However, some sustainability measures can still be provided in relation to the dwellings such as flow reducing taps, energy efficient white goods, cycle storage provision and recycling provision. A condition can be imposed to require details of such measures to be agreed prior to any development commencing.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as the proposal would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the site and the Thame Conservation Area, to the historic or architectural interest or setting of the listed buildings, to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 P07/E1323**

**That planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement within 3 years**
- 2. Samples of external facing materials and brick walls to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
- 3. Sample panel of brickwork for walls to be provided on site and approved prior to the relevant part of the works commencing**
- 4. New windows to be painted timber**
- 5. Removal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings**
- 6. Obscure glazing to first floor windows in the north west and south east elevations of Plot 5. No additional windows at first floor level in the north west or south east elevations of Plot 5.**
- 7. Tree protection details to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
- 8. Arboricultural method statement for works within root protection areas to be submitted to and approved prior to development commencing**
- 9. Details of new hedge planting on western boundary to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
- 10. Parking and turning in accordance with approved drawings prior to occupation**
- 11. Details of bins/recycling to be and submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
- 12. Details of sustainability measures to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**

**P07/E1324/LB**

1. **Commencement three years**
2. **Samples of external facing materials to be submitted and approved prior to works commencing**
3. **Sample panel of brickwork for walls to be provided on site and approved prior to the relevant part of the works commencing**
4. **Details of any flues/vents to be submitted and approved prior to works commencing**
5. **Finishes to match adjacent works**
6. **New windows to be painted timber**
7. **Adequate support to the buildings during the works**

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