

SUBJECT **COMMITTEE SITE VISIT REPORTS** **ITEM 7**
 2 JULY 2008
 Attendance – Verbally updated at Committee

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P08/W0379
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	07.04.2008
PARISH	ASTON UPTHORPE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Patrick Greene
APPLICANT	Mr David Pearce
SITE	Frimley Stable Thorpe Street Aston Upthorpe
PROPOSAL	Refurbishment of stable yard and ancillary buildings including erection of new dwelling.
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	455302/186400
OFFICER	Mr M.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

1.2 At the last meeting, Members resolved to visit the site prior to determination.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The site, which is identified on the **attached** plan, lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area. To the north and east of the site are a number of residential properties including 5 Hagbourne Road and Edlins which are both listed buildings. To the west of the site is a treed driveway leading to Blewburton Hall, a substantial property on the edge of the settlement. To the south are a variety of residential properties.

2.2 The site presently contains a range of stables and a variety of other buildings which have previously been used for food storage and tack rooms. There are also a number of timber barns and other buildings. Although all the structures contain a variety of building materials, they are mostly timber under clay tiled roofs although there are also some clay pantiles and slate. At the front (east) of the site there is a substantial brick and tile building which has a lawful use as a dwelling.

2.3 The road network in the area is mostly narrow village roads. The site slopes upwards from the road towards the treed avenue at the rear of the site. There are a few shrubby trees on the site which is mostly covered in concrete hardstandings with some grass towards the western and southern edges.

2.4 There are currently two access points to the site. To the north the access is through a yard area which contains an old petrol pump and then continues between existing

stables. To the south is the second access which is used jointly with a residential property unconnected with the application.

- 2.5 The site had previously been used as a racing stables but has been unused for a number of years. None of the buildings is in particularly good condition although none is yet derelict.

3.0 THE APPLICATION

- 3.1 The application proposes the demolition of a number of storage buildings and barns on the site together with the rebuilding of some of the stables with refurbishment of others. When completed, there would be 28 stables, a foaling bay, a hay and feed store, a residential unit for trainers accommodation, the refurbishment of the existing dwelling on the site to be used as a mess room for stable lads and the erection of a substantial new dwelling for the owner and family.

- 3.2 The stables and other accommodation directly associated with the horses, would be in the general location of existing stables and other buildings. The trainers accommodation would be in a new brick and tile building to the west of the site some 10 metres by 7 metres. The new principal dwelling on the site would be of traditional two-storey brick and tile construction in the form of three closely linked blocks. It would have a footprint of some 190 sq.m. and a total maximum spread across the site of some 26 metres. An area of flat roof is proposed in the middle of the building to accommodate photovoltaic cells. A basement is also proposed under a proportion of the building to accommodate plant and machinery in association with proposed groundwater heat pumps. A garden area and adjoining paddock to contain a relocated horse exerciser is also proposed. The overall height of the main dwelling would be some 7.2 metres.

- 3.3 Copies of relevant plans and elevations are **attached** to this report.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 Aston Upthorpe Parish Council - Objection (copy of representations **attached**). They consider the scale of the principal dwelling is excessive and are concerned about later conversions.
- OCC (Highways) - No objection. They acknowledge that existing accesses have inadequacies but justify no objection on the basis of the current usage of the site.
- OCC (County Archaeologist) - No objection.
- SODC – Sustainability Officer - Welcomes the energy conservation measures proposed.
- SODC – Countryside Officer - No objection. Condition required concerning bats.
- SODC – Environmental Health - No objection. Condition required concerning contamination.

- Neighbours (4)
- Object – they are concerned about horse box use on narrow streets and the adequacy of the access, they have concerns about possible future developments at the site including the use of the existing dwelling and the size of the principal dwelling on the site.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 There have been a number of recent applications submitted seeking permission for similar developments on the site. Of most relevance is application P07/W0513. This sought planning permission for identical conversions and rebuilding of existing stables, foaling bay, hay and feed store, trainers accommodation and mess room. It also proposed a three storey property which had a similar overall footprint of that now proposed. However, the overall height was 1 metre higher and the basement was a full floor containing bedroom and other accommodation which required ground moulding in order to give access and light to it. It was of a more modern design incorporating two end pavilions linked with a curved flat roofed structure. The applicant exercised his right of appeal against the refusal of planning permission and the decision notice dismissing the appeal was dated 20 December 2007 and is **attached** to this report. This decision accepted the principle of redeveloping the site for the keeping of horses, the proposed trainers dwelling and the conversion of the existing dwelling to a mess room. However, as can be seen from the decision notice, the Inspector at para 4 considered that the principal dwelling then proposed would be ‘sufficiently intrusive to harm the ... conservation area and that, as such, it would not preserve or enhance the latter's character or appearance’. A copy of the elevations of the principal dwelling then proposed are also **attached** to this report.

6.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 6.1 The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:

- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G6 - Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings
- H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- H5 - Housing sites in larger villages in the Green Belt
- H6 - Restraint on new houses in the countryside
- D1 - Principles of good design
- D6 - Community safety
- D8 - Conservation and efficient use of energy
- CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area
- C2 - Harm to the AONB
- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- R8 - Protection of existing public right of way
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
- EP6 - Sustainable drainage
- EP7 - Impact on ground water resources

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be:

- i) Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and visual amenity of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- iii) Impact on neighbours
- iv) Highways
- v) Energy conservation and use of materials
- vi) Waste disposal
- vii) Ecology

i) Principle

7.2 Officers consider that the appeal decision has established the principle of the development of the site. It should be noted however that since the submission of the previous application, the status of Aston Upthorpe has changed in that it is no longer an H5 settlement due to the loss of the post office. Consequently the settlement is not a sustainable location and Policy H6 would normally apply. However, given the history of this application and the fact that it is part of an overall scheme which would bring some acknowledged benefits to the area, your officers consider that it would not be reasonable to object on principle at the present time. This opinion could change with the passage of time, although it should be noted that this revised design was submitted within 4 months of the appeal decision.

ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and visual amenity of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

7.3 The refurbishment of the stables, the trainers accommodation and other ancillary works were accepted as being acceptable at the recent appeal. The Inspector dismissed the appeal because of the character and bulk of the principal dwelling then proposed. Consequently, officers consider that the main consideration in terms of design is in respect of the current proposal for the principal dwelling, having regard to Policies CON7 and C2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the comments made by the appeal Inspector. Although of a similar footprint to that which has been dismissed, what is now proposed is of a more traditional design. The bulk and massing has been substantially reduced by a reduction in the height of 1 metre and the use of in effect three blocks of buildings which break up the elevations. The reduction in the height will be more noticeably than a simple 1 metre it suggests, given that the basement accommodation will not be living accommodation and therefore does not require the substantial ground remoulding which was required previously.

7.4 Any disbenefits of the new dwelling on the site have been balanced against the advantages of the refurbishment and renovation of the site and the improvements to the Conservation Area. Officers consider that these benefits do outweigh any disbenefits caused by the size and scale that the new dwelling maybe considered to create.

iii) Impact on neighbours

7.5 There will be a net reduction of footprint of existing buildings on the site and a net reduction in the number of horses capable of being accommodated. Given its existing usage and relationship to surrounding buildings, officers consider that a direct impact on adjoining owners of the building works proposed would not justify a refusal of planning permission. Whilst racing stables tend to start early in the morning and maybe have late arrivals of horses and horse boxes on racing days, officers consider that there would be a net reduction in such uses given the reduction in the number of horses to be kept at the site. Consequently, officers consider that there would be little direct impact on neighbours.

iv) Highways

7.6 It is acknowledged that the existing access are substandard in terms of vision, construction and drainage. The majority of roads within the area are narrow with blind bends and tight alignments. However, given the reduction in stables, it is likely to

involve a reduction in traffic movements from the proposed development. As such no highway objection is raised to the development.

v) Energy Efficiency

- 7.7 The applicant has proposed a number of energy conservation measures for the proposed new dwelling including photovoltaic cells, high levels of insulation and ground water heat pumps. Officers consider that these matters can be covered by a condition and represent an energy efficient dwelling in accordance with Policy D8 of the Local Plan.

vi) Waste Disposal

- 7.8 With the reduction in the number of horses, existing waste disposal arrangements should be adequate. A suitable condition would be required to ensure kerbside collection for domestic waste.

vii) Ecology

- 7.9 The Council's Countryside Officer is now satisfied that there is no evidence that bats are using the existing buildings. He has however recommended a condition requiring the development to be implemented in accordance with the submitted scheme of mitigation and enhancement.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The scheme dismissed at appeal in December 2007 (P07/W0513) is relevant in the consideration of this application. The Inspector dismissed the appeal because of the character and bulk of the principal dwelling.
- 8.2 The principal dwelling on the site has been designed with a more traditional form reflecting its location and its bulk and massing has been reduced. With appropriate conditions, it is considered that the refurbishment of the existing site will represent an enhancement of the Conservation Area and will be in accordance with other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

1. **Commencement date 3 years**
2. **Samples of all new materials**
3. **Landscaping scheme**
4. **Lighting scheme**
5. **Cease residential use of existing dwelling**
6. **Bat mitigation**
7. **Scheme for surface water drainage**
8. **Foul drainage scheme**
9. **Contamination investigation**
10. **Contamination (remediation and investigation)**
11. **Sustainable method of construction**
12. **Refuse and recycling facilities**

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