
APPLICATION NO.	P09/W0092
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	12.02.2009
PARISH	WALLINGFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Imran Lokhon Mr Marcus Harris
APPLICANT	St Mirren Homes (Wallingford) LTD
SITE	Land and Garages at Croft Villas Wallingford
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing garages and erection of a single block of flats comprising 10 x 1 and 4 x 2 bed flats with 16 car spaces.
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	460278/189398
OFFICER	Mr M.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendations conflicts with the views of the Wallingford Town Council.
- 1.2 The site, which is identified on the **attached** plan extends to some 0.15 hectares and presently accommodates two separate blocks of garages erected in 1974. They are constructed in blockwork with flat sheeted roofs. They are currently in a poor state of repair and the forecourt to the garages are low grade tarmac. Some vandalism has occurred and the site has a very run down appearance. A lit and tarmaced surface public footpath runs along the site's northern and eastern boundaries. The footpath has a small grass verge and the tarmac surface is over 1 metre in width.
- 1.3 To the east of the site is Croft Villas, which are Victorian/Edwardian buildings lying within the Wallingford Conservation Area. The footpath, marks a very distinct change of character at the end of Croft Villas. All other surrounding development comprises 1960's and early 1970's housing estates with a mixture of flats and houses. Immediately to the south of the site is a tall, flat roofed telephone exchange constructed in the 1960's.
- 1.4 Access to the site is through the housing estate. Vehicular access through Croft Villas is not possible due to a line of bollards which have been in place for many years.

2.0 THE APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application proposes the demolition of the two blocks of garages and the erection of a single block of flats comprising 10 one-bedroomed flats and 4 two-bedroomed flats. The building would be three storey with a basement car park accommodating 15 parking spaces and an 11 space secure bicycle rack. A further 3 surface car parking spaces are proposed in front of the pumping station on the western side of the site.
- 2.2 The building would be 27.5 metres wide, 11.7 metres deep with a further single storey element 4.2 metres deep across the whole width of the rear. The total height above ground level would be 9.5 metres.
- 2.3 The elevations are proposed to be constructed principally in brick with contrasting brick quoin detailing and leaded roof bay windows at ground floor fronting onto Croft Villas. The eaves height is at a normal eaves height for a two storey property and the

roofspace accommodates further rooms served by dormers both front and rear. The roof is proposed to be tiled. Copies of the relevant elevations are **attached** to this report.

- 2.4 The application is also accompanied by a Sustainability Statement advising that the design will be such as to achieve Code Level 3 – Code for Sustainable Homes and a parking report on the existing garages which shows that only two of the existing garages are currently occupied with the cars. These are available to view on the Council's website.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Wallingford Town Council - Object. They consider it is an overdevelopment of the site.
- Neighbours (4) - Objection. They consider that it is an overdevelopment of the site, has an adverse impact on the adjoining Conservation Area, will compromise the privacy, space and light, will make more use of the existing road system and be generally out of keeping with the area.
- SODC Conservation Officer - Similar to appeal proposal therefore no objection.
- SODC Environmental Protection Officer - Requires conditions concerning contamination.
- OCC County Archaeologist - No objection but requires an archaeological watching brief.
- OCC Developer Funding Officer - Requires contributions for education, libraries, waste management, museum resource centre, social and healthcare provision and highways.
- Thames Valley Police - They have some detailed concerns.
- OCC (Highways) - No objection. They have submitted reasons why which are **attached** to the report.
- Thames Water - No objection.
- CPRE Rights of Way Officer - No objection although they comment that the footpath must be retained at all times.
- Monson - Requires surface water and foul drainage conditions with the existing foul drains clearly shown.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 In 2007 (P07/W0388) planning permission was granted for the clearance of the garages and the erection of a block of 10 flats. This permission would have required a footpath diversion to be undertaken in advance of any work starting. Later that year (P07/W1060) a further application was submitted for an identical building block. By altering the layout of the proposed surface parking however they were able to achieve this without requiring a footpath diversion. Planning permission was granted by decision notice dated 20 November 2007. Early in 2008 (P08/W0360) planning

permission was refused for a 28 bed care home. The applicant owned two adjoining properties and 25 Charter Way (next door to the present site) was to be used for staff and other ancillary accommodation. The application was refused as the District Council had concerns that it would represent an overdevelopment of the site, that there could be nuisance from the kitchen and result in an unneighbourly form of development. The applicant appealed that decision and it was granted by decision letter dated 8 December 2008 from the Planning Inspectorate. A copy of that decision notice is **attached** to this report. A further application (P08/W0729) sought planning permission for the erection of a two bed house in the form of an extension to 25 Charter Way. Planning permission was granted although it was recognised that it would be on land required as a waste storage area for the care home. It would not be possible to build this property if the care home was constructed because of condition 16 imposed by the Planning Inspector.

The appeal is a relevant planning consideration and below is a table giving comparative dimensions and other information relating to the history of the site detailed above.

	Width	Depth (excluding rear)	Height	Single storey depth	Distance of flank wall to 8 Croft Villas	Number of parking spaces
P07/W1060 10 flats	19.7m	11.6m	9.4m	4.3m	22.5m	18
P08/W0360 Care home allowed at appeal	28m	11.6m	9.4m	6.2m	15m	19 (plus use of garden of 25 Charter Way)
Current proposal	27.5m	11.7m	9.5m	4.2m	15m	18

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:

- G2 – Protect district from adverse development
- G5 – Best use of land/buildings in built up areas
- G6 – Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings
- CON7 – Proposals in a conservation area
- CON12– Archaeological field evaluation
- EP2 – Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP3 – Adverse affect by external lighting
- EP6 – Sustainable drainage
- EP7 – Impact on ground water resources
- D1 – Principles of good design
- D2 – Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 – Outdoor amenity area
- D4 – Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- D6 – Community safety
- D8 – Conservation and efficient use of energy
- D9 – Proposals for renewable energy
- D10 – Waste Management
- D11 – Infrastructure and services secured
- 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
- R2 – Provision of play areas on new housing development
- T1 – Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 – Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 In view of the planning history detailed above and to the development proposed, officers consider that issues of principle, housing mix, sustainability, drainage, crime prevention, protection of the footpath and waste disposal have already been considered and do not require further elaboration here.
- 6.2 The main issues in this case are considered to be:
- 1) Design
 - 2) Size, bulk and massing in comparison to its surroundings
 - 3) Impact on Conservation Area
 - 4) Amenity of prospective occupants
 - 5) Impact on neighbours
 - 6) Access and parking
 - 7) Infrastructure
- 6.3 i) Design
The approved schemes, particularly the care home allowed at appeal, are of relevance to the consideration of this application. **Attached** to this report are copies of the principal elevations of the design now proposed together with the same elevations for the care home granted at appeal. The appeal proposal included a substantial flat roofed area and the whole design was contrived to reduce the apparent height. The mansard type roof with its half hips have no precedent locally and officers consider would have resulted in a form of development out of keeping with its surroundings. The Appeal Inspector however, disagreed. The design proposed in this application is more appropriate within the context of the area in my view. It includes a pitched roof rather than a contrived pitch and the rooms in the roof result in dormers which are subservient in the roof rather than dominating. Many of the details have been taken from the Victorian/Edwardian properties adjoining although the style is clearly more modern. Given its location between a telephone exchange, somewhat indifferent 1960's and 70's housing and the Conservation Area, officers considered that the design is satisfactory.
- 6.4 ii) Size, bulk and massing
From the comparative table given above, it can be seen that this proposal compares favourably to that allowed at appeal. In respect of its bulk, because of the type of roof form proposed, it now will be less bulky than the mansard roof already approved. Therefore, officers consider that the size, bulk and massing is, on balance, satisfactory.
- 6.5 iii) Impact on Conservation Area
Policy CON7 suggests that development which lies outside a Conservation Area can still have an impact on its setting. In this particular case however, there is a very clear definition between the Conservation Area and the area outside. Given the existing garages, which are becoming increasingly derelict, officers consider that if anything, the development will enhance the Conservation Area because of the improvements of the quality of the buildings on the site.

- iv) Amenity of occupants
- 6.6 The Council would normally expect a minimum of 25 sq.m. of amenity space per unit. This would mean some 350 sq.m. Because of the underground parking, there is more space available which would be of better quality, than with the approved scheme of 10 flats, in that it would not be overlooking a parking court. The total amount of amenity space is some 428 sq.m.
- 6.7 Because of the ramp down to the underground car park, two of the units have a somewhat unfortunate aspect with bedrooms looking out onto the ramp with the block of flats being built over the top of them. The living areas of these units however have outlooks either front or rear and, on balance, officers consider that the lack of outlook from two of the bedrooms is insufficient grounds to justify a refusal of planning permission.
- v) Impact on neighbours
- 6.8 As can be seen from the comparison table officers consider that the impact of this development is less than that of the care home. Consequently, on balance, having regard to the appeal decision, it is considered that the impact on neighbours is insufficient to justify a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.9 The applicant has been able to achieve a development of higher density because of the formation of the underground car park. It is important to ensure that the ridge height is as shown on the submitted drawings and consequently a condition to ensure that the car parking is underground is essential to ensure that this occurs.
- vi) Access and parking
- 6.10 Policy D2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan requires adequate parking facilities to be provided. The existing garages have been surveyed and it would appear that there is little demand for them. Many have been vandalised. Only two of the garages are currently occupied by cars which could not be accommodated elsewhere. The applicant has indicated that two of the underground parking spaces would be allocated to the existing users.
- 6.11 The site lies in a highly sustainable location very close to the town centre of Wallingford. It would be feasible to occupy the flats without the need for the use of a car. In such locations, government advice is that parking standards should be lowered to discourage car usage. Seventeen spaces would be provided for the 14 flats. Although this is below standard, officers consider that because of its sustainable location, in this particular case, such provision is acceptable. In addition, on-street parking at this point should not cause difficulties as the road is a cul de sac.
- 6.12 The County Highway Officer has requested a number of conditions as set out in the recommendation and proper provision is made for secure cycle parking.
- vii) Infrastructure
- 6.18 In accordance with Policy D11, negotiations are well advanced in the preparation of appropriate legal agreements with the County Council to provide towards infrastructure as set out in the consultation responses section above. In respect of district contributions, negotiations are on-going in respect of payments towards outdoor and indoor sport, play areas, green space, safety and security and recycling.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The scheme allowed at appeal (see history) is relevant in the consideration of this application. The Inspector allowed the appeal and he considers that the scale, bulk and massing was in keeping with the surroundings and that the development was not unneighbourly. The present proposal is better in terms of its design and bulk, in my view.
- 7.2 The site lies within the well defined confines of built development at Wallingford where the principle of development is acceptable. With the attached conditions, the proposals represent an acceptable form of development and is otherwise in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **It is recommended that: i) subject to the prior completion of appropriate agreements with the County Council for payment to be made towards education, libraries, museum resource centre, social and health care and sustainable transport measures and with the District Council to provide contributions towards outdoor and indoor sport, play areas, green space, safety and security, recycling and community facilities, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencing date 3 years**
2. **Samples of all materials**
3. **Remove permitted development regarding insertion of additional windows**
4. **A scheme for the external lighting**
5. **Layout access to parking areas 1 – 3 including the provision of pedestrian vision splays**
6. **Prior to first occupation close existing access**
7. **Parking provision to be as shown**
8. **Scheme for landscaping**
9. **Surface water drainage scheme**
10. **Foul drainage scheme**
11. **No demolition or building works to take place other than between 0730 to 1800 Monday to Fridays and 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays with no works on Sundays or Bank Holidays**
12. **Sustainable methods of construction to Code Level 3**
13. **Archaeological watching brief**
14. **That the landscaping scheme referred to condition 8 shall include measures to design out crime**
15. **Contamination investigation**
16. **Contamination remediation and validation**
17. **Height of slab level to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development**
18. **fencing only in accordance with scheme approved by Condition 8**

In the event that the required Section 106 Agreements are not in place by 13 May 2009, then planning permission shall be refused because of the lack of infrastructure payments in accordance with Policy D11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan the development would therefore put additional strain local services.

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