

SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 8

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0246
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	23 March 2009
PARISH	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
WARD MEMBERS	Ms Joan Bland Miss Lorraine Hillier
APPLICANT	Mrs Patricia Christmas
SITE	Radnor Close, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2DA
PROPOSAL	Erection of automated entry gates on private no through road facing private owned drive
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	476212/182901
OFFICER	Mr P Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee because of a conflict between the Planning Manager’s recommendation and the views of Henley-on-Thames Council.

1.2 Radnor Close is a private residential development of 15 three-storey dwellings contained in 4 terraces arranged in a “U” shape around a communal parking and amenity area. Built on land to the rear of properties in Countess Gardens, the development is a typical 1970s construction, being of brick build with a simple tiled pitched roof and integral garages at ground floor level. The development is accessed from Finlay Drive, a private no through road that leads from New Street to Phyllis Court.

1.3 The main Henley Conservation Area does not include Radnor Close but immediately surrounds it on all sides.

1.4 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** at Appendix One.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of automated entry gates at the entrance of Radnor Close. These gates will be positioned next to the southern gable of the largest terrace in the close in the southeast corner of the development. They comprise of a pair of pedestrian access gates either side of the main vehicular access gates. Combined, these gates will span a width of around 10 metres and would have a height of 1.9 metres. Constructed in wrought iron, these gates will be automated with power supply runs located under the existing road surface to minimise excavation works.

2.2 This application follows an earlier withdrawn scheme for a larger set of entry gates that were proposed to be located much closer to the junction between Radnor Close and Finlay Drive. Officers objected to the design and forward location of these gates and this application is a result of further discussions between Officers and the applicant.

2.3 The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix Two.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – Recommends refusal, inappropriate development in or adjacent to a Conservation Area

Conservation Officer – No objections. Although this proposal represents an element of formality into an otherwise un-gated private drive, it is considered the scheme will not adversely impact the character and appearance of the setting of the Conservation Area

Forestry Officer – No objections

OCC Highways Officer – No objections

Neighbour Representations – Two letters of support received from Radnor Close residents, highlighting the improved security the gates will offer and that they will reduce speeding in a development populated by elderly residents and children

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P08/E1274 - Erection of automated entry gates on private no through road –
Withdrawn prior to determination in December 2009
P70/H0464 - 15 three storey residences with access – Approved October 1970

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – Policies G2, G6, C9, CON7, D1, D2 and T1
South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2008

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this application are:

- Whether the scale and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the development, the street scene and the adjacent Conservation Area.
- Whether the proposal will affect the health of nearby trees.
- Whether there will be any impact from the proposal on highway safety

Design Issues

6.2 Policy D1 states that the principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development. In objecting to the previous application, Officers considered the design of the gates to be inappropriately grand to serve a relatively modern development such as Radnor Close.

6.3 This second application has refined the design, resulting in a simpler style of gate that reflects the fenestration details found elsewhere in Radnor Close and in particular the iron surround to the balconies serving most of the properties. The gates have also been reduced in height and have been moved further back into the Close, nearer to the development they will serve. This has resulted in a much better visual relationship between the gates and the buildings beyond. The Radnor Close development has a

simple design that reflects the era in which it was built and Officers consider that the amended design of the gates is also simple and so more in keeping with its modern character.

- 6.4 Officers are mindful that Finlay Drive has an open character defined by grass verges with little street furniture. Thus, it is accepted that the proposed gates would introduce a formal boundary feature into an area where currently there are none. However, as the gates are now located adjacent to the southern gable of the largest terrace of the Radnor Close development, they are better related to the Close itself. The gates are set back over 10 metres from the junction with Finlay Drive, which Officers consider an acceptable distance. This setback, combined with a clear curve in the road, will ensure that the gates will only be clearly seen along a small stretch of the southern end of Finlay Drive. Officers therefore consider that the impact on the character of the overall street scene will be acceptable.
- 6.5 Policy CON7 states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would harm the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Henley Town Council has objected to this application, considering it inappropriate development adjacent to a Conservation Area. However, Officers do not consider that the gates would be unduly prominent in the surrounding area or would detract from its character. Finlay Drive is a private no through road, and so it is not somewhere that is frequently passed by the public. In addition, no views of the gate will be possible from New Street, due to the distances involved and the curve of the road, whilst beyond Radnor Close lays residential gardens and Rupert House School where public access is extremely limited. As such, Officers are satisfied that views of the gates looking out from within the Conservation Area will be limited to the short stretch of Finlay Drive already outlined. In such views, the gates would be seen against the Radnor Close development itself and would not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area

Impact on trees

- 6.6 Policy C9 states that any development that would cause the loss of landscape features, such as trees, will not be permitted. There are a number of fine trees that line Finlay Drive that contribute to the character of the street, and in particular, an attractive horse chestnut and maple lie close to the junction with Radnor Close and have significant amenity value. The position of the gates lies outside the root protection areas (RPA) of these trees and the applicant has confirmed that the power supply and service runs to the new gates would be laid under the existing tarmac. As such, no excavation within the RPA of any tree will be required to implement this proposal and Officers consider the impact on the health of these trees is acceptable.

Highway Safety Issues

- 6.7 Policy T1 aims to ensure a safe and accessible road network within the district. Two residents of Radnor Close have written to confirm their support of the scheme, with one making specific reference to the problems currently caused by speeding traffic along Finlay Drive. Officers consider that the gates will act in part as a traffic calming measure, forcing vehicles to slow down when entering and exiting Radnor Close. Furthermore, Officers are satisfied there will be no impact on the public highway network beyond Finlay Drive, with the junction with New Street being sufficiently far away to not be affected by the new gates.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal complies with the relevant Development Plan policies and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of its relationship to the character of the existing Radnor Close

development, the street scene and the surrounding Conservation Area. It is also acceptable in terms of its impact on the health of adjacent mature trees and safety in the wider highway network.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Planning Permission subject to:

- 1. Commencement three years.**
- 2. Gates to be constructed in wrought iron and powder coated black**

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