
APPLICATION NO.	P09/W0440
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	01.06.2009
PARISH	DIDCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Lyndon Elias Ms Jane Murphy
APPLICANT	Chesside Homes Limited
SITE	Land adj to Marsh Bridge Cottages Didcot
PROPOSAL	Erection of 14 residential units with associated parking, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage (As amended by drawing numbers 05117 - 507B, 508B, 509B, 510B, 517B, 518B, 519B, 520A, 521B & 533A accompanying letter from Agent dated 30 June 2009).
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	453553189954
OFFICER	Mrs K Gould (W)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The planning application is before the Planning Committee as the officer recommendation conflicts with the views of Didcot Town Council.
- 1.2 The site lies within the built up limits of Didcot, close to the town centre. To the south east of the site is an area of open land, to the south are allotments and to the north is the Great Western Railway line.
- 1.3 Access to the site is via a track/road directly off the B4016. This track serves 1 – 11 Broadway and Marsh Bridge Cottages and is an adopted highway for some 18m from the junction with the B4016 and a public footpath and cycle path thereafter.
- 1.4 The site is currently overgrown except for that part which includes part of the rear gardens of nos 5 and 7 Marsh Bridge Cottages.
- 1.5 An OS extract is **attached** which shows the location of the site.
- 1.6 An outline planning application and a full planning application for residential development on this site have been refused on this site. (P03/W0448/O and P07/W0260) A copy of the appeal decision and the decision notice relating to these is **attached**.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to erect 14 residential units with associated parking, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage with new access. The access arrangements comprise proposed improvements to the junction of Marsh Bridge Lane with the B4016, regulation and formalisation of the existing on-carriageway parking arrangements and a new access from Marsh Bridge Lane into the site. These are indicated on plan ref ARC1012.001 which is **attached**. The planning agents have submitted a large amount of supporting information with the application including a noise assessment and Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment, which can be viewed on the Council's web site.

2.2 The development would comprise two storey development comprising

- 4 x 1 bed flats
- 6 x 2 bed flats
- 3 x 3 bed houses
- 1 x 4 bed house

The development includes 21 car parking spaces, bike storage, bin storage and refuse vehicle turning. Access to the site would off the B4016 onto Marsh Bridge Lane and then via a new access into the site. The development would comprise terraced houses along the front of the site with two blocks of flats to the rear of the site designed to appear as a terrace.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Police- Crime prevention design service – No objection

Thames Water Development Cntrl – Representation

County Archaeological Services – Archaeological investigation to be carried out prior to the commencement of development.

Health & Housing – Representation – No objection subject to conditions relating to noise control.

Monson Engineering Ltd. – Details of Surface water drainage to be submitted prior to the commencement of development.

Forestry Officer – No objection subject to condition relating to landscaping

Countryside Officer – No objection - habitats found are not significant in the County context in terms of their nature conservation value and no evidence was found of any protected species.

Didcot Town Council - Refuse – concerns with regards to and its proximity to the roundabout.

Neighbour Supporters (2) – Parking for existing residents will be improved, access onto the B4016 will be transformed, style of development in keeping with existing development , ample outdoor living and communal space, no encroachment or overlooking, will improve the appearance of the site, offer much needed new properties, very sustainable location.

Neighbour Objectors (4) Inadequate access, loss of wildlife, inadequate parking provided, dangerous access onto the B4016, access road is not wide enough, noise and disruption during construction.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P07/W0260 - Proposed demolition of nos 5 and 7 Marsh Bridge Cottages and the erection of 14 no 3 bed houses with associated access and parking – Refused

P03/W0448/O - Change of use to residential and alterations to access. Refused and dismissed on appeal

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

- G2 Protection and enhancement of the environment
- G6 promoting good design
- D1 Good design and local distinctiveness
- D3 Plot coverage and garden areas
- D2 Vehicle and bicycle parking
- D8 Energy, water and materials efficient design
- D11 Infrastructure and service requirements
- H4 Housing in towns and larger villages outside the Green Belt
- H7 Range of dwellings
- H8 Dwelling densities
- H9 Affordable housing
- EP2 Noise and vibrations
- T1/2 – Transport requirements for new developments
- T8 Car parks and on- street parking

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPG24 – Planning and Noise

PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPS3 - Housing

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of this planning application are:

- **Whether the principle of residential development is acceptable in this location**
- **Consideration of policy H4 criterion**
- **Housing mix**
- **Housing densities**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Sustainability**
- **Noise and disturbance**
- **Affordable housing**

Whether the principle of residential development is acceptable

- 6.2 The site lies within the built up confines of Didcot. Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) allows proposals for housing on sites within the built up areas of Didcot and the other 3 main towns of the District. The principle of residential development on this site is therefore acceptable subject to the criteria set down in policy H4 of the adopted SOLP. When the original outline planning application (ref P03/W0448/O) was considered by the appeal inspector the principle of residential development was not raised as an issue when he dismissed the appeal.

Consideration of policy H4 criterion

- 6.3 Policy H4 allows for residential development within the built up confines of Didcot provided that:

1. **An important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view point spoilt.** The majority of the site is open and overgrown. Part of the rear gardens of nos 5 and 7 Marsh Bridge Cottages are also included in the site. The site has been vacant for many years and has no recreational use. The Council's countryside officer has confirmed

that it has no special ecological value and is not an important public open space.

2. **The design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings.** The existing character along Marsh Bridge Lane is of two storey terraced properties which front onto the lane. They are modest in their scale and height. The ridge height of the proposed development would be 7.9m. The proposed development would comprise a terrace of 4 dwellings along the site frontage which would reinforce local distinctiveness. The flats to the rear of the site have been designed so as to appear as terraced dwellings with separate entrances for each flat. The height and scale of the proposed development is in keeping with the surrounding development.
3. **The character of the area is not adversely affected.** As the site is currently open, the proposed development will have an impact on the visual amenity of the area. However, the principle of residential development is acceptable in this location and the design and scale of the proposal will reinforce and complement the character of the neighbouring residential development. The proposed facing materials of the development would be bricks and render with tiled roofs. As such the visual amenity of the area would not be adversely affected. The scale of the blocks of flats to the rear of the site would be comparable with the terraced housing in the locality and along the site frontage.
4. **There are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections** The South Oxfordshire Design Guide advises that 3 and 4 bed dwellings should have a minimum of 100sqm of private amenity space; a 2 bed dwelling 50sqm and flats 35sqm for 1 bed dwellings. The proposed development meets these requirements. The development would be of a high density but provision for some landscaping has been made and a condition has been recommended which requires a landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such a landscaping scheme would help to “soften” the development.
5. **Highways** The Town Council have objected to the proposal on highway grounds with “concerns with regards to and its proximity to the roundabout” The outline planning permission was refused on highway grounds in 2003. In the appeal decision relating to this application, the Planning Inspector was satisfied that the standard of visibility for drivers emerging from the Marsh Bridge Lane onto the B4016 was acceptable. He also did not object to the suitability of the access road for vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people. The Inspector did have concerns relating to the geometry of the junction which could cause conflict between large service vehicles seeking to turn left in to the access road and vehicles attempting to emerge onto the B4016. This concern has been addressed by the current proposal. Improvements to the bellmouth radii and visibility are proposed as suggested by the planning inspector are shown on drawing ARC 1012-001. OCC (highways) have raised no objection to this proposal but have recommended a number of conditions relating to parking, turning and alterations to the junction with the B4016 which are proposed by the applicant. In addition, the development would provide 2 car park spaces per house, 1 car park space per flat with 3 visitor spaces. As such the highway arrangements are considered acceptable by officers in accordance with policy T1 of the SOLP, there are no technical reasons to refuse the application on highway grounds.
6. **If the proposal constitutes backland development, it would create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built up limits of the settlement.** This proposal does not constitute backland development and therefore this criteria does not apply to this proposal.

- 6.4 **Housing Mix** Policy H7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan seeks to ensure that a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in the District will be sought in new residential developments and areas of housing of uniform type and size will not be acceptable. The current application proposes an appropriate mix of development in accordance with policy H7 of the SOLP.
- 6.5 **Housing densities** Policy H8 of the SOLP and Government advice in PPS3 recommends a density of 30 dwellings or more per hectare and in town centre locations and of 40 dwellings or more per hectare, unless such densities have an adverse effect on the character of the area. This proposal seeks to erect 14 dwellings on a site of 2,791qm (0.279ha) which is equivalent to a density of some 50 dwellings per hectare. For a site which is within walking distance of Didcot town centre and within an area of high density terraced housing, this density is appropriate and in accordance with Government guidance and policy H8.
- 6.6 **Infrastructure** Contributions for the County Council have been secured towards towards:
- i) education, ii) libraries, iii) waste management, iv) museum resource centre, v) social and health care, vi) fire and rescue and vii) highways and transport. The applicant has indicated their willingness to complete a unilateral undertaking to ensure the payment of these contributions which would be secured by a Section 106 legal agreement. In addition, Policy D11 of the SOLP requires adequate infrastructure to be available or provided for by new development. In this case, the applicant has agreed to pay developer contributions to the District Council towards i) sport and recreation, ii) play areas, iii) community hall facilities, iv) safety and security, v) recycling, vi) street naming, vii) green infrastructure and biodiversity and these will be secured by a Section 106 legal agreement.
- 6.7 **Sustainability** Policy D8 of the SOLP requires all new developments to demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials through its siting, landscaping, building design, use of materials, layout and orientation of buildings. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) seeks a 3 star rating under the code for sustainable homes on all developments of 10 units or more up to 1 April, 2010. In Appendix 1 of the Planning, Sustainability, Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application, it states that the proposal aims to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes rating of 3.
- 6.8 **Noise and Disturbance** When the outline planning application was considered by the appeal inspector, he was concerned about the impact of the increased noise and disturbance associated with a residential development on the living conditions of existing residents of the area and concluded in paragraph 18 of the appeal decision notice that “I consider that the noise and disturbance that residents would suffer from the dramatically increased use of the access route would be totally unacceptable, despite the fact that the dwellings lie close to the main railway and residents are already subject to high levels of intermittent noise from that source.” In addition, refusal reason 7 for the full planning application (P07/W0260) was also related to noise and being contrary to policy EP2 of the SOLP. In light of the Inspector’s comments and the reasons for refusal, the applicants have commissioned a noise survey and assessment to address some of the noise issues of the previous refusal of planning permission. This information has been considered by the Council’s Health and Housing team and no objection is being raised to this proposal on noise and disturbance grounds. A number of conditions have been recommended and the development has been designed to ensure that the occupiers of the new dwellings and those of the existing dwellings are

not subjected to unreasonable levels of noise and disturbance.

6.9 **Affordable housing** Policy H9 of the SOLP requires affordable housing to be provided within certain thresholds. This proposal falls below the threshold for affordable housing.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Planning permission is granted because the principle of residential development on this site is acceptable. The current proposal has addressed the reasons for refusal on the previous schemes and has overcome the concern of the appeal inspector regarding noise and disturbance and highway issues. The proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and will not be harmful to the residential amenity of the existing residents in Marsh Bridge Lane.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **It is recommended that the grant of planning permission is delegated to the Head of Planning subject to the prior completion of an appropriate planning obligation with the County Council to ensure infrastructure payments are made towards education, libraries, waste management , a museum resource centre, social and health care, fire and rescue and public transport and with the District Council to ensure infrastructure payments are made towards sport and recreation, play areas, community hall facilities, safety and security, recycling, street naming, green infrastructure and biodiversity and the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
2. **No development shall commence on site until the applicant has secured a staged programme of archaeological investigation.**
3. **No development shall commence until a phased contaminated land risk assessment has been carried out.**
4. **Sample materials required (walls and roof)**
5. **Landscaping (incl access road and hard standings)**
6. **Landscaping management scheme to be submitted.**
7. **Sustainable Homes - Code Level 3 to be achieved.**
8. **The development shall be constructed in accordance with the noise control measures specified in the submitted noise report.**
9. **Notwithstanding the above condition, the development shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to ensure that the internal ambient noise levels for dwellings is acceptable.**
10. **Hours of operation - construction/demolition sites**
11. **Surface water drainage details to be submitted**
12. **Foul water drainage details to be submitted**

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