
APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0547 & P09/E0548/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	Full & LBC
REGISTERED	16 th June 2009
PARISH	Goring Heath
WARD MEMBER(S)	Ann Ducker and Pearl Slatter
APPLICANT	The Police Rehabilitation Centre
SITE	Flint House, Reading Road, Goring Heath
PROPOSAL	Erection of three storey extension to Flint House to provide 11 bedrooms, two storey extension to Flint Fold to provide 14 bedrooms and single storey extension to Flint House to provide physiotherapy area and re-arrangement of car parking area incorporating removal of garden pond.
AMENDMENTS	Additional historical information and transport statement.
GRID REFERENCE	462727/180542
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between Officers' recommendation and the views of Goring Heath Parish Council.

1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix 1. The application site comprises Flint House, a G20 Grade II three storey listed building, which has been greatly extended with a number of wings sprawling to the west of the original building. The site also comprises Flint Fold a 1990's two storey H-shaped building, located to the north-east of Flint House, with a covered walkway between the two. The buildings are occupied by the Police Rehabilitation Centre, providing care for injured Police Officers in the southern half of the UK. The site is in an isolated location surrounded by open countryside within the Chilterns AONB, on the southern side of Reading Road between Goring and Crays Pond. The site has a woodland setting, with surrounding trees within and adjacent to the site subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Areas of car parking are located along the access road and in the south-eastern corner of the site, where there is a disused tennis court. This part of the site also contains an ornamental pond and putting green. The site generally rises from south to north and this slope is particularly evident in the south-east corner. The land drops down into a valley to the south of the site. There are three residential properties to the north-east of the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 Application P09/E0547 seeks full planning permission for the erection of three extensions. A three storey extension would be added to the southern elevation of the 'New Wing' of Flint House, built in the 1990s. This extension would provide 11 bedrooms and would continue the existing design of the wing. It would be 11 metres deep and 12 metres wide. The ridge heights would be 12.4 metres, in line with the existing ridge, stepping down to 11 metres. A two storey extension would be added to the southern side of Flint Fold. Its main north-south axis would measure 18 metres and its main east-west axis would measure 23 metres. The ridge heights would vary from 9.5 metres (0.3 metres below the existing ridge) to 8.5 metres and 8 metres.

- 2.2 A single storey lean-to extension to provide additional physiotherapy accommodation would be added to the western elevation of the 'New Wing' facing the original Flint House building. It would measure 8.5 metres wide by 3.8 metres deep and 4.5 metres high. The net increase in floorspace would be 762 square metres on top of the existing 7100 square metres, providing 25 additional rooms and requiring 6 additional employees in addition to the existing number of 81. The area currently occupied by a tennis court (used for parking), ornamental pond and putting green would be changed to a new car parking area, involving alterations to levels. The proposal would provide an additional 37 spaces from 144 to 181, with two additional disabled bays and 10 extra cycle spaces and 6 extra motorcycle spaces. The car parking would continue to be lit with low-level bollard lighting, as at present. Through the rationalisation of unmarked car parking bays elsewhere on the site, 32 spaces would be lost, resulting in an overall increase of 5 spaces. Application P09/E0548/LB seeks listed building consent for the two extensions to Flint House.
- 2.3 The applications were accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Arboricultural Report, Historic Buildings Consultants Statement and Transport Statement. All of these can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk. The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix 2.
- 3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
- 3.1 **Goring Heath Parish Council** – The applications should be refused. The development proposed falls within the scope of Policy E9 of the Local Plan. The site is within the AONB, and has a significant impact on the countryside. The proposed car park, with lighting, is on the southern slope of the ridge and is therefore very visible from a considerable distance. A Planning Appeal in respect of a site in a very similar location just 500 metres away (P04/W0648) was rejected by the Planning Inspector because that application, conflicted with PPS7 and Local Plan Policy G4. The Inspector referred specifically to Flint House, noting that it was hidden by trees. The car park proposed will not be within the tree covered area, but visible and prominent. The Parish Council draws attention to the Inspectors comment that "the immediate surroundings are of the highest quality in the AONB", and "the site lies within an area that is unspoilt, retains a strong intact landscape structure, and sense of place". As such this proposal must be rejected, and any sympathy that the members of the Planning Authority have with the aims and objectives of the applicant should not be considered. The applicant should be directed to providing underground parking as was required at the Borocourt Hospital site, also in the AONB.
- 3.2 **OCC Highways** – Holding objection withdrawn in the light of findings of the Transport Statement.
- 3.3 **Conservation Officer** – No objections to extensions, which would not incur any additional impacts on the historic or architectural interest or setting of the Grade II listed building to those already approved under previous planning and listed building consents. On the basis of historical analysis, there is no objection to the removal of the pond and conversion to car parking, although this would be regrettable. Several standard conditions recommended.
- 3.4 **Environmental Services (Environmental Health)** – No objection.
- 3.5 **Countryside Officer** – No objection subject to standard informative to safeguard protected species.

- 3.6 **Tree Officer** – No objection subject to detailed tree protection and landscaping conditions.
- 3.7 **Environmental Services (Contamination)** – No objection subject to standard condition requiring investigation and remediation as necessary.
- 3.8 **Neighbours** – One representation stating no objections on behalf of two local residents.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Numerous planning applications for extensions and alterations to Flint House. The most relevant applications are:
- 4.2 P99/S0460 – Planning permission was granted for an almost identical 11-bed extension to Flint House in August 1999. The Planning Committee considered that this further relatively modest extension to the existing 80 bed Police Convalescent Home would cause no material harm to the character and amenity of the Chilterns AONB, the setting of the listed building and trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order. This planning permission was never implemented.
- 4.3 P00/S0392 – Planning permission was granted for a 60-bed free-standing extension to the Police Convalescent Home, which was considered to cause no additional harm than an earlier planning permission for a 49-bed Police Convalescent Home (P99/S0463/O).

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:
- G1 – General Restraint and Sustainable Development
 - G2 – Protection and Enhancement of the Environment
 - G3 – Locational Strategy
 - G4 – Development in the Countryside and on the Edge of Settlements
 - G6 – Promoting Good Design
 - C1 – Landscape Character
 - C2 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - C6 – Biodiversity Conservation
 - C8 – Species Protection
 - C9 – Landscape Features
 - CON2 – Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings
 - CON3 – Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings
 - CON5 – The Setting of Listed Buildings
 - EP3 – Lighting
 - EP8 – Contamination
 - D1 – Good Design and Local Distinctiveness
 - D2 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking
 - D6 – Design Against Crime
 - D7 – Access for All
 - D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design
 - E9 – Institutions in the Countryside
 - T1 – Transport Requirements for New Developments
 - T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments
 - T3 – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- 5.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance:
- South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 – Sections 3, 4 & 5.
 - Chilterns Buildings Design Guide – Chapter 3.
 - South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Character Area 8.

- 5.3 Government Guidance:
PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG13 – Transport
PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Under Policy E9 of the SOLP, proposals for extensions to existing institutions in the countryside, but outside the Green Belt, to meet the operational requirements of the institution will be permitted provided that:

- The proposal does not conflict with the Policies to protect the landscape;
- The proposed extension is of a scale and type of development appropriate for the site and its surroundings, including the impact on the historic and architectural qualities and setting of the Grade II listed building and the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site, including design, materials and landscaping;
- In the case of proposals that would generate significant additional journeys, the site is in a location accessible by public transport and/or by cycling and walking;

In addition the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers should not be compromised through the physical impact of the development or from the levels of activity associated with it; and

- 6.2 The issue relevant to the listed building consent application is whether:
- The works would have an adverse impact upon the special architectural and historic qualities of the Grade II listed building or its setting.

Landscape Character

- 6.3 Policy C2 of the SOLP seeks to safeguard the natural beauty and landscape quality of AONBs. Policy D2 of the SOLP sets out that parking should be provided in a safe, discreet and sensitive matter. The proposed extensions would increase the amount of floorspace by about 10%. In the context of a site enclosed by many mature trees, the physical form of the extensions would not be prominent in the limited public views of the site from the south across the valley and from the main road. If the extensions are seen, they would be viewed against the backdrop of the existing buildings, because they would not be any higher or extend the footprint into the countryside. The arboricultural survey has demonstrated that the adjacent mature trees would not be harmed by the proposal. The south-eastern corner of the site is the most open part of the site, where boundary screening is thinner. As a consequence, the proposed parking area would be visible from two field entrances along a public bridleway on the opposite valley to the south of the site. However, these views are over a distance of about 400 and 600 metres and the car park would still be seen in the context of Flint Fold in the background and some existing planting to the north that would be retained. A significant amount of this area is already covered by hardstanding. Concerns about the impact of lighting are understood, however, this would be a continuation of the low-level bollards that are already installed over some of this area and as a consequence light spillage would be kept to a minimum and the precise specification and operation of the lighting could be controlled via a planning condition.
- 6.4 There are no objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer. In addition, the boundary planting could be strengthened through a landscaping condition, to help assimilate the development into its surroundings. The Parish Council's reference to a

dismissed appeal related to an application for a new dwelling on an exposed site, which is not directly comparable, because unlike with these applications, the relevant policies to that application were not permissive. On the basis of the above assessment, the proposed development would accord with criterion (ii) of Policy E9.

Listed Building Issues

- 6.5 Policies CON2 and CON3 of the SOLP state that extensions and alterations to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish its special historical or architectural qualities. Policy CON5 explains that proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused. Although two of the extensions would represent significant extensions to the premises, the Council's Conservation Officer is satisfied that all three would be sympathetic to the qualities of the Grade II listed building. This is because the original listed building is already dwarfed by later extensions and the proposed further extension would not be directly connected to the historic part of the building or visible from it. It will also continue the form and design of the existing building. Furthermore, planning permission for an identical extension was granted in 1999 and the Policies in the SOLP to safeguard listed buildings have not changed materially since then. The lean-to extension would be much closer to the historic part of the building, but would be of subservient scale and thereby have a limited impact. The extension to Flint Fold would be subordinate to the main building and would reflect the existing design in terms of detailing and materials. It would not bring Flint Fold significantly closer to the historic part of the building and would therefore not adversely impact on its setting. The loss of the ornamental pond would be regrettable, but there is no historical justification for its retention and the remainder of land that would be converted for car parking has long since lost its original use as a walled kitchen garden and this element of the proposal cannot be resisted on these grounds. In the light of the above assessment, the proposed development would comply with criteria (iii) and (iv) of Policy E9.

Highway Safety and Trip Generation

- 6.6 Criterion (i) of Policy T1 of the SOLP explains that development should provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network, criterion (iii) requires development to be accessible by public transport and criterion (iv) states that it should be served by an adequate road network. Policy T2 requires compliance with various adopted parking and turning standards. In terms of the additional car parking, the Transport Statement (TS) indicates that although the number of proposed spaces on the existing putting green would be 39, 2 of these spaces would replace existing spaces located elsewhere on the site which will be lost as a result of the proposal. Thus the net increase would be 37 spaces which would represent a 26% increase. The TS suggests that the increased parking provision should result in the cessation of use of the 32 unmarked bays, thus the net increase would be only 5 spaces (3%). In addition to vehicular parking the proposal also seeks to provide an additional covered cycle shelter which would also be used for motor cycle parking. The TS states that this would double the provision from 10 to 20 spaces, with up to 6 motorcycle spaces being provided. Although the proposed development would result in an increase in the number of staff on the site the TS indicates that the current proposals are not expected to result in a significant increase in peak hour traffic flows on the highway network near the site. This is partly because staff work shift patterns with changeover times outside peak hours.
- 6.7 The site has operated a Travel Plan since 2001, as a requirement of the earlier planning permissions. Annual monitoring reports, required as part of a Section 106 Legal Agreement have also been provided to the County Council. It is evident that there has been an increase in the use of sustainable modes of transport for travel

to/from the site since the implementation of the Travel Plan. The increase in cycle parking and motor cycle provision, proposed as part of this application will help to encourage the continued use of alternate modes of transport to the car and to balance out any increase in traffic generation. On the basis of this assessment, the proposal would comply with criterion (v) of Policy E9.

Living Conditions of Nearby Residents

- 6.8 The only immediate residential occupiers lie to the north-east of the site. Two of these have raised no objections to the proposal. The physical changes to the appearance of the site would all be to the south of existing buildings and would therefore not impact on these properties. As discussed above, the Local Highway Authority is satisfied that the level of trip generation would not be significant and as such these residents are unlikely to suffer any disturbance from additional vehicular or general activity.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.9 The supporting statement explains that the proposed extension to the new wing would incorporate solar panels to provide hot water and all of the extensions would be built in compliance with Part L of Building Regulations, covering the conservation of fuel and power in buildings other than dwellings. This would be an acceptable approach, given that the proposals are extensions to the existing premises and the limitations of working in and around a listed building. A more detailed sustainability report could be required to be agreed prior to occupation through a planning condition. Officers consider matters relating to protected species and contamination could be dealt with by the imposition of standard conditions or informatives.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The planning application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the planning application for the proposed development would safeguard the special architectural and historical qualities of the Grade II listed building and its setting, would preserve the natural beauty and landscape quality of the AONB, would not pose a risk to highway safety and trip generation and would not materially harm the living conditions of nearby residents.
- 7.2 The listed building consent application would safeguard the special architectural and historical qualities of the Grade II listed building and its setting.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **Grant Planning Permission**

Subject to the following conditions:

1. **Standard 3 year time limit**
2. **Details of car park levels against fixed datum point**
3. **Samples of materials for walls and roofs prior to commencement**
4. **Sample panels of bricks/lime mortar prior to commencement**
5. **Details of vents, flues and extract ducts prior to commencement**
6. **Details of windows and doors at 1:10 and 1:5 prior to commencement**
7. **Details of sustainable measures prior to occupation**
8. **Car and cycle parking as plan and thereafter retained as such**
9. **Hard and soft landscaping scheme including car parking surfacing prior to commencement**
10. **Tree protection measures prior to commencement**

- 11. Accommodation to be occupied/used only in connection with the Police Convalescent Home**
- 12. Details of Lighting prior to commencement**
- 13. Details of contamination investigation and remediation as necessary**

8.2 Grant Listed Building Consent

Subject to conditions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 above.

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