

SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 8

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P11/W0068
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	24.02.2011
PARISH	DIDCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs Jane Murphy
APPLICANT	Chesside Homes
SITE	Land adjacent to Marsh Bridge Cottages Didcot
PROPOSAL	Construction of a pair of vehicular gates and a pedestrian gate to enclose the private parking areas of the approved development of new homes, together with associated adjustment to the surrounding landscaping.
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	453553/189952
OFFICER	Mrs K Gould (W)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee as the recommendation differs from the views of Didcot Town Council.

1.2 The application site is located within the built confines of Didcot, close to the town centre. Planning permission has been granted for a development of 14 dwellings (P09/W0956) The construction of these dwellings has now been completed. A site location plan is **attached**.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposed development involves the construction of a pair of vehicular access gates and a pedestrian gate to enclose the private parking areas of the approved development of new homes, together with associated adjustment to the surrounding landscaping.

2.2 The proposed vehicular access gates would be operated electronically. The gates would be 2m high (max) and would be constructed of black painted wrought iron. The gates would be sited some 15m back from the edge of the access road. A plan showing the location and type of gates proposed is **attached**.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Didcot Town Council – Refuse not in keeping with the street scene and the rest of the town. Didcot has never had a gated development and does not welcome this proposal. It would set an unfortunate and unwelcome precedent.

- 3.2 Neighbour Approve (5) – A gate into the new development would be great for the security of the new residents of this private development. It will stop unauthorised parking. A gated entrance into the development would greatly improve security on the site for residents. Other gated development does exist in Didcot – 46 Wantage Road – A gated development will make the development feel more “executive” which will appeal to the high profile young business professionals that Didcot needs to attract to make a good economic base for successful businesses.
- 3.3 OCC (Highways) – No objection in highway terms. It is noted that the furthest point in the site beyond the gates is further than the normal extreme distance that fire tenders need to be to attend a fire. Recommend a condition requiring an emergency service override for the gate locking is required to be installed in order that they gain access. A design of a mechanism to achieve this shall be submitted to the LPA for approval and the approved mechanism shall be installed prior to the commissioning of the gates.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P10/W1105 - variation of condition 14 (parking and manoeuvring areas) of planning permission P09/W0956 to revise the parking layout – Approved

P09/W0956 - Erection of 14 residential units with associated parking, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage. – Approved

P09/W0440 – Erection of 14 residential units with associated parking, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage – Approved

Proposed demolition of nos 5 and 7 Marsh Bridge Cottages, and erection of 14 no 3 bed houses together with associated access and parking – refused.

Change of use from vacant to residential and alterations to existing access – Refusal of outline planning permission/ Appeal dismissed.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan
G2 Protection and enhancement of the environment
G6 Promoting good design
D1 Good design and local distinctiveness
D6 Design against crime
T1 T2 Transport requirements for new developments

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In assessing this planning application, the main considerations are:
i. whether the proposed gates would harm the character of the area.
ii whether there are any highway safety issues.

Whether the proposed gates would harm the character of the area.

- 6.2 The proposed gates are 2m high (max) and will be set some 15m back from the edge of the highway and behind the building line of the new houses. As such, they will not be

visually prominent in the street scene or from the road/footpath and cycle route which runs along the front of the site. Immediately in front of the site is the railway embankment which has a metal fence running along the boundary with the road. The proposed gates will therefore not appear out of keeping in this locality. The Town Council have objected to the proposal on the grounds that there is no other gated development in Didcot and this proposal would set an unfortunate and unwelcome precedent. However, the applicant has confirmed that another gated development in Didcot has been allowed at 46 Wantage Road. With the amount of new housing development currently under construction in Didcot regard has to be given to the appropriateness of such features. In this particular case, the site has been developed in depth with one row of development behind the frontage development. The proposed gates would not be on the road frontage but set well back so their prominence would be minimal. Any future proposal for a gated development elsewhere in Didcot would have to be considered on its individual planning merits having regard to the site specific circumstances. In addition, part 3.3 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide recommends that “communal parking areas should be provided in courtyards to the rear of dwellings, with a single entrance point with a lockable gate and overlooked by adjacent dwellings.” As such, this proposal is in accordance with Design Guide advice.

Whether there are any highway safety issues

- 6.3 No objections have been raised from the Highway Authority. Gated communities can be criticised because they close off routes across a site. In this case, the site can be negotiated around by pedestrians accessing the countryside and no routes are apparent through the site. It is noted that the furthest point in the site beyond the gates is further than the normal extreme distance for fire tenders to attend a fire. As such, a condition requiring an emergency service override for the gate locking mechanism is necessary.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The gates are considered acceptable in this location where they will not be visually harmful to the character of the area. At the time of writing this report, no objections have been received from local residents to this proposal. Five letters of support have been received and no objections have been received from the Highway Authority.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **That planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
2. **Condition listing approved drawings**
3. **An emergency service override for the gate locking is required to be installed in order that they can gain access. A design of a mechanism to achieve this shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved mechanism shall be installed prior to the first use of the gates.**

Author Mrs K Gould
Contact No. 01491 823754
Email Add. planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk