

SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 7

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P11/E0495
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	31.03.2011
PARISH	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
WARD MEMBER(S)	Ms Jennifer Wood Mr Will Hall
APPLICANT	Mr Phil Fleming
SITE	59 Reading Road Henley-on-Thames
PROPOSAL	Construction of detached garage with storage room above
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	476212/182349
OFFICER	Miss Emma Bowerman

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Committee as the officer's recommendations conflict with the views of the Town Council and the application falls within the category of a 'minor' development as the site is in commercial use. The application was deferred from the Planning Committee meeting on 17 August 2011 to allow Members to visit the site to better understand the position of the proposed garage and the relationship with neighbouring properties.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) comprises an office building set behind the main street frontage in Henley-on-Thames town centre. The site is primarily hard surfaced to provide car parking for the commercial use of the site and is accessed from Reading Road, via a driveway that runs between the two frontage buildings. The site falls within the Henley-on-Thames Main Conservation Area.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to provide a detached garage with storage room above. The proposed garage would be positioned on the existing parking area at the rear of the site, close to the rear boundary and both side boundaries. The proposed garage would measure 7.9 metres x 5.4 metres and would have a pitched roof to a height of 5 metres. It would be constructed from plain brickwork and although the application forms state that the roof would be covered with concrete tiles, the applicant has subsequently agreed to the use of clay tiles and this change of materials could be secured by a condition.

2.2 A copy of the application plans are **attached** as Appendix B. The Design and Access Statement and all other documents associated with the application can be viewed on the council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – Recommend refusal. The proposed development is considered to be unneighbourly by virtue of the height and bulk of the garage.
- 3.2 **The Henley Society** – Commented that a two storey building, as proposed, would be unneighbourly.
- 3.3 **Neighbours** – One letter of objection from 50 Queen Street raising concerns that the development would be unneighbourly as it would be intrusive and overbearing and result in a loss of light and overshadow the house and courtyard.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning application P10/E1955 for a detached garage with storage room over was refused planning permission in March 2011. This application proposed a 5 metre high garage with a mansard roof. Officers considered that the roof was bulky and inappropriate in design and that the proposed materials (concrete roof tiles) would be inappropriate in the conservation area. The plans refused under application P10/E1955 are **attached** as Appendix C. The reason for refusal was:

The proposed development, by reason of its design, bulk and materials, would fail to preserve or enhance the Henley Main Conservation Area and would detract from the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies G2, G6, D1, CON7, and E5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, and advice within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 and contained within national guidance in PPS1 and PPS5.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
- G2, G6, CON7, D1, D2, E5, TC2, T1, T2
- 5.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance:
- South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)
- 5.3 Government Guidance:
- PPS1, PPS5

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are:
1. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding conservation area
 2. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
 3. Highway considerations

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Conservation Area

- 6.2 The application site is reasonably well enclosed, being set behind the frontage development on Reading Road. The proposed garage would be positioned in a space that is currently used for parking and is enclosed on three sides by the neighbouring boundaries. The wall to the south is the two storey elevation of the adjoining Salisbury Club and there is trellis fencing to the east, with the low pitched office building of 50a Queen Street just beyond. The garden wall of No.50 Queen Street marks the boundary to the north. Although the site is reasonably well enclosed, there are views into the site from Reading Road along the access.

- 6.3 The proposal would provide secure parking and storage in the roof for the office on site. Local Plan Policy E5 states that proposals for business will not be permitted which are of a scale and type inappropriate to the site and its surroundings and that are not in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of design, layout and materials. Local Plan Policy CON7 also requires the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the conservation area. Officers are of the opinion that the simple pitched roof design of the proposed building would be in keeping with the area and would generally comply with the design guidance in the SODG.
- 6.4 Local Plan Policy CON7 also requires the use of traditional materials whenever this is appropriate to the character of the conservation area. Although the application form states that the roof would be covered in concrete tiles and the garage door would be PVCU, the applicant has agreed to use clay tiles on the roof and for the garage door to painted metal or timber. These materials would be appropriate within the conservation area and could be secured by condition. On the basis of this assessment, Officers consider that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding conservation area and that the previous reason for refusal has been overcome.

Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.5 The Salisbury Club and the office at 50a Queen Street do not have any windows that face the application site and as such, officers consider that the impact of the development on these adjoining buildings would be acceptable. There would also be sufficient separation to the rear of 59 Reading Road to ensure that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on this neighbour.
- 6.6 The proposed garage would be positioned 1.4 metres from the garden wall that marks the side boundary of 50 Queen Street and the northeast corner of the proposed garage would be 3 metres from this neighbour's conservatory. The garden at 50 Queen Street is quite enclosed and the owners have raised concerns that the proposed building would be overbearing to the garden and house and would also result in a loss of light and overshadow their property. Although the proposed garage would be apparent over the boundary, I do not consider that the structure would be unduly overbearing to the rear garden and windows of 50 Queen Street as the roof would be pitched away from this neighbour. The proposed garage would be positioned alongside the much higher Salisbury Club and officers consider that the level of overshadowing and impact on light caused by the proposal would not be significant given that the adjoining higher building would cast a greater shadow and that the roof of the proposed garage would slope away from 50 Queen Street. The proposal would not incorporate any roof lights that would look towards 50 Queen Street and so would not result in any adverse overlooking.
- 6.7 Although the proposal would have some impact on No.50 Queen Street, on the basis of the above assessment, officers are of the opinion that the impact would be acceptable. Officers note that the previous application was not refused on grounds of neighbourliness and only on design. This previous decision is a material planning consideration and the impact on No.50 Queen Street would be no greater under this application.

Highway Considerations

- 6.8 The council's highways liaison officer has not commented on this application but did provide comments on the previous application, which is identical in terms of the impact on parking provision and highway safety. The proposal would continue to provide

parking at the site but in a more secure and controlled manner. On the basis that the garage is retained for the parking of vehicles only and that the first floor storage area remains ancillary to the office on site, officers have no objection to the scheme in terms of highway safety.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy as, subject to conditions, the development would conserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, respect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 **That planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement – 3 years**
2. **Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans**
3. **Samples of materials and details of garage door to be submitted and approved**
4. **Garage to be retained for parking purposes only**
5. **Storage space in roof of garage to remain ancillary to the office**

Author: Emma Bowerman
Contact No: 01491 823761
Email: planning@southandvale.gov.uk