
APPLICATION NO.	P18/S0003/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	2.1.2018
PARISH	WALLINGFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Elaine Hornsby Imran Lokhon
APPLICANT	Winslade Investments (Wallingford)
SITE	Wallingford Portcullis Social Club, 28 & 29 Goldsmiths Lane, Wallingford, OX10 0DU
PROPOSAL	Demolition, part demolition, redevelopment and Change of Use of the Portcullis Club building & No 29 to provide 14 residential units. Eight two- bedroom houses, three two-bedroom flats and three one-bedroom flats.
OFFICER	Sharon Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation to grant planning permission conflicts with the views of the Wallingford Town Council. The Town Council object to the application.
- 1.2 The site lies in a prominent location fronting onto Goldsmith's Lane and The Kine Croft between the Masonic Hall and the community centre. The Mint on the opposite side of Goldsmiths Lane is a terrace of residential properties and also a Grade II listed building. The site lies in the Wallingford Conservation area and is an area of archaeological interest. In addition, the Kine Croft is a Scheduled Monument.
- 1.3 The buildings on the site have been vacant since 2015. Prior to that they were last used for the Portcullis Social Club but were originally part of the former Wallingford Brewery dating from the C18/C19. Much of the site is covered in buildings of differing ages. There is very little open space on the site other than a small courtyard.
- 1.4 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 A similar scheme for 15 residential units was considered at planning committee on 26 July 2017 - ref P16/S4208/FUL (this application did not include 29 Goldsmiths Lane). The application was refused for the following reasons;
1. Having regard to the density of development and the location of the site (where vehicular and pedestrian access is limited by the access into the site and the limited width and lack of pavement on Goldsmiths Lane), the proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the site that would increase pedestrian and vehicular activity and would be harmful to the safety and convenience of users of the public highway. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy CSWAL1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and saved Policies G2, D2, H4, T1 and T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.
 2. The proposal would fail to provide affordable housing to meet the needs of the District contrary to Policy CSH3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and wider guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to convert the buildings worthy of retention to provide 14 residential units. A significant amount of the existing building comprising unattractive, relatively modern additions would be demolished – including 29 Goldsmiths Lane. Ridge heights on two sections of the buildings would be raised to provide for second floor accommodation – Flat C on Goldsmiths Lane and Flat F onto the Kine Croft. The retained and new elements would provide for two L-shape blocks. One fronting Goldsmith Lane which would contain 6 units (1 x one bed flat and 5 x two bed units (3 houses and 2 flats)). The other retained building would contain 7 units (2 x one bed flats and 5 x 2 bed units (4 houses and 1 flat). 29 Goldsmiths Lane would be a two bed house. The ground floor of the block fronting onto Goldsmiths Lane would also include a large bin storage area.
- 2.2 Cycle parking for 27 bicycles would be provided within one of the buildings. A communal courtyard would be provided for amenity space for the flats which includes covered parking for a further 7 bicycles and uncovered bicycle parking for 6 visitors within the site. The scheme is proposed as car free and there would be no parking facilities for cars provided. Private garden areas would be provided for 5 units.
- 2.3 In an attempt to overcome refusal reason 1, this application includes no 29 Goldsmiths Lane (a dwelling). No 29 would be demolished and rebuilt set further back on the site to allow for a new footway onto Goldsmiths Lane. Setting back No 29 would expose the end wall of the Portcullis Club and allow for the provision of a pedestrian undercroft and pedestrian access across the front of 29 Goldsmiths Lane to connect into the existing narrow footpath on the west side of Goldsmiths Lane.
- 2.4 Reduced copies of the plans and documents accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full copies of the plans and consultation responses are available for inspection on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

Full responses can be found on the Council's website

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| 3.1 | Wallingford Town Council | Refuse. Wallingford Town Council is not opposed to the principle of redevelopment of the application site. However, the Council considers that the proposed development is an overdevelopment of the site, will generate traffic and create parking problems and that it is a bad neighbour development. Contrary to Policies H4, D1, D2 and T1, T2 and T8 of SOLP.
The detailed comments are attached at Appendix 3. |
| 3.2 | OCC (Highways) | No objection subject to conditions, a S278 agreement and contributions to improvements to the bus service. |
| 3.3 | OCC (Archaeology) | No objection conditions recommended |
| 3.4 | Conservation Officer | Summary. Overall, I consider the principle of the proposed demolitions and conversions to be acceptable and largely respond to the industrial character of the site. The application has demonstrated that No.29 Goldsmiths Lane has been stripped of much internal historic fabric and that there would be a benefit to the development of the site to rebuild this unit and provide improved |

pedestrian access. The north-east block on the site is proposed for re-building. The elevation plans show that the Goldsmith's Lane elevation is to be treated differently from the existing building and details of the materials have been clarified and are acceptable. Within the site, this block has a more contemporary flat roofed and balcony appearance than the previous scheme but I do not think this will harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

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|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 3.5 | Contaminated Land Officer | The garden soils are unsuitable for the proposed residential use and that remedial works are required. To ensure that all remedial works are undertaken satisfactorily I would recommend that any planning permission is subject condition. |
| 3.6 | Air Quality Officer | No objection regarding adverse impacts on local air quality. |
| 3.7 | Neighbours Objecting (13) | This application proposes only one less unit than the previous application. I believe it still constitutes over development of the site. Although for the most part privacy issues with The Mint have been dealt with some still remain and should be remedied. |

Access for large vehicles is insufficient, and possibly dangerous. This includes not just occasional removal vans, but also delivery vehicles, such as those from supermarkets. Since the householders will not have their own parking spaces, and therefore presumably no cars of their own, we should assume that such deliveries will be quite frequent.

It is not clear what the developers expect delivery vehicles to do. But it will not be acceptable for delivery vehicles to stop in Goldsmiths Lane, for the time it takes to make a delivery to a second-floor flat. The Lane is a single lane road, less than 5 metres wide (which includes the pedestrian walk-way), and it is quite busy during the daytime. So the proposal, as it stands, seems to bring a likelihood of occasional traffic blockages.

There is very little car-parking space available nearby. The 12 spaces in Kinecroft are already full for large parts of the day. The walking distance from the nearest public car-park to the site entrance is about 150 metres.

Another major concern for immediate neighbours is control of the demolition and construction processes. Noise and dust are obvious problems, and may require some restriction of daily start times. Vibration could present a serious threat for the houses in The Mint, on the opposite side of Goldsmiths Lane, as most of these houses are listed buildings with walls that were built in the 18th century, and their foundations are probably vulnerable. These walls are less than 5 metres away.

Management of the construction phase may not be part of the planning committee's role, but it seems very important that the District Council takes responsibility for ensuring that these works are carried out safely, without risk of damage or discomfort to those who already live very near to the site.

There is an increase in the amount of windows overlooking properties in Goldsmiths Lane. These will be very intrusive.

3.8 Neighbour support (2)

The Wallingford Masonic Centre Ltd are supportive of the application for the former Wallingford Portcullis Social Club (the Club) that adjoins us. We have been consulted throughout by the developer as the revised plans have evolved.

The existing property is unattractive due to the later 1970's additions and the buildings continuing to deteriorate. We welcome the plans to regenerate the site but at the same time re-use and preserve the more interesting heritage buildings and provide much needed housing. Worsening disrepair of the site will affect the shared walls of the Masonic Centre threatening our buildings infrastructure and increasing our costs.

The Club has been vacant for over 3 years and the overall ambience of the area with the dilapidated buildings will continue to suffer greatly.

In particular the revised pedestrian access is a significant benefit to the Club site - particularly relating to safety. It is also a benefit to the Lane in general which, by its nature, will always have constraints.

The Portcullis club/ The Wells Brewery or just 28/29 Goldsmiths Lane is a stunning industrial building that has been left empty for over 3 years and is ready to be revitalised and bought into the residential 21st century to write its next 100 year history. I am surprised that the main reason for opposition is the lack of car parking. I thought locals would embrace this way of living. Instead they worry that owners will park and congest Goldsmiths Lane and the surrounding roads. There are thousands of non-driving people who would happily buy a property without a car parking space. Their guests may have cars and park in local car parks and roads but that's exactly what our guests do too.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 **Portcullis Club**

[P16/S4208/FUL](#) - Refused (28/07/2017)

Part demolition, redevelopment and Change of Use of the Portcullis Club building to provide 15 residential units comprising six two-bedroom houses, three two-bedroom flats and six one-bedroom flats. (As amended by drawings accompanying e-mail from agent received 3 April 2017 and as clarified by drawing no 8161042_6101_B showing virtual footway designation).

[P16/S1106/PEJ](#) – Pre application advice - Response provided 6/06/2016

Redevelopment including part demolition of former Portcullis Club and change of use to C3 to provide 14 residential units. **Office meeting**

[P15/S3212/PEM](#) – Pre application advice - Response provided 22/10/2015

Conversion of main buildings and alterations (including removal of some extensions) to provide dwellings in place of existing social club use.

29 Goldsmiths Lane.

[P17/S2484/NM](#) - Approved (31/07/2017)

Non Material Amendment sought "enlargement of ground floor bay to form entrance lobby" on application P16/S3593/HH

[P16/S3593/HH](#) - Approved (21/12/2016)

Demolition of existing single storey extension and construction of two storey extension

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Policies

- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
- CSQ3 - Design
- CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- CSWAL1 - The Strategy for Wallingford
- CSEN3 - Historic environment
- CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
- CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
- CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;

- CON5 - Setting of listed building
- CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area
- EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment
- EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
- EP6 - Sustainable drainage
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
- D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 - Outdoor amenity area
- D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- CON11 - Protection of archaeological remains
- CON12 - Archaeological field evaluation
- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- CON13 - Archaeological investigation recording & publication
- CON3 - Alteration to listed building
- CON6 - Demolition in conservation area

5.3 Neighbourhood Plan policies;

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

Wallingford Town Council are working towards the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan and are at stage 1 in the process (Area Designation) with a claim submitted to DCLG. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan has limited weight at this stage.

5.4 Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033 (ESOLP)

This plan is not yet an adopted part of the development plan of the Council and as such can only be given limited weight.

5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal adopted 2018

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

5.6 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 14	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Paragraph 17	Core planning principles
Paragraphs 47 and 49	Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
Paragraphs 56, 57 and 61 to 66	Requiring good design
Paragraph 70	Promoting healthy communities
Paragraph 95	Meeting the challenge of climate change
Paragraphs 128 to 134	Conserving the historic environment
Paragraphs 186 to 187	Decision taking
Paragraphs 203 to 206	Planning conditions

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

5.7 Other Relevant Legislation

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998
- Environmental Impact Regulations, as amended 2015
- CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- NPPF policies
- Loss of community facilities
- Highways issues
 - Pedestrian access
 - Car free development
 - Cycle parking
 - Refuse collection
- Impact on the Heritage assets
 - Character and setting of the listed buildings
 - Character of the conservation area
 - Setting of Scheduled Monument
- Provision of gardens
- Provision of affordable housing
- Mix of units
- Neighbour impact
- CIL
- OCC Contributions

6.2 **Principle.** The National Planning Policy Framework advises that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is echoed within policy CS1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. The site lies in the centre of Wallingford, one of the towns in the district. It is a sustainable location and Policy CSWAL1 of SOCS sets out the overall strategy for the town. One of the aims of CSWAL1 is to achieve housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites within the town. The scheme involves the redevelopment of a brownfield site and conversion of existing buildings which would accord with the overall strategy for Wallingford and is acceptable in principle.

6.3 **NPPF Policies.** The most relevant paragraphs of the NPPF in the consideration of this application are;

- Paragraph 14 which establishes that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, **granting permission unless:**
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.**

6.4.

- Paragraph 47 requires local planning authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing.
- Paragraph 23 recognises that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies for encouraging residential development on appropriate sites.
- Paragraph 51 requires that Local planning authorities identify and bring back into residential use empty buildings. They should normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B use classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.
- Paragraph 70 emphasises the importance of planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

6.5 **Loss of community facilities.** Saved policies CF1 of the SOLP aim to protect essential community facilities as follows:

Policy CF1

Proposals that result in the loss of a recreation facility or an essential community facility or service, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:

- (i) **suitable alternative provision is made for the facility (or similar facilities of equivalent community value) on a site elsewhere in the locality, or**
- (ii) **in the case of recreational facilities, it is not needed, or**
- (iii) **in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.**

6.6 The loss of the community facility was not included in the previous refusal reason as the council were satisfied that there are suitable alternative facilities in the immediate vicinity and there is no objection to the loss of the social club.

6.7 **Highways issues.**

With respect to highway safety matters the advice from Central Government set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is as follows:

Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

The term severe is locally interpreted as situations, which have a high impact, likely to result in loss of life, or a higher possibility of occurrence with a lower impact.

- 6.8 The impact of the development on pedestrian and vehicular safety was the main reason for refusal on the last application. The Town Council and all the neighbours who commented on this application are generally in favour of redeveloping the site but have significant concerns about the car free nature of development and the lack of a full width footway onto Goldsmiths Lane. The concerns relate to where residents will park in an area where there are parking restrictions and where parking can already be problematic. Delivery and refuse vehicles also pose a problem as there will be no ability to enter the site. However, given the previous use of the site as a social club, the net impact of the residential use would be negligible; indeed it is expected to result in a slight reduction of vehicular movements due to the reduction in the number of units.
- 6.9 **In respect of pedestrian access**, the proposed development will result in increased pedestrian traffic along this narrow footway on Goldsmiths Lane. This is currently a stretch of carriageway of about 4m in width which contains sporadic pieces of footway that are not connected. Because the development is intended to be a car-free, safe pedestrian and cycle access from the development to St. Martins Street and Market Place is vital. The use of the existing footway is also constrained because of an existing drainage problem, which means pedestrians tend to get splashed during periods of wet weather, thereby providing a disincentive to walk along it. The proposal includes an improved package of on and off-site improvements to the previous scheme as detailed below and the off-site improvements would be secured with a S278 agreement.
- 6.10 As part of this current application, the applicant now proposes to demolish No. 29, replacing it with a new dwelling set back within its plot and therefore away from Goldsmiths Lane. This allows a new footway to be provided along the western side of Goldsmiths Lane adjacent to the eastern elevation of No.29, thereby negating the need for the 'virtual footway' to commence as far south as previously proposed. By setting No. 29 back within its plot, it reveals the south eastern elevation of the former Social Club itself, through which it is proposed to form a covered walkway of some 2.2m in width, connecting to the new footway formed adjacent to No 29, as shown below

6.11



- 6.12 Implementation of these works would therefore allow a continuous segregated footway to be created between the former Social Club and the existing footway adjacent to the Community Centre (Centre 70), located to the immediate south of No. 29, which in turn links to Church Lane and the town centre. The delivery of this footway will result in a material enhancement to pedestrian safety, both for the future residents of the former Social Club and the existing residents and visitors to Wallingford, all of whom will benefit from its provision. With this provision the County Council's Road safety team have concluded that the inclusion of a virtual footway north up to the High Street is no longer necessary as the painted line will be unlikely to survive the trafficking there are alternative routes to the town centre.
- 6.13 The off-site improvements also include;
- the insertion of a gully on the western side of Goldsmiths Lane immediately east of the existing footway and the eastern frontage of the social club. The gully would need to link to the existing drain on the corner of Kinecroft and Goldsmiths Lane, and
 - The tie in of 10m x 1.2m of footway into the existing highway on Goldsmiths Lane immediately east of the reconstructed property currently known as No. 29 Goldsmiths Lane.
- 6.14 **Car free development.** The development is designed to be a car-free development. Given the constraints at the access onto Goldsmiths Lane and the existence of buildings across much of the site, it is simply not possible to provide any parking. However, the site is in a highly sustainable location approximately 200m from St. Martins Street and Market Place, where residents can catch the X39/X40 bus service which operates between Oxford and Reading via Wallingford on a half-hourly basis between Monday and Saturday and on an hourly basis on a Sunday. They can also access service X2, which operates between Oxford and Wallingford via Abingdon, Milton Park, and Didcot on a half hourly basis, Monday – Saturday, and on an hourly basis on Sundays. In addition, National Cycle Network Route 5 runs along High Street (approximately 50 metres from the development site). In addition, shops, schools and medical services are all within easy walking distance. With such good access to public transport and other town centre facilities residents would not need vehicles to access day to day services.
- 6.15 The applicant has completed surveys of the public car park immediately east of Goldsmiths Lane south-east of the proposed development to support their conclusion that there will be adequate nearby parking for residents who may have cars. These surveys show that both of the peak hours of usage by the general public are within the daytime and at a time when residents are unlikely to need to park there. OCC highway dispute the applicant's assertion for the following reasons,
- the car park, which has 137 spaces, might lose some spaces due to the construction of another development that will back on to it,
 - the car park does not allow resident permits, and
 - at a site visit mid-afternoon on a week day showed that the car park was full.
- Even with the question of demand on local car parks due to the presence of double yellow lines in surrounding streets, residents who have cars are unlikely to park unsafely. OCC consider that this issue is an amenity problem rather than one of highway safety, and not a reason for objection.
- 6.16 **Cycle parking.** Cycle parking for 27 bicycles would be provided within one of the buildings. A communal courtyard would be provided for amenity space for the flats which includes covered parking for a further 7 bicycles and uncovered bicycle parking for 6 visitors within the site. These facilities are considered acceptable.

- 6.17 **Refuse collection.** Paragraph 6.15 of Oxfordshire County Council's Residential Roads Design Guide states that a refuse vehicle must be able to reach refuse collection within 5m for large communal refuse bins. The plans show bin storage is provided immediately adjacent to the access which indicates that this is possible with the refuse lorry stationed on Goldsmiths Lane. On this basis there is no reason for objection.

Summary of highway comments. The Highway Engineer has no objection to the scheme subject to a number of conditions in relation to the travel information packs, a construction traffic management plan and drainage.

- 6.18 **Impact on the Heritage assets.** Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 134 makes clear that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

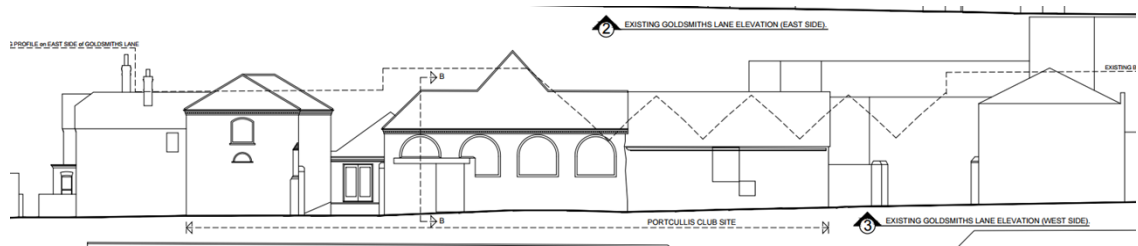
Paragraph 137 encourages LPAs to look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 138 recognises not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

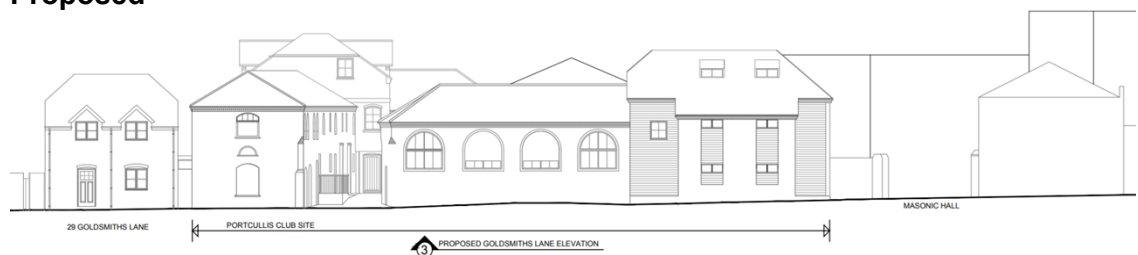
- 6.19 **Character and setting of the listed buildings.**

Overall, the principle of the proposed demolitions and conversions are acceptable and largely respond to the industrial character of the site. Officers have no objection to the addition of another storey over the existing single storey range on Goldsmiths Lane. There is a variety of different roof levels along the whole length of the road and the addition of a further storey will add to this variety. Whilst this will further enclose this part of Goldsmiths Lane, I consider that the increase in eaves level will not result in excessive height adjacent to the other retained buildings such that the setting of the listed building opposite will not be compromised.

**6.20 Elevation to Goldsmiths Lane
Existing**



**6.21 Elevation to Goldsmiths Lane
Proposed**



6.22 Character of the conservation area.

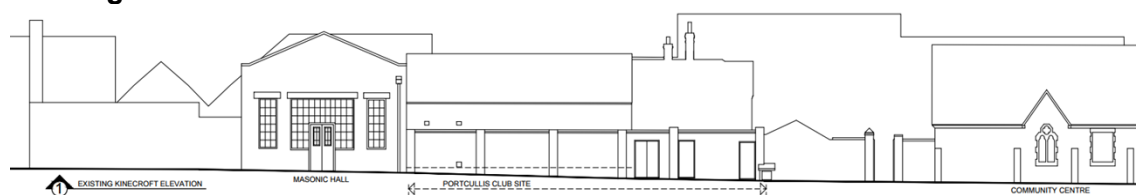
The Wallingford Conservation Area appraisal was adopted in 2018 and the proposed scheme has been considered with regard to the significance of the conservation area, and in line with Historic England's Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (2016). In accordance with paragraph 129 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated conservation area and other assets have been assessed and the potential impact of the application scheme on the heritage assets has been duly considered.

6.23 Overall, the proposal will enhance the special interest of the conservation area and is in keeping with the simple former industrial character of this part of the conservation area on Goldsmiths Lane and adjoining open space of the Kinecroft. The scheme is not significantly different in many respects from the previous scheme and design and conservation area impact were found to be acceptable and were not included as refusal reasons.

6.24 Setting of Scheduled Monument.

The elevation to the Kinecroft has not changed significantly from the previous scheme which was not refused on grounds of design or heritage impact. Your officers consider the design to be in keeping with the historic and simple industrial nature of this part of the conservation area and will not compromise the setting of the Scheduled Monument.

**6.25 Elevation to Kine Croft
Existing**



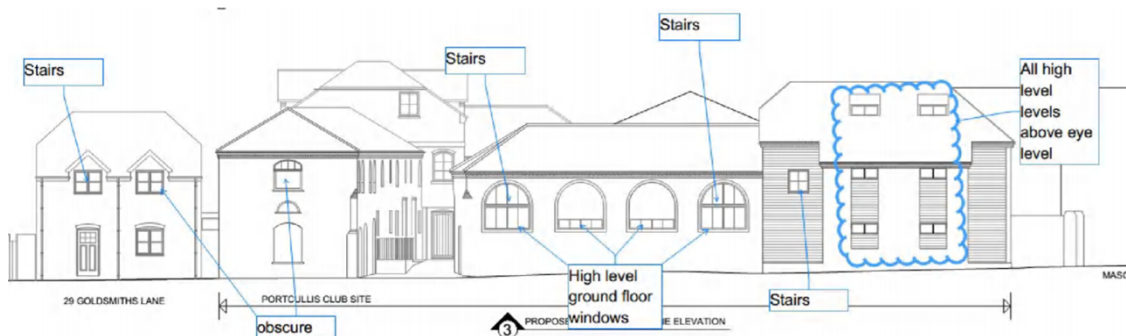
6.26 **Elevation to Kine Croft
Proposed**



- 6.27 **Amenity/ Provision of gardens.** Minimum standards for garden areas for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in Policy D3 of the Local Plan. In this case a minimum of 50 square metres of private garden area would be required for each 2 bedroom units and 35 square metres for one bed units. The lowercase text to policy D3 does however make it clear that schemes involving the conversion of existing buildings to residential in town centres, conservation areas or affecting listed buildings may be exempted from the recommended standards if all other relevant policy criteria are met. Some of the units have their own private garden areas, all have access to the paved communal courtyard but many of the units are below the required standard. However, there is easy access to the adjacent Kine Croft and Bull Croft park and other town centre amenities which more than makes up for any lack of private space.
- 6.28 **Affordable Housing.** Policy CSH3 of the SOCS requires that in housing developments of 3 or more units, a 40% provision of affordable housing should be made. However, in May 2016 the Court of Appeal effectively re-instated the Government's ministerial statement on affordable housing from November 2014. This means that developments of no more than 10 homes or with a gross floorspace not exceeding 1,000 sq m would be exempted from levies for affordable housing and tariff-based contributions. In this case the scheme proposes a net gain of 13 units and the requirement to provide affordable housing is triggered.
- 6.29 The previous scheme was refused on the grounds that no affordable housing was included. However, when refusing the previous scheme government guidance about the application of the Vacant Building Credit (VBC) was not taken into account. The VBC is designed to encourage and speed up the redevelopment of previously developed land which is more costly to develop than greenfield land. National policy on this is expressed in the PPG. At Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 23b-021- 20160519 it states that where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought. Affordable housing contributions will therefore only be payable for any increase in floorspace.
- 6.30 Thus although policy would appear to require 40% of the gain in dwellings (13 times 0.4= 5 units) affordable housing can only be considered on the gain in floor space due to the application of VBC. The existing total floorspace is 1,002sqm (excluding No29) and thus contributions could legitimately be sought only on the gain of 84sqm. The calculation for requiring affordable housing would be 40% of 84sqm i.e. 34sqm.
- 6.31 However, in addition to VBC, the applicants are making a viability argument as Policy CSH3 does allow for schemes not to deliver affordable housing if this would render the development unviable. There are considerable additional costs when developing a restricted urban site, including demolitions and site clearance, together with costs of adapting the existing structures, where retained. The submitted viability study

demonstrates that the scheme is only just viable for the scheme proposed and if any affordable housing was provided the scheme would not be viable. Where viability is an issue Policy CSH3 provides for a reduced or no provision of affordable housing which is the case with this scheme. In this case, given the VBC and viability factors your officers do not think that the provision of affordable housing is reasonable.

- 6.32 **Housing mix.** Policy CSH4 of the SOCS seeks an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes and on schemes of over 10 dwellings, 10% should be designed to meet current lifetime home standards. This scheme would be made up of 1 and two bedroom units, which does not strictly meet the requirements of policy CSH4. However, as this accommodation will provide small units in a highly sustainable location and given the range of property sizes in the area and the need for small units there is no objection in this case. A condition is recommended in respect of the provision of lifetime homes.
- 6.33 **Neighbour impact.** The main residential neighbours affected by this proposal are the properties in The Mint on the opposite side of Goldsmiths Lane. The windows on the existing elevation to Goldsmiths Lane have been previously blocked and do not offer views onto the properties opposite. The Mint properties have a number of windows at varying levels and of varying sizes looking onto Goldsmiths Lane. Residents of the Mint have expressed concerns about potential direct overlooking between windows at a distance of some 4.5 metres. The applicant has taken on board the concerns of The Mint residents in the design of the elevation facing Goldsmiths Lane. All windows on this elevation are either high level, serve stairs or are obscured glazed and a condition is recommended to ensure that these windows are retained as such.
- 6.34 **Proposed elevation to the mint**



- 6.35 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).** The council's CIL charging schedule has been adopted and applies to relevant proposals from 1 April 2016. CIL is a planning charge that local authorities can implement to help deliver infrastructure and to support the development of their area, and is primarily calculated on the increase in footprint created as a result of the development. In this case CIL is liable for the new areas of floor space amounting to **£ £14,170.36**.
- 6.36 **Oxfordshire County Council Infrastructure contributions.** The County Council require a S278 agreement for the road improvements and this will follow after the granting of planning permission. The County Council have also asked for contributions for improvements to the bus service. There is no legal agreement proposed for this development and given the viability issues no contributions are sought from this development. The developer will have to fund waste bins and street naming.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 As set out under the 'principle of development' section of this report this application needs to be assessed against the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 14 of the NPPF unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The report describes the proposals in full and assesses the proposal against the relevant material planning considerations. The three strands of sustainable development are set out at paragraph 7 of the NPPF as economic, social and environmental. My conclusions against each of the strands is summarised below.

Wallingford is a sustainable location where infill development and redevelopment of existing sites is permitted in principle.

The loss of the community facility appears to be justified in the supporting information. The scheme would reduce the footprint of the existing building removing elements that are not attractive and do not contribute positively to the character of the area. The retained historic elements can be accommodated on the site in a way that conserves the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and enhances the character of the conservation area.

The design and materials will better reflect local vernacular and building materials and would positively enhance the wider character of the area, the setting of the conservation area or the setting of listed buildings. The site affords some amenity space but is immediately adjacent to a public park which will offset the under provision on site.

Parking concerns are noted but in this highly sustainable location the scheme could function as a car free development.

Economic role

The Government has made clear its view that house building plays an important role in promoting economic growth. In economic terms, the scheme would provide construction jobs and some local investment during its build out, as well as longer term expenditure in the local economy supporting the ongoing vibrancy of the town. I consider that moderate weight should be afforded to this benefit.

Social role

The proposal helps to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply small units required to meet the needs of present and future generations. It also does this by creating a high quality built environment. I consider moderate weight should be given to these social benefits.

Environmental role

In environmental terms, the scheme offers opportunities for enhancement of the area by bringing back the buildings into a viable new use, which is a matter to which I afford moderate weight. The impacts on the character of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings and the Scheduled Monument is also acceptable.

Taking into account the benefits of the development and weighing these against the limited harm, I consider that the proposal represents a sustainable development, consistent with Para.14 of the NPPF and Policy CS1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. The proposal would contribute towards the objective to boost the supply of housing, consistent with Para.47 of the NPPF.

Therefore, placing all of the relevant material considerations in the balance I conclude that the limited adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal and recommend the application for approval. The scheme would not result in a materially harmful unneighbourly impact to adjacent properties. An under provision of normal parking standards is acceptable given the previous use on the site and the highly sustainable location. As such the development accords with the relevant development plan policies and the provisions of the NPPF.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement three years - full planning permission.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Works to match existing.**
- 4. Details of refuse and recycling storage shall be submitted.**
- 5. Further photographic recording required.**
- 6. Construction traffic management.**
- 7. Travel information pack.**
- 8. Highways drainage.**
- 9. Wildlife protection (mitigation as approved).**
- 10. Archaeology (submission and implementation of written scheme of investigation).**
- 11. Air quality.**
- 12. Remediation method statement and verification report.**
- 13. Withdrawal of permitted development (Part 1 all classes).**
- 14. Cycle parking.**
- 15. Hours of operation for construction.**
- 16. Indoor noise levels.**
- 17. Lighting.**
- 18. Control of dust during construction.**
- 19. Obscure glazing/high level to windows on Goldsmiths Lane frontage.**
- 20. Lifetime homes.**

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