

APPLICATION NO.	P14/S1262/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	24.4.2014
PARISH	DIDCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Bernard Cooper Mr Steve Connel
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs H Swanborough
SITE	Land adjoining 31 Church Street Didcot Oxfordshire, OX11 8DQ
PROPOSAL	Erection of a new detached dwelling.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	453030/189930
OFFICER	Mrs K Gould

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation is contrary to the view of the Town Council.
- 1.2 The site lies adjacent to no 31 Church Street, Didcot which lies in the heart of the Didcot Northbourne conservation area. The site is currently a predominantly open tarmaced area in between numbers 31 Church Street and flats to the west. The site has been used to support the applicant's taxi business for a long period of time but is now considered to be surplus to requirements of the business. Previous to this, a small church meeting room stood on the site but was removed in the 1980's.
- 1.3 The site which extends to some 0.035 hectares, lies within the built up limits of Didcot within walking distance of the station and town centre. It backs onto the rear gardens of numbers 18 and 16 East Street. An Ordnance Survey extract is **attached** at appendix 1.
- 1.4 This proposal has been submitted following a pre application advice request with your planning and conservation officers ref. P13/S2280/PEM.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission to erect a single, detached, two storey 4 bedroom dwelling with integral single garage.
- 2.2 The design of the proposed dwelling is traditional with stonecills, lintels and string coursing within red brick elevations under a slate roof. A projecting gable and flat roofed canopy are proposed at the front whilst a more contemporary flat roof element is included at the rear with a contrasting rendered finish. A copy of the proposed elevations and floor area is **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Didcot Town Council – Object – Due to insufficient parking and amenity land.

Conservation Officer - No objection . The site is within the Didcot Northbourne Conservation Area. This proposal is for a new 4 bedroom detached dwelling with an integral garage. The character of the conservation area is fairly mixed. This proposal has responded to pre-application advice and I consider that the design and scale of the

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proposal would be sympathetic to the established character of the area. The choice of materials would also be in-keeping with the character of the conservation area. Pre-application comments expressed concern that the previous proposal for a 3 bed dwelling and a 1 bed bungalow would constitute over development and this proposal has now been revised to provide a single 4 bedroom dwelling. Whilst the dwelling would extend across more than half of the site length, this is partly caused by an integral garage. This is in response to previous comments indicating that there was not sufficient landscaping to the front of the property. I therefore see this as a compromise which I am satisfied with. I therefore recommend approval of this application, subject to the following condition – sample of materials. (brick and slate)

OCC (Highways) - No objection. The proposed two car parking spaces (one garage and one forecourt) are necessary and a planning condition should be required to ensure that there would be no future garage conversion into accommodation.

Forestry – Comments awaited

Neighbour Object (1) It now seems inevitable that any undeveloped land will be subjected to a planning application and this is yet another one. The section of Church Street the application relates to is made up mainly of 2 or 3 bedroom houses, with the exception of one larger property adjacent to the application site that stands out in the surrounding area. A 4 bedroom house would therefore not be in keeping with the majority of houses in this section of the street. The setting back of the house has the effect of reducing the amenity/garden area of the property. Given that the application is for a 4 bed house which is probably aimed at a family market the amenity/garden area appears too small in relation to the size of the house. Over a number of years there has been a lot of infilling and new builds within this part of Northbourne Conservation area which has reduced the character of the existing buildings and overall area. The French doors at the rear of the first floor appear intrusive to the gardens it will overlook, including our own property. The intrusion is increased by the setting back of the property from the road and will add to the existing intrusion created by the flats built on the old Dales site. The position and number of trees shown in our garden are plotted incorrectly on the plans submitted. If permission is granted, no building works or storing of items/ equipment should be undertaken within their root protection area.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P04/W1101/CA](#) - Approved (26/11/2004)

Partial demolition of existing offices and erection of eight, one bedroom apartments with new access point and parking facilities.

[P04/W1100](#) - Approved (26/11/2004)

Partial demolition of existing offices and erection of eight, one bedroom apartments with new access point and parking facilities. (As amended by Drawing Nos. 0423-P01A, P02A & P03A accompanying Agent's letter dated 15 November 2004).

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CSEN3 - Historic environment
CSQ3 - Design
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
CSDID3 - New housing in Didcot

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area
- D1 - Principles of good design
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
- D1 - Good design and local distinctiveness.
- D4 - Privacy and daylight
- D10 - Waste management
- CSQ2 - Sustainable Design and Construction.

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this planning application are:

- Is the principle of a new dwelling acceptable in this location?
- Policy H4 criteria

Principle

6.2 Policy CSDID3 of the SOCS allows for housing on sites in Didcot on suitable infill sites or redevelopment sites. The housing needs survey identified a need for more four or more bedroom houses in the district. Policy H4 of the SOLP allows for housing on sites within the built-up areas of the 4 main towns of the district providing the criteria set down within the policy are met. In this particular case, the site lies within the built up area of Didcot within a predominantly residential area. As such, the principle of a dwelling on this site is acceptable.

Policy H4 criteria

6.3 Policy H4 of the SOLP allows for housing within the built up limits of the 4 main towns provided that the following criteria are met:

- (i) **an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt.** The site is currently covered with a tarmac hardstanding and lies between existing residential development. The site has no ecological value and is not an important public open space.
- (ii) **the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings.** A two storey dwelling constructed of traditional brick and slate (to the front) is in keeping with the established character of the area. This is a relatively high density area with terraced houses located directly onto the street. There are examples of other detached dwellings including no 31 and plan ref SK03 shows how the proposal would be integrated into the street. It is your officers' opinion that the proposed design of the building would reinforce local distinctiveness and

would be in keeping with its surroundings.

- (iii) **the character of the area is not adversely affected.** The site is sensitive because it lies within the Didcot Northbourne conservation area. Given the existing unattractive tarmac hardstanding at present, there is potential to enhance the character of the area. The proposed single dwelling would sit comfortably in the existing high density residential area. The current hard surfaced, open area is the anomaly within the area and the character of this area can be enhanced by this proposal in your officers' opinion. The Council's conservation officer has raised no objection to this proposal.

- (iv) **there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.** The Town Council have objected to this proposal on the grounds that there is insufficient parking and amenity space. A local resident has objected on grounds which include overlooking, and lack of garden area to the rear. The proposed dwelling has 4 bedrooms which according to the Council's standards regarding parking and garden sizes would require 2 off street parking spaces and a private amenity space of 100sqm. This proposal has a private rear garden of some 122sqm and has two off street parking spaces. As such, this proposal meets the Council's standards in relation to parking and private amenity space. The County Highway Authority has not raised an objection subject to a condition requiring the retention of the garage accommodation. Notwithstanding this, given the site's highly sustainable location within easy walking distance of the town centre facilities, parks and bus routes a slight under provision of parking and garden size would have been considered acceptable in this location. An objection has also been received from a resident in East Street regarding the overlooking which would occur from first floor windows of the new dwelling. At present the site is undeveloped so any additional windows at first floor will introduce an element of overlooking which does not exist. However, this is an urban location with many dwellings backing onto the rear gardens of other properties. An element of overlooking is therefore expected. In the Council's Design Guide, it is recommended that a minimum window to window distance of 25m is allowed when assessing planning proposals. In this particular case, a distance of some 38m would exist between the rear first floor windows and the rear elevation of the dwellings on East Street. As such, this is not considered by your officers to be unneighbourly and a refusal on overlooking grounds would not be defensible on appeal in their opinion.

- (v) **if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.** This proposal does not constitute backland development.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The principle of residential development is acceptable in this location. The proposal accords with policy H4 of the SOLP and would enhance the character and appearance of the Didcot Northbourne conservation area. The proposal exceeds the Council's standards in terms of garden size and parking and would not be overbearing or unneighbourly on the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. The proposal accords with Development Plan policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission
- 2 : Approved plans
- 3 : Matching materials (walls and roof)
- 4 : No Garage conversion into accommodation
- 5: Landscaping.

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