
APPLICATION NO.	P13/S2469/FUL and P13/S2470/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION and LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
REGISTERED	5.8.2013
PARISH	CROWMARSH GIFFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Ms Kristina Crabbe
APPLICANT	Comer Homes
SITE	Former Carmel College Mongewell Park Mongewell, OX10 8BU
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing Grade II Listed northern gate pier at the entrance to Carmel College and re-build, 1.5 metres north of existing location, and shorten the flanking wall. Additional quoin stones to north corner of wall.
AMENDMENTS	As amended by revised details and amended drawing refs (CC)(20)-ENT-01RevB and 02RevB accompanying Agent's letter dated 12 June 2014.
GRID REFERENCE	461652/187932
OFFICER	Ms S Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These applications were deferred from the Committee on 23 July 2014 to allow for further discussions in respect of infrastructure and affordable housing contributions on the applications for the redevelopment of the Carmel College site. These applications are linked to the redevelopment of the former Carmel College site.
- 1.2 The gate piers and lodge house mark the entrance to Mongewell Park adjacent to the A4074 and are dated 1889. The piers, flanking wall and lodge are listed for group value as Grade II listed buildings. The trees to the north of the site are covered by a group Tree Preservation Order and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty washes over the area.
- 1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission and listed building consent for the demolition of the existing northern gate pier at the entrance to Carmel College and to rebuild it to allow for two way traffic between the gate piers. The current gap between the piers measures some 4.5 metres and the applications seek to widen the gap to 6 metres and shorten the flanking wall. Additional quoin stones to north corner of wall are proposed to be incorporated into the foreshortened wall. Reduced copies of the plans 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.

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3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Crowmarsh Parish Council Original comments. Refuse. The proposed shortening of the flanking wall will have a detrimental effect on this grade II listed building, completely altering the visual symmetry of both wall and the main building when viewed from the north, west and east. The plans are misleading and not drawn to scale.
 Amended plans – Maintains objection
- South Stoke Parish Council Objection. This is purely to accommodate the traffic associated with the redevelopment of Carmel College. Access should be provided in a different manner.
- English Heritage No specific comments. This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your expert conservation advice.
- Forestry Officer No negative impact on the adjacent protected trees
- OCC (Archaeology) No archaeological constraints to this scheme.
- OCC (Highways) As the proposal seeks to widen the existing gate; this will improve access and egress therefore likely improving traffic flow past this structure.
- Neighbour Objectors (20) The gate posts and lodge house should be considered as one structure, as is the intention of the Grade II Listing. Materially changing one element, changes the whole. The imbalance created by this proposal throws off the architectural integrity and context of the whole structure and not only has a significant negative impact to historical accuracy but also the beautiful aesthetic of this building.
 The plans are misleading as they show an increase of 5.5m but the statement specifies 6 m.
 Moving of the gate pier is regrettable, even given that it has been moved once already. That very minor change has had little impact on the cohesion of the ensemble. However, separating the gate piers by a further 1.5 metres would widen the opening to the point that the sense of enclosure would be lost and that this will have an impact on the historic and architectural integrity of the group. It is still a much greater alteration than the previous move and the cumulative impact is extremely significant.
 The application has no justification in isolation. There is no need to widen the gateposts given the current level of traffic. Although queuing and waiting times entering and exiting the site are a problem at rush hour it does not cause traffic to back up onto the A4074. Therefore this application should be withdrawn and only be submitted as part of the bigger application for the development of 166 dwellings on the Carmel College site.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P11/W2357 and P11/W2358/LB – Current application
 Redevelopment to provide 166 residential dwellings (C3), refurbishment of Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings including provision of a restaurant community cafe and swimming pool and retention of boating facilities and associated landscaping, access and parking arrangements.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CSS1 - The overall strategy
CSEN3 - Historic environment

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan saved policies

CON1 - Demolition of listed buildings
CON3 - Alteration to listed building
CON5 - Setting of listed building
C9 - Protection of landscape features
T1–T2 - Transport requirements for new developments
RUR12 - Re-use of Mongewell Park

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 126. - Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 128 - In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 129 - Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 - In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 - 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. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.

Paragraph 133 - Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 134 - 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 136 - Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this case are;

- i. Background
- ii. The impact of development on the heritage asset
- iii. Whether it can be demonstrated that any harm or loss to the heritage is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss,
- iv. Tree issues
- v. Highway issues

Issues ii and iii are the only issues relevant in the consideration of the listed building consent application

Background.

- 6.1i In 1889, Alexander Frazer replaced the original Georgian house at Mongewell Park with a new brick mansion built in the William and Mary style. The RAF occupied the site during World War Two and, following the war, Mongewell Park was acquired by Carmel College, a Jewish boarding school, which resulted in the addition of a number of buildings within the Mongewell Park grounds, some of which have subsequently been listed. Carmel College left Mongewell Park in 1997 and the buildings have sat empty and unused ever since. Planning permission and listed building consent are currently being sought for the redevelopment of the Carmel College site for housing.

Saved Policy RUR 12 of SOLP allows for the re-use of Mongewell Park following on from the closure of Carmel College subject to certain criteria. Criterion xi) is that development should make adequate provision for access to the site. The lower case text to the policy acknowledges that the site is accessed by a relatively narrow road from the A4074 and identifies the need to consider the access and wider transport implications of any new uses. The gap between the existing gate piers is currently 4580mm and is not wide enough to allow passage for two way traffic; it creates a pinch point to the free flow of traffic entering and leaving the site from and to the A4074. The narrow width between the gate piers has been a longstanding problem but as the site has not been in use as a boarding school since 1997 traffic levels have been relatively low and the pinch point has not caused any significant highway problems. The restricted width of the gate piers is however a constraint to the redevelopment or even re-use of the site. The current applications for the relocation of the gate piers attempt to remove this constraint to provide an improved access to accommodate the traffic associated with the re-use/redevelopment of the site. The applications relating to the redevelopment of Mongewell Park are considered under a separate report.

Impact of development on the Heritage asset.

- 6.1ii The applications seek full planning permission and listed building consent for the demolition and re-construction of one of the gate piers and the shortening of the flank wall; these are both heritage assets. The NPPF attributes great weight to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (section 12). Paragraph 132 of the NPPF acknowledges that the significance of a designated heritage asset can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. It goes on to state that substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Paragraph 134 also 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. In accordance with the NPPF advice, saved policy CON1 of SOLP resists the demolition of any listed building and saved Policy CON3 requires that any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities that make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.

Description of the asset.

- 6.1iii The gateway comprises two inner gate piers (piers 2 and 3) and two outer gate piers (piers 1 and 4), both constructed of Portland stone, linked via low brick walls to form a U-shaped gateway. The gateway, including the lodge, was built in 1889, and is attributed to the architect R.S. Wornum, when he was also working on the main house. Together, they form an interesting group which are all listed grade II for the group value. The main house itself was not considered worthy of listing. The walls and piers are detailed as follows;

- The three sides of the Portland stone gate piers which are not linked to the walls have recessed panels, some of which feature decorative carved detail.
- The east facing panels of the inner gate piers (facing towards the main road) feature a carved stag's head set within a strapwork cartouche, with a carved drop of fruit and flowers.
- The west facing panels (looking towards Mongewell Park) feature the carved side profile of female face wearing a simple head dress set within a stone strapwork cartouche, with a carved drop of large flowers.
- The sides of the gate piers facing inwards (towards each other) have been left blank; though still feature the recessed panels.
- The outer gate piers feature only the carved design of the stag head and cascading drop of fruit and flowers. This design is carved on all of the three sides that are not connected to a flanking wall.
- The main body of the piers sit upon moulded stone plinths and are topped with moulded stone caps and ball finials.
- The inner and outer piers are linked via low brick walls, with stone quoins positioned where the piers and walls are connected. The walls are built upon a stone base and topped with moulded stone coping

In this case, there is clear evidence that the gate pier proposed for rebuilding has already been moved to widen the gate opening (the original footprint is visible on the driveway), the flank wall has also been shortened and rebuilt; these works probably occurred in 1963. The gate pier will be removed and reconstructed to create an opening of 6 metres, an increase to the existing opening of just over 1.5 mm. The increase is needed to satisfy the requirements of Oxfordshire County Council highways. Whilst this alteration regrettable, the fact that the pier has already been moved and rebuilt does reduce its architectural and historic significance. The small increase in the proposed width of the opening, and the very detailed methodology provided by the applicants for the work, are also relevant considerations. Other alternatives to providing a suitable access to this site have been considered and discounted and on this basis there are exceptional circumstances to justify this proposal. Subject to conditions to ensure the materials and methodology are appropriate and that the rebuilding works are carried out the proposal is acceptable in your officers view

Impact on trees.

- 6.1iv The proposed works do not involve works within the root protection areas of any protected trees.

Highway issues.

- 6.1v As the proposal seeks to widen the existing gate; this will improve access and egress therefore likely improving traffic flow past this structure.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Your officers recommend that planning permission and listed building consent are granted for the relocation of the gate pier and the shortening of the flank wall. The heritage asset has been altered in the past and the further increase in the gap between the piers is required to facilitate the redevelopment of the wider site. Other options to provide an alternative access to the site have been explored and discounted and, given the exceptional circumstances, the works to the heritage asset are justified provided that the gate pier is rebuilt in it revised location. In other respects the proposal accords with the Development Plan Policies.

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8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions

- 1 : Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2 : Approved plans**
- 3 : Submission of details**
- 4 : Gate pier and wall to be rebuilt immediately**

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Grant Listed building Consent subject to the following conditions

- 1 : Commencement 3 yrs – Listed building consent**
- 2 : Approved plans**
- 3 : Submission of details**
- 4 : Gate pier and wall to be rebuilt immediately**

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