

<b>Application No:</b> 09/00523/F	<b>Ward:</b> Bicester West	<b>Date Valid:</b> 17.04.09
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr J Mullins	
<b>Site Address:</b>	Garage Block adjacent to 32 Langford Gardens, Bicester	

**Proposal:** Demolish 2 garage blocks and erect 3 no. three bedroom houses. Alterations to street layout.

## 1. Site Description and Proposal

### 1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Langford Gardens is a small cul de sac located off Danes Road, Bicester. This forms part of a much larger estate of older housing within the town. The cul de sac comprises very similar terrace properties with the garage court the subject of this application located on the junction with Danes Road.

The court comprises a total of 7 prefabricated garages and to the east of the proposed dwellings a block of 4 garages is also to be demolished. The garages are all owned by Charter Community Housing and their records show that only 6 of these garages are occupied. The applicant has submitted information which shows that there are 5 empty garages in other courts off Langford Gardens and according to the agent, the current occupiers of the garages will be offered alternative garages from this vacant stock.

The garages are located on a rectangular shaped parcel of land. The applicants consider that the redevelopment of this site would reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour as it would remove a currently unobserved area.

### 1.2 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application 07/01282/F Demolition of existing garages and erection of a terrace of 3 no. three bedroom houses - Withdrawn on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 as the Highway Liaison Officer required more information on alternative parking/garaging arrangements for the existing tenants.

Application 08/01414/F Demolition of 7 no. garages to be replaced by 3 no. terraced houses plus six car parking spaces – Refused on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008. Reason for refusal ‘The proposed layout would result in the loss of on-street parking opportunities for surrounding properties to the detriment of both amenity and road safety contrary to the requirements of Policy T8 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and saved Policy TR2 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.’

### PROPOSAL

#### 1.2

This is a full application seeking consent for the redevelopment of the site to construct 3 new dwellings. These dwellings will be for **Social Housing** and not private residential dwellings. The scheme includes the demolition of 11 garages in total. The scheme includes the provision of 6 car parking spaces for the three new

dwelling and 11 car parking spaces located to the east of the proposed dwellings.

This application follows a previous planning application on the same site application 08/01414/F which was refused due to concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on highway safety due to insufficient car parking provision. The agent and applicant have undertaken a parking survey of the site and the locality and submitted this with the application and the scheme now includes parking provision for 17 cars within the application site.

This application is one of a number of pre-application projects that are being looked at for new housing development within the District to replace existing old style garage courts. To date this Council has entertained at least three other planning applications within the District and is currently considering at least three other sites throughout the District at pre application stage.

## 2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of a site notice, press notice and neighbour letters. The last date for comments was 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

## 3. Consultations

- 3.1 **Bicester Town Council** have raised an objection to the application. They state that 'The development will result in an over-development of the area and will be of no benefit to either residents or the surrounding area. Loss of amenity: parking is already a major issue for residents and this would be compounded further should this application be approved. Vehicle access: in particular access for emergency vehicles concerns have been previously raised re. access for fire tenders etc. safety issues for residents'
- 3.2 **Oxfordshire County Council Highway Liaison Officer** has raised no objection to the application subject to planning conditions to ensure car parking is retained and footpath provided.
- 3.3 **Thames Water** no objection to the application on sewerage infrastructure grounds. With regard to surface water drainage they consider that it is up to the developer to make sure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. They suggest that an informative is attached to any planning consent. This has been included in the conditions above.
- 3.4 **Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist** has stated 'that the proposal does not appear to directly affect any presently known archaeological sites. However, our records do indicate the presence of known archaeological finds nearby, and this should be borne in mind by the applicant. If archaeological finds do occur during development the applicant is asked to notify the County Archaeologist in order that he may make a site visit or otherwise advise as necessary. Suggest a note to the applicant.

### 3.5 **Third Party Representations**

Seven third party representations have been received to the application from properties adjacent to the site. These comments are summarised as follows:

1. The local inhabitants have been parking their cars behind the garages ever since the houses were built
2. The application states that the space is a likely point for anti social behaviour but it seems that the alley created on the north eastern side of the site may be more likely to cause a concern
3. The replacement parking offered is some distance from the garages that are to be removed
4. The redevelopment will result in an area that is not big enough to manoeuvre emergency vehicles
5. Parking is already an issue in the area. The proposed development will put considerable strain on parking in the area
6. The impact these houses will have on the surrounding area during demolition and then construction.
7. Increased activity on the roads.
8. Noise.
9. Safety – there are a lot of young children in the area and elderly too
10. Only building three houses on the site is a waste of resources and expense.
11. Three additional houses will introduce a further potential for 6+ vehicles to the already limited access area
12. The current congestion and parking issues cause safety issues
13. Access to the rear of many houses on Danes Road and Langford Gardens will be made considerably more difficult without the access area in front of the garages
14. The back of several properties receive sunlight from the direction of the garages. The proposed development will obstruct light on the ground floor for substantial periods of the year.

## **4. Relevant Planning Policies**

- 4.1 **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering sustainable development  
Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing  
Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13): Transport**
- 4.2 **Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (The South East Plan)**  
Policy T4: Parking  
Policy BE1: Management for an urban renaissance  
Policy H5: Housing Design and Density
- 4.3 **Cherwell Local Plan November 1996**  
Policy C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development  
Policy C30: Design of new residential development
- 4.4 **Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2004**  
Policy H1a: Location of new housing  
Policy H11: Windfalls (Bicester)  
Policy TR1: Transport and development  
Policy TR11: Parking

Policy D1: Urban Design Objectives  
Policy D3: Local Distinctiveness

## 5. Appraisal

### 5.1 Siting of the new dwellings with regard to the character of the surrounding area

The existing built form adjacent to the garage court comprises mainly terrace housing in average blocks of 6. There are some larger semi detached properties on Danes Road. The form of development comprises straight terraces and staggered terraces.

The proposal is for three residential terraced properties situated in a block fronting onto the cul de sac. Plot 1 and 2 are adjoined with a gable front to the east elevation and plot 3 is set forward of plot 1 and 2 by 2 metres with a gable front to the east elevation. Number 32 Langford Gardens sits adjacent to the last plot of the three, with an access pathway measuring 2m running between the two properties.

The new dwellings are of a staggered form which is a characteristic of other dwellings within Danes Road and therefore the proposal is considered to respect the existing form of adjacent properties. The layout provides a clear front and rear garden area with parking to the front. In addition, the ridge heights are in keeping with what has been built in the locality.

In terms of the character of the surrounding area, this is clearly residential with clear boundaries and parking areas defined. The proposed development is considered to respect this character and also enhance the area by removing a number of old style, prefabricated garages.

The siting of the proposed dwellings meets the requirements in respect of protecting residential amenity. The distance between the rear of the properties on Danes Road and the proposed dwellings is in excess of 22 metres and is sufficient to avoid any adverse impact in terms of overlooking or loss of light.

## 5.2 Design and appearance of the new dwellings

The dwellings have a very specific floor layout comprising, an open plan living/dining room area, a kitchen and WC on the ground floor with three first floor bedrooms, ample storage with under stair cupboards and the layout also provides the ability for future lift provision to be installed if necessary.

The properties are to be constructed from brick with the addition of soldier course bands, storm porches and projecting gables to create some interest visually in the buildings. The Case Officer has raised some minor design issues with the agent regarding the projecting gable to the front plot 1 and 2. This gable is a large projection and it has been requested that the first floor windows be sited closer together in order to try and reduce the bulk of brick work at first floor level and an increase in the roof pitch of the gable to be more in keeping with the gable to plot 3.

The side elevation of plot 1 is blank and therefore minimal surveillance is achieved to the area between Langford Gardens and Danes Road. It has been suggested to the agent that an opening, in the form of a window be sited in this elevation at first floor or ground floor level. Amended plans are expected to be submitted prior to the meeting of Planning Committee and will be fully report to the meeting.

The boundary treatment on the public sides of the development is 1.8m high walls with close boarded panels to the boundary. This is considered to be in keeping with the existing built form within the area where most of the boundary treatments are either brick wall or close boarded fence. All the materials are in keeping with the existing appearance of the adjacent properties.

## 5.3 Access and parking arrangements

The access to the properties for vehicular traffic is taken from the existing Langford Gardens access into the former garage and parking court to the east of the proposed dwellings. The existing access to the garages sited in place of the new dwellings is to be closed off.

In terms of pedestrian routes into the development, again these are taken from the existing footpath into this part of Langford Gardens and to the front of the dwellings a new footpath is to be constructed along with a new side access between 32 Langford Gardens and plot 3 and one also to the side of plot 1. There is also a new grass verge proposed running alongside plot 1.

The access and manoeuvring area has been designed to include new dropped kerbs for access into the new parking spaces created for the new dwellings and the Highway Authority is happy with the arrangement as detailed. The addition of three extra dwellings is not considered to make a significant impact on the established residential area which is considered to be capable of absorbing the activity generated by these new dwellings.

The new dwellings are provided with 2 car parking spaces each which is in accordance with current highway standards.

The area to the east of the proposed new dwellings has been enlarged by the slight

resiting of the kerb to the front of the dwellings. The area to the east of the new dwellings can therefore accommodate 11 parking spaces which are to be laid out as shown on the submitted plans. In total the scheme includes 17 car parking spaces which the Local Highway Authority are happy to support the scheme in highway safety terms.

The application has been accompanied by a parking survey of the area. Of the 11 garages affected by the proposal only 6 are currently rented with tenants, with a total of 5 being vacant. These 6 garage tenants can be relocated to nearby garage block D which has 5 vacant garages, and one tenant relocated to nearby Danes Road. The current proposals aim to formalise the parking arrangements to the east of the new dwellings. As identified in the parking survey, up to 14 cars were parked in Langford Gardens at any one time, the current proposals will allow for 11 of these vehicles to park safely and at peak times. It is considered that any overflow parking can be accommodated safely in the adjacent roads or within the garage court adjacent to block D without adversely affecting highway safety.

The proposed development provides sufficient car parking for the new development and existing parking pressure and will not adversely affect highway safety and is considered to be in accordance with policy T4 of The South East Plan and guidance contained with PPG13: Transport.

#### 5.4 Emergency vehicle access

A number of objections have been received to the planning application which makes reference to the development creating problems for the manoeuvring and operation of emergency vehicles such as fire appliances.

The Case Officer of the previous application spoke to a representative of the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue HQ at Kidlington regarding this matter. In order to deal with an emergency such as a fire, the appliances would manoeuvre their appliance to the nearest fire hydrant where the water would then be pumped through the appliance to the hoses. In order to comply with the requirements of Building Regulation requirements, a fire appliance must be able to gain emergency access to a building within 45m. Surrounding dwellings can be accessed to within 45 metres without having to negotiate into the parking court created.

Having assessed the existing street formation and then compared this with what is proposed there is not considered to be an issue with this application preventing an emergency vehicle such as a fire appliance from getting access to existing properties should they need to.

#### 5.5 **CONCLUSION**

Overall, this detailed proposal is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the design and appearance of the proposed buildings fits in with the character of the surrounding area and efforts have been made by the applicants to accommodate existing tenants of the garages in alternative locations and have illustrated the local parking requirements and provided car parking to replace the garages which are to be removed.

## **6. Recommendation**

**Approval**, subject to the receipt of amended plans and to the following conditions:

1. 1.4A – Full Permission: Duration Limit (3 years) (RC2)
2. 2.0A – Details of Materials and External finishes (RC4) Insert 'dwellings'
3. 4.13CD – Parking and Manoeuvring area retained (RC13BB)
4. 14.12AA - .....Surface, Laid out etc (RC14A) insert 'parking'

### **Planning Notes**

1. Thames Water have been consulted in respect of the application and a copy of their reply is enclosed for your information.
2. Oxfordshire County Council Archaeologist has been consulted in respect of the application and a copy of their reply is enclosed for your information.

### **Reason for the grant of planning permission**

The Council, as the local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Incorporating and adhering to the above conditions, the development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposed development is of a design, size and style that is appropriate and will not unduly impact on neighbouring properties. The development proposes sufficient car parking and would therefore not introduce a highway danger. As such the proposal is in accordance with saved policies C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan, policies H11, TR11, D1, D2 and D3 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan and policies T4 and BE1 of The South East Plan and guidance contained within PPS1: Delivering sustainable development and PPG13: Transport. For the reasons given above<sup>3</sup> and having regard to all other matters raised including third party representations, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions as set out above.

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