

Application 11/00385/CAC	No:	Ward: Bicester Town	Date 08/03/2011	Valid:
Applicant:	Mr John Blunsden			
Site Address:	31 North Street, Bicester			

Proposal: Demolition of existing rear extensions and outbuildings and removal of prefabricated garaging

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is located within Bicester town centre, within the Conservation Area. There are no listed buildings within close proximity to the site. The site is accessed direct from North Street, which is a one way road leading onto Sheep Street.
- 1.2 The site is bound at the rear by Twitchers Alley, a public footpath which links North Street with Field Street. To the south east of the site, along the frontage, lies no.29 North Street, which is used as commercial premises. Beyond that lies an area of public open space known as 'Tollgate Seats', which is paved, planted and has public seating. To the north of the site, lies no. 33 North Street, which is a residential property, bound by a high brick wall and outbuildings to the rear.
- 1.3 The existing dwelling (31 North Street) comprises a two storey, stone built property, with timber fenestration and plain roof tiles. The property has a collection of outbuildings/single & two storey extensions at the rear. The rear additions to the existing dwelling are of some merit, but the outbuildings are more modern, pre-fabricated concrete structures which are unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The replacement of these buildings with a two storey extension to provide three dwellings is part of a separate application for full planning permission (11/00279/F).
- 1.4 The proposal involves the demolition of the rear extensions and more modern pre-fabricated outbuildings.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notices/press notice The final date for comments was 8 April 2011.
- 2.2 No letters of representation have been received.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 Bicester Town Council – no comments received at the time of writing this report. Any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

- 3.2 Senior Conservation Officer – Objects to the proposal, on the basis of detriment to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. Relevant Planning Policies

- 4.1 National Policy Guidance:
PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
- 4.2 Regional Policy Guidance:
Policy BE6 - Management of the historic environment
- 4.3 Local Policy in the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996:
Policy C23 – Retention of positive features
- 4.4 Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011
Policies EN39 & EN40 – Preserve/enhance Conservation Areas

5. Relevant Planning History

- 5.1 10/00065/F (WDN) Demolition of existing extension and erection of 3 no. dwellings.
- 11/00279/F (PCO) Demolition of existing rear extensions and outbuildings and removal of prefabricated garaging. Development of 3.no dwellings, incorporating the original dwelling

6. Appraisal

- 6.1 The key issue to consider in the determination of this application is the impact of the demolition on the character and appearance of the Bicester Conservation Area.
- 6.2 Policy HE9.3 in PPS5 states that where a proposal has a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm, the Local Planning Authority should weigh the public benefit of the proposal against the harm and recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.
- 6.3 31 North Street in particular is singled out for mention in the conservation area appraisal because of the existence of rear sheds. It is the intention to remove these buildings to facilitate the new extension. It is clear that the more modern, pre-fabricated concrete structures do not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area and their removal will undoubtedly enhance the area.
- 6.4 The rear extensions are more traditional, historic structures. However, it is not considered that their removal would result in a harmful impact to the Conservation Area. Rather, it would preserve the typically open part of this section of North Street character area which is visible from Twitchers Alley and comprises large areas of hardstanding (rear of no. 29) and large rear domestic gardens.
- 6.5 In my opinion, the removal of these buildings would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

7. Recommendation

Approval, subject to the following condition

1. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: Drawing no. 1104/5.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council, as local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its merits as the proposal pays proper regard to the character and appearance of its surroundings and has no undue adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such the proposal is in accordance with Government guidance contained within PPS 5, Policy BE1 of the South East Plan and saved Policy C23 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. For the reasons given above and having proper regard to all other matters raised the Council considers that the application should be approved and Conservation Area Consent granted subject to appropriate conditions as set out above.

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