

The Henley Society (Planning)
c/o 91 St Marks Road
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire
RG9 1LP

5 August 2014

The Planning Manager (Southern Area), S.O.D.C.
Benson Lane,
Crowmarsh Gifford,
Wallingford, OX10 8NJ

Dear Sir/Madam

HENLEY SOCIETY COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Society's comments on planning applications considered recently are as follows.

- 1. P14/S0925/HH (amended) – 58 St Marks Road. Erection of two storey rear extension and front porch.** In our opinion, the rear extension is too large in relation to the existing property and is still unneighbourly.
- 2. P14/S1868/HH – 66 Reading Road. Increase the opening of the brick wall from pedestrian gate to car driveway....** The removal of the attractive pedestrian gate from this prominent location in a Conservation Area should not be permitted. There appears to be vehicle access to the garden area already, through an entrance in Hamilton Avenue, and the new entrance would detract from the attractiveness of the area and increase the visibility of parked cars.
- 3. P14/S2014/HH – 52 Albert Road. Erection of part single with part two-storey rear extension.** The two-storey element is unneighbourly.
- 4. P14/S2096/LB – Adam House, 71 Bell Street. Proposed internal works, new rooflights, repair works....** No objection to the removal of the brick wall in the side range but the conservation officer should be consulted on the internal alterations.
- 5. P14/S2127/HH – Riverside Lodge and all houses on Rod Eyot.** The need to raise the height of the buildings is accepted but we are concerned about the impact on their appearance from the popular riverside path. Some of the buildings are rather unattractive and they would become much more prominent if increased in height by about 1.5 m. We suggest that individual planning applications should be submitted with appropriate drawings.
- 6. P14/2151/FUL – St Mary's Prep School, St Andrews Road. Replacement of existing school sign with new sign and provision of new nursery school sign.** The school is in a Conservation Area and in this location we would strongly prefer hand-painted timber signs to signs involving aluminium and vinyl.
- 7. P14/S2187/FUL and 2188/LB – The Maltings, Hart Street. Proposed internal and external alterations and conversion of existing light industrial building to form two 3-bed dwellings.** This is an important listed building on a site of considerable historic interest. We are very concerned about the very substantial, mostly internal alterations, but also about some of the fenestration

(e.g. the balconette at the south gable is out of character with the plain building). The positioning of all bedrooms plus bathrooms at ground floor level would require very substantial excavations for services as well as new foundations for the proposed new piers to support the upper floor and roof trusses. The proposed deep foundations close to the historic brick and brick/flint walls (with shallow foundations) may well cause problems during construction. There may be a need for underpinning – a very major intervention and rarely acceptable in this type of situation. House 2, mostly of flint walls, is the older of the two and is particularly liable to be affected by such excavations. The proposed open plan for the first floor would require the taking out of all existing tie beams and their replacement by higher transverse beams and steel work, all of which would be detrimental to the historic fabric and integrity of the building as well as endangering its stability. By removing the tie beams, their traditional role in the A frame of the roof trusses would be lost and the masonry walls would no longer be tied to each other.

A less intensive use for the building needs to be considered. If it is to be converted to residential use there is a need to work with the existing fabric, not against it. The first floor is divided into bays by the substantial ties and these bays could well be converted to bedrooms. More than one access staircase would remove the need for head-height access throughout the first floor. Some (though not all) ties could be cut to allow for doors, as strong door frames would give stability and join the cut tie beams together. This type of conversion has been carried out successfully in many listed buildings.

Finally a comment regarding archaeology. The existing modern concrete floor is relatively thin and below it lie the previous floor or floors, possibly dating from many centuries ago. The site is in a substantial town centre burgage plot of which little is currently known. Prior to consent being granted, but after the modern floor has been carefully removed, trial archaeological excavations should be carried out. A watching brief alone is certainly unacceptable for this location.

8. **P14/S2199/HH – 77 Reading Road. Proposed part single and part two- storey side/rear extensions.** This proposal would result in a serious over-development of the site and the two storey element would be particularly unneighbourly.
9. **P14/S2217/HH – 59 St Andrews Road. Single garage to side aspect, with dormer to sloping roof and conversion of existing garage to room.** We consider the design to be poor, especially with the garage projecting forward of the front elevation.
10. **P14/S2248/FUL – Land adjacent to 4 St Andrews Road, Singers Lane. Erection of single storey detached dwelling with associated parking.** The introduction of a new bungalow at this location, immediately adjacent to a Conservation Area would have a number of unfavourable consequences by its impact on neighbouring gardens, by its out-of-character flat roofed appearance, by making access to existing garages more difficult and by adding to traffic movements in the narrow Singers Lane.

We have no objection to, or comments on, the following applications:

P14/S1930/HH – 21 Vicarage Road. Proposed side extension.

P14/S2067/HH – 6 Blandy Road. Single storey side and rear extension.

P14/S2121/HH – 38 King James Way. Replace conservatory with single storey rear extension.

P14/S2292/T56 – Wenborn Wood, Reading Road. Replacement of monopole and equipment cabinet...

P14/S1965/HH – 41 Gravel Hill. Removal of pebble-dash finish to facade; re-instatement of windows etc.

P14/S2214/FUL – Dry Leas Sports Ground, Marlow Road. Proposed single storey extension and refurbishment of clubhouse.

Yours faithfully

D C Whitehead (Secretary, Planning Committee)