

P25/S1973/FUL Knightstone, Station Road, Goring RG8 9HA

Comments from Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

The Council objects to this application. The Council's comments below relate to the visual impact of the development in context of neighbouring buildings and the Conservation Area overall; its design; and the proposed arrangements for residents' parking. The Council also notes that the application is described as 'Extensions and alterations including raising the roof to existing dwelling...' whereas in reality it is effectively a substantial new build.

Context

The application site is in the heart of the Goring Conservation Area and includes here buildings dating from the late 15th century to the pre-Victorian era. A Conservation Area Appraisal has been drafted and is due to go for public consultation shortly. The site is immediately opposite the Grade II Catherine Wheel Public House and the other Grade II buildings nearby are Elm Cottage, Hazel Cottage, the Old Farmhouse and the Barn and Stables. While the Council acknowledges that the existing building on the site does nothing to enhance the Conservation Area, this does not mean that any replacement building or alterations to it should not be carefully considered in relationship to the other buildings and streetscape in the Conservation Area.

Station Road was once the main street in Goring; in this part of the Conservation Area the buildings are varied but typically include buildings of a modest scale, with low mass and density - that is, small traditional cottages, some terraced, mainly two storeys in height with occasional dormers. Some are built of flint and brick (e.g. the old school, now the Community Centre), brick, brick and timber or painted white. The frontages, where not directly on the road, are walled with small cottage gardens. Next to the application site is a small red brick, former Temperance Hall, now the Public Library.

The Council points out that the applicant has made no attempt to demonstrate the scale and appearance of the proposed development in relation to the streetscape. In the Council's opinion it would have a substantial mass disproportionate to, and out of keeping with the rest of the street and its height would dominate neighbouring buildings, notably the Library next door and the Listed Catherine Wheel pub and the cottages opposite. The proposal is particularly unneighbourly to the property to the rear, White Lodge, which would be overlooked by two upper floors of windows.

Design

The proposed development would have a substantially increased footprint and height in comparison to the existing building and it is hard to see how this could be described as simply an extension and alteration. Consequently, the bulk of the building would be immediately apparent from the street. No attempt has been made in the design to lessen the impression of bulk and, while efforts have been made to reflect the local vernacular - by using flint and brick, arched brick lintels and hipped gable ends - the building will be

obtrusive rather than integrate harmoniously with the streetscape. The Council notes that the flint and brick on the front elevation is extended partly on to the side elevations. In the Council's view the effect of this is to demonstrate that the use of flint and brick is primarily cosmetic, rather than integral to the building's design and construction as is the case with the traditional buildings nearby.

In order to accommodate a third bedroom the roof is higher and more dominant overall when compared to those of the nearby cottages; the loss of a bedroom and a redesign, for example, to one and a half storeys with dormers might be more acceptable, in keeping with the surrounding area.

Parking

No properties in Station Road have car parking immediately on to the Road. There are two issues here: the appearance of parked cars by the road and safety.

The overall 'feel' of Station Road is of a traditional, narrow village street, tightly enclosed by cottages, some with enclosed front gardens, and other buildings, some set back slightly from the Road. There is no on-street car parking. The introduction of car parking spaces where a garden and low wall is currently would therefore be alien and incompatible with the conservation interest of the Road.

Safety is an important consideration. Station Road is narrow and includes a recently introduced pedestrian priority lane to improve pedestrian safety. Despite the 20mph speed limit traffic does travel at higher speeds and vehicles reversing out of the proposed spaces could cause an accident as well as posing a hazard to pedestrians.