

East Area Planning Committee

7 October 2015

Application Number: 15/01247/CT3

Decision Due by: 1 July 2015

Proposal: Conversion of farm buildings to create 2 x 2-bed dwellinghouses and erection of 2 x 3-bed two storey dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) with provision of private amenity space and associated landscaping. Formation of double carport to existing dwelling. Alterations to access and provision of additional parking.

Site Address: Brasenose Farm Cottage, Eastern By-Pass Road, Oxford
(site plan: appendix 1)

Ward: Lye Valley Ward

Agent: Mr David Grundy

Applicant: Oxford City Council

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to support the development in principle but defer the application in order to draw up a legal agreement in the terms outlined below, and delegate to officers the issuing of the notice of permission, subject to conditions on its completion:

Reasons for Approval

- 1 The proposed development would make an efficient use of a group of redundant buildings and previously developed land for residential purposes in order to deliver a balanced mix of accommodation for the Wood Farm Neighbourhood Area. The proposal would constitute a viable conservation of these under-used buildings of local interest and provide new built form that would conserve the significance of the farmstead to the benefit of the heritage asset. The proposal would provide a good standard of internal and external living environment for the future occupants of the proposed housing. The dwellings would provide a level of off-street parking which would be considered suitable for a sustainable area such as this, and a new access that would be acceptable in highway terms. The development would not introduce any significant arboricultural, ecological, or archaeological impacts and any such issues could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions. The proposed development would accord with the overall aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the

Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and Sites and Housing Plan.

- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application. However officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples of materials
- 4 Details of windows / rooflights / doors
- 5 Details of refuse and cycle storage
- 6 Landscape plan required
- 7 Landscape carried out after completion
- 8 Landscape hard surface design - tree roots
- 9 Landscape underground services - tree roots
- 10 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 11 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 12 Arch - Implementation of programme of investigation
- 13 Biodiversity Report Recommendations carried out
- 14 Surface Drainage Scheme
- 15 Detailed design of access road improvements
- 16 Visibility Splays
- 17 Parking Areas to be provided
- 18 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 19 Details of means of enclosures for all boundaries
- 20 Energy Efficiency Measures
- 21 Design - no additions to dwelling
- 22 Contaminated Land Risk Assessment

Legal Agreement

- Appropriate planning obligation to secure affordable housing contribution

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows

Core Strategy

CS2_ - Previously developed and greenfield land

CS11_ - Flooding

CS12_ - Biodiversity

CS23_ - Mix of housing

CS24_ - Affordable housing

HP11_ - Low Carbon Homes

Sites and Housing Plan

HP2_ - Accessible and Adaptable Homes

HP4_ - Affordable Homes from Small Housing Sites

HP9_ - Design, Character and Context

HP12_ - Indoor Space

HP13_ - Outdoor Space

HP14_ - Privacy and Daylight

HP15_ - Residential cycle parking

HP16_ - Residential car parking

Other Material Considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document
- Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Relevant Site History:

None

Representations Received:

Letters have been received from the following addresses. Their comments are summarised below

- 29 Glebelands; 34 East Field Close; 31 Blenheim Road (Horspath)
- The access and egress to and from Brasenose Farm is unsafe as it consists of a single track road that exits onto a dual carriageway without traffic control
- The access is inadequate for 4 dwellings as it was barely acceptable for one
- There is a lack of signage at the junction to Brasenose Farm which currently causes traffic problems because other drivers fail to understand there is an access there
- Although most users accessing Brasenose Farm access the site from Brasenose Driftway which is at slow speed, but for those access from Headington there is a concern about traffic safety even with the 50mph limit
- The exit from the site should have a slip road to enable cars to decelerate and avoid the main traffic on the dual carriageway
- The Local Plan does not designate this area as residential
- Access to school and other amenities are only available by car
- The pathway from Brasenose Farm is uneven, unkempt and requires upgrading

to enable pedestrians to walk to the traffic lights at the junction with Brasenose Driftway

- The pathway is poorly lit at night and in close proximity to high speed traffic using the ring road

Statutory Consultees:

Natural England: No comment to make on the application

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority: No objection, subject to conditions

Officers Assessment:

Background to the Proposal

1. The site is located on the outskirts of the city boundary on the eastern side of the Eastern By-pass (A40). It is bounded by allotments to the north and east respectively with Shotover Country Park beyond, and an industrial estate to the south (**appendix 1**)
2. The site comprises Brasenose Farmhouse and its outbuildings which date back to the latter part of the C17th. The farmhouse, stables, and threshing barn are the only remnants from the period that survive on site with other farm buildings demolished in the late 1960s. There are two accesses to the site, a vehicular access from the Eastern Bypass (A4), and a pedestrian access through the allotments from Brasenose Wood to the east.
3. The site is not within a conservation area and the farmhouse and outbuildings are not listed. The farmhouse has been nominated for inclusion on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register, and is of interest because it has associations with the Morris family, with William Morris living there in his childhood. The farmhouse has recently been used as accommodation for the Shotover Country Park Rangers employed by the Council, while the outbuilding was used as offices for the property maintenance team, and the other barns used for storage. The buildings are no longer in use, and as such the Council is seeking a viable use for the building.
4. Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing stables and threshing barn to create 2x2 bedroom dwellinghouses. A new two-storey building would be erected on the south-western side of the farmyard to create 2x3 bedroom dwellinghouses.
5. The proposal would also include the provision of private amenity space and landscaping associated with the new dwellings, and provision of additional parking. There would also be alterations to the access from the A40.
6. The existing farmhouse would be retained as a dwellinghouse, but the proposal includes the formation of a double car port for this dwelling.
7. Officers consider the main determining issues to be

- Principle of Development
- Balance of Dwellings
- Affordable Housing
- Site Layout and Built Form
- Residential Use
- Transport
- Landscaping
- Archaeology
- Biodiversity
- Sustainability
- Other matters

Principle of Development

8. The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value. These aims are supported through Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
9. The existing outbuildings are currently vacant with the last authorised use being as an office and storage for the city council. The reuse of these buildings and the erection of further residential uses on the opposite side of the farmyard would accord with the aims of the NPPF and Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy.

Balance of Dwellings

10. Policy CS23 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires residential development to deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet the projected future household need, both within each site and across Oxford as a whole. The mix of housing relates to the size, type and tenure of dwellings to provide for a range of households.
11. The Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (BoDSPD) sets out the appropriate housing mixes for each Neighbourhood Area within the City. The site is located within the Wood Farm Neighbourhood Area, where a reasonable proportion of new family dwellings are required within residential schemes. In this area the BoDSPD states that development proposals involving the provision of 1-3 units should not result in the net loss of a family unit of accommodation.
12. The provision of 2x2 and 2x3 bedroom units along with the retention of the existing farmhouse would be wholly consistent with Policy CS23 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the BoDSPD.

Affordable Housing

13. Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP4 states that residential development on sites with capacity for 4 to 9 dwellings, will only be granted where a financial contribution is secured towards affordable housing elsewhere in Oxford. The proposed development would therefore constitute a qualifying development under

the terms of this policy.

14. The National Planning Practice Guidance was amended in November 2014 to define the specific circumstances by which planning obligations should be sought from small scale development. This made clear that affordable housing contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less. In line with this advice, the Council resolved to not apply the terms of Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP4. However these amendments to the National Planning Practice Guidance and Ministerial Statement have recently been quashed by the high court and as a result of this decision the Council are now able to apply Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP4 in its entirety.
15. Any planning permission would need to be accompanied by a satisfactory planning obligation that secured a financial contribution towards affordable housing.

Site Layout and Built Form

16. The NPPF considers that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. This means that the level of development within any scheme should suit the sites capacity and respond appropriately and realistically to the site constraints. This is reflected in Oxford Local Plan Policy CP6. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development to demonstrate a high-quality urban design that responds to the site and its surroundings; creates a strong sense of place; attractive public realm; and provide high quality architecture. Policy CP6 and CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 also states that the siting, massing, and design of development should create an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain, scale, materials, and details of the surrounding area, and that the built form makes the most efficient use of the site in a manner that suits its capacity. This is supported by Sites and Housing Plan Policies HP9.
17. The Farmhouse and outbuildings are not statutorily listed, but have some architectural and historic interest as a survival of a C17th agricultural landscape within Shotover Country Park and also local significance with its associations with William Morris.
18. A Heritage Assessment has been prepared for the site by the Council's Heritage and Specialist Services Team in order to inform the decisions about the sites future. The assessment identifies that while not statutorily listed, the farmhouse and outbuildings as a group have some architectural and historic interest as an example of a late C17th enclosed farmstead with surviving threshing barn, stables, and animal sheds and also local significance with its associations with William Morris. The assessment concludes that the farmhouse and outbuildings would benefit from a viable and appropriate use that would then help sustain the sites heritage value and a regular programme of maintenance. A number of opportunities are also identified which would conserve or reveal the significance of the building as heritage assets. These would be the removal of the C20th interventions in the stable building; reinstatement of the historically correct form of windows, doors and fireplaces; construction of a new long building range on the

west framing the western side of the foldyard to rediscover the sense of enclosure and earlier form supporting its setting; and the careful removal of the C20th cement-rich pointing and paint

19. The proposal has been developed following extensive pre-application discussions with officers to ensure that it responds to the opportunities in the Heritage Assessment. The stables and barn would be converted into 2x2 bedroom units, and will work with the existing fabric of the building and retain its existing roof form. The existing openings in the buildings will be utilised in order to minimise the alterations to the external appearance of the buildings. It is considered that the conversion would be successful in maintaining the significance of these buildings, although care will need to be taken with the detailing of windows and rooflights in the building. This could be dealt with through a condition which reserves the approval of all the windows, doors and rooflights.
20. The proposal also includes the erection of a new building on the north-western side of the yard to create 2x3 bedroom dwellings. The building would have the appearance of a pair of buildings side by side, in a similar fashion to the Stables and Barn on the opposite side of the yard. The buildings would measure 9m (l) x 6.1m (w) and have ridge heights of 6.2m and 7.1m. The building would use natural rubble stonework, blue grey slate tiles and painted timber windows and doors. The overall size, scale and appearance of these buildings would be appropriate for the setting, and the construction of a new long building range on this side of the yard is welcomed in terms of framing the courtyard. Again the windows, doors and rooflights should be reserved for approval so as to ensure that they are appropriate and relate to the barn and stable conversion. Finally the lean-to car port to the side of the existing farmhouse would also be considered appropriate in terms of size, scale and design.
21. Overall officers consider that the proposed works would be of a size, scale and design that would preserve and better reveal the historical significance of this collection of farm buildings in accordance with the aims and objectives of the above-mentioned policies. It is also recommended that conditions are attached to seek prior approval of all materials including mortar mix, and a scheme for the retention of the stone carvings on the inside of the main threshing barn openings.

Residential Use

22. The 2x2 bedroom dwellings in the barn and stables and the 2x3 bedroom dwellings in the new dwelling which would all have internal floor sizes that comfortably exceed the indoor space standards set out within Oxford Local Plan Policies CP10 and Sites and Housing Plan Policies HP2 and HP12.
23. The units would all be provided with a private garden of suitable size for the type of accommodation proposed in accordance with Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP13.
24. A condition would need to be attached to any permission reserving approval of the means of enclosure for these private gardens and also for the location of all refuse and cycle storage.

Landscaping

25. An Arboricultural Report was submitted with the application. The site contains a number of trees which have either been planted or naturally regenerated in three principal areas, a group of Leyland cypress stands to the north of the farmhouse next to the Eastern By-pass. A linear group of trees straddles the site access drive's eastern edge, and a triangular copse lies to the west.
26. The trees to the south of the drive are unaffected by the proposals. The creation of the two-storey building (units 4 and 5) would involve the removal of the middle section of the tree belt along the drive but these are small trees and of moderate quality which are screened from external views by the surrounding trees. The Leyland cypress group to the north is also identified for removal and the area subject to indicative replacement planting, which should produce no net harm to public visual amenity in the medium term. Finally a number of small trees, mostly fruiting varieties are shown removed from within the existing garden and courtyard areas under reconfiguration of the amenity spaces around Units 1 and 2. This would be considered acceptable subject to replacement planting proposals for the paved courtyard, which can be secured under condition.
27. Having reviewed the submitted details, officers consider that the application has responded appropriately to the arboricultural constraints of existing trees, retaining the individual trees and groups of real merit. These are the triangular copse to the west of the drive, a group of trees at the southern end of the access drive, which provides a landscape foil to the proposed areas of car parking and maintains the character of the access drive which has something of the quality of a secluded country lane. Importantly the retained group will align with the triangular copse in views from the north-east to maintain screening of the industrial units to the west from the SSSI. This is an important public amenity area. An attractive early mature walnut tree adjacent to the farmhouse is also retained and the design responds to the Root Protection requirements of the tree and the spatial relationship with existing and proposed buildings is considered adequate.
28. The landscape plan should also include details of the treatment of the courtyard around the existing and new buildings to ensure that this reflects the historical significance of the farmhouse setting.
29. Therefore subject to appropriate conditions which control the replacement planting for any tree removals and respective tree protection measures, officers consider that the proposal would be acceptable in arboricultural terms under Oxford Local Plan Policies NE15, CP1, and CP11.

Transport

30. A Transport Statement and Addendum has been provided to consider the transport impacts of the proposal. The site is currently accessed via a drive from the southbound carriageway of the Eastern By-pass (A4142) which also serves the adjacent allotments. The area to the front of the existing farm buildings currently provides an informal parking area for vehicles used by the allotments.

31. Traffic Generation: The proposed dwellings will increase the number of vehicles using the access. The four dwellings will result in approximately 2.6 trips in the peak hours, which is 1 trip per 20 minutes. This is not considered a significant increase and the Local Highways Authority has raised no objection in these terms.
32. Access: The proposal will result in improvements to the existing access from the Eastern By-pass (A4142) through the widening of the entrance and access to 4.8m with kerb radii of 6.5m, and improved visibility splays. The scheme also includes signage at the junction which will make clear that there is 'no right turn' onto the Eastern By-pass allowed.
33. These works will have a benefit to all users of the access road (i.e. the proposed dwellings and allotments) as it will allow two-way traffic along the access road and remove the current sharp site access that requires drivers on the Eastern By-pass to slow when accessing the site. The applicant has also provided swept path analysis to demonstrate that refuse and emergency vehicles can enter and exit the site. In addition to the above, footway improvements are proposed on the Eastern Bypass Road from the site access to the signalised pedestrian crossing that leads to Horspath Driftway. The footway will have a width of 1.2m.
34. The Local Highways Authority have raised no objection to the access improvements subject to conditions requiring the design details for the improved access to be approved and constructed before the development is brought into use and also for the visibility splays to be provided as shown on the submitted drawings.
35. Car Parking: The proposed development would provide 2 parking spaces per dwellinghouse (including the existing farmhouse) within the courtyard of the farmyard complex. The site plan also shows 19 parking spaces outside of the farmyard complex which would be specifically allocated for the existing allotment areas.
36. This would accord with the maximum parking standards as set out within Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP16. In both cases the layout provides suitable sized spaces, which are accessible and have sufficient turning space for vehicles to manoeuvre.
37. The Local Highways Authority have raised no objection to the level of car parking, subject to a condition requiring these details to be provided prior to the occupation of the development. It will also be necessary to seek approval of the method of construction of the parking areas to ensure that it is appropriate visually for its setting and also to ensure that they employ sustainable urban drainage methods.
38. Cycle Parking: The proposal has not provided details of the cycle parking facilities for the development. Nevertheless there is sufficient space within each of the new dwellings curtilages to provide suitable space to provide the minimum

standards of 3 spaces per 3 bedroom dwelling and 2 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling. This could be secured by condition.

39. Overall officers consider that the proposed development will not create significant levels of traffic and would make adequate provision for car and cycle parking associated with the uses on site. The proposed works to improve the access road and junction with the eastern by-pass would have significant public benefit for all users of the road. As such the proposal would accord with the aims of Oxford Local Plan Policy CP1 and Sites and Housing Plan Policies HP15 and HP16

Sustainability

40. Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP11 states that all development must show how energy efficiencies have been incorporated into the development. The application has not included an energy statement to set out how this will occur for the proposed development. A condition should be attached which requests details of the energy efficiency measures to be incorporated into the building to be submitted prior to the start of works on site.

Archaeology

41. An Archaeological Evaluation by Foundations Archaeology has been submitted with the application. The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeology although current site constraints prevented the footprint of a known former farm structure being fully investigated. The results of the evaluation demonstrated that the farmyard has been subject to considerable modern disturbance however it was not possible to establish the full extent of this disturbance.
42. The application is of interest because it involves works to a historic farm complex that includes buildings of 17th century and later date. The site is also located in an area with potential for Roman, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains. The site is located 100m from the Dorchester-Alchester Roman Road which was the focus of an extensive corridor of pottery manufacturing compounds stretch from Otmoor, through east and south Oxford, towards Abingdon. This extensive manufacturing zone formed a regionally important Roman pottery industry, the remains of which are of national significance in the field of Roman studies. Previously likely kilns have been identified 160m to the north-west (OHER No 16300) and 290m to the east along the edge of Brasenose Wood (OHER No 5482). Furthermore Iron Age and Roman settlement remains have previously been excavated 130m to south-west at Brasenose Driftway (OHER No 17002) and the concentration of burials and Roman finds to the south of Brasenose Farmhouse suggest that there may have been a road side settlement in the vicinity (nearest pottery recovered 130m to the south (OHER 6157).
43. In this case, bearing in mind the character of the proposed development and the results of the heritage assessment, in line with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, a condition should be imposed that requires a written scheme of archaeological investigation and recording. The archaeological recording should consist of a Level II photographic survey and watching brief during refurbishment of the existing structures and a watching brief during ground works

for new buildings and related services. The archaeological recording should be undertaken by a professionally qualified archaeologist working to a brief issued by ourselves.

Biodiversity

44. The application has been accompanied by a Phase 1 and Preliminary Bat Survey and Bat Emergence Survey by 4 Acre Ecology Limited. The survey has identified that the small scale nature of the works on an already developed site would not have an adverse impact upon the Brasenose Wood SSSI. Natural England has raised no objection to the application
45. The Bat Emergence Survey has confirmed that the existing farmhouse and stable building is being used as a transient roost for a small number of bats. No roosts were confirmed in the other buildings despite them displaying suitable features for bats. The survey has prepared a method statement for construction works to avoid any impact upon bats. This will be applied across all of the existing buildings on site and is considered to be acceptable in terms of preventing any adverse impact upon bats on site.
46. In terms of mitigation and enhancement measures, the survey recommends the installation of a bat box in a suitable tree nearby to the development to mitigate against any temporary roost loss. In addition bat slates shall be installed in each of the roof areas, in order to provide additional access for bats between the slates and the felt, which are areas favoured by crevice dwelling bats as well as Brown Long-eared bats. The gable ends of the buildings also provide opportunities to provide bat boxes. These measures should be secured by condition.
47. Officers also consider that bird boxes should also be provided on site, which are immersed into the fabric of the converted buildings rather than attached to the exterior of the buildings or on trees. A condition should be attached which seeks further details of the proposed box designs and locations on the building.
48. As such officers consider that the proposal would not have any adverse impact upon any sites of specific scientific interest or protected species subject to appropriate mitigation measures being carried out. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with the aims of Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS12.

Other Matters

49. Contaminated Land: The Phase 1 Environmental Desk Study submitted with the application identifies the potential for contamination to exist on site and recommends that further intrusive investigations are necessary. It is recommended that a condition should be imposed upon any planning permission to secure further phased risk assessments to determine whether any contamination exists and what remediation works (if any) are necessary.
50. Community Infrastructure Levy: The proposal would be liable for a CIL charge which according to the submitted plans would be £19,633.61.

Conclusion:

51. The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2016. Therefore officer's recommendation to the Members of the East Area Planning Committee is to approve the development in principle, but defer the application for the completion of a legal agreement to secure the necessary financial contribution towards affordable housing as set out above.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

Extension: 2228

Date: 25th September 2015