

APPLICATION NO.	P07/E0849
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	17 July 2007
PARISH	WATLINGTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Rodney Mann and Angie Paterson
APPLICANT	Kitesover Developments LLP
SITE PROPOSAL	Land adjacent to Meadow Court, Love Lane Watlington erection of two detached two storey. Five bedroom dwellings and a pair of semi-detached two storey two bedroom dwellings, access and car parking.
AMENDMENTS	Two – information concerning drainage, service details and engineering and realignment of 5-bedroom houses
GRID REFERENCE	468753/194769
OFFICER	PAUL LUCAS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between the Planning Manager's recommendation and the views of Watlington Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract attached as **Appendix 1**. The site extends to approximately 0.3 ha and comprises an undeveloped triangular shaped plot of land lying within the built up area of Watlington immediately adjacent to the south of the access into Icknield School and Community Centre and to the west of Chequers Public House on Love Lane. The site is undeveloped and appears as a dense coppice with young self seeded trees across the land with more mature trees at its perimeter. There is presently no vehicular access onto the site. The site lies on the northern edge of the Watlington Conservation Area which is characterised by a wide variety of building types ranging from small historic cottages to large Georgian town houses.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning for the erection of two detached two storey five bedroom dwellings with integral garages together with a pair of two storey two bedroom semi detached dwellings with attached garages. The dwellings would be arranged in an 'arc' shape with the pair of semis at the northern end of the site. The four dwellings would all be served from a single new access branching off the existing entrance drive to Icknield School and Community Centre and as much boundary vegetation as possible would be retained. The new dwellings would be

erected using red bricks, plain clay roof tiles and painted wooden framed windows and chimneys. The southernmost detached dwelling would be situated some 11 metres away from the closest residential property, No.35 Love Lane, to the south-west.

- 2.2 The applicant's supporting letter is **attached** as Appendix 2. The amended plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix 3.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Watlington Parish Council - The application should be refused. Continuing concerns about traffic safety, specifically increased traffic due to more bedrooms. Road width is lower than previously approved. Poor design within conservation area – non-vernacular and non-traditional design elements.
- 3.2 Forestry Officer - No objection subject to conditions to ensure a no dig method of construction for access routes that encroach into tree protection areas and a landscaping scheme that includes significant replacement planting.
- 3.3 Conservation Officer - Although these houses are slightly larger and higher, there are noted improvements in design.
- 3.4 OCC Highways - No increase in the number of trips per dwelling using TRICS data. No objections subject to same conditions as imposed on the approved scheme.
- 3.5 Building Control - No comments
- 3.6 Neighbours - 7 representations of objection to the original proposal summarised as follows:
- i. More traffic from additional bedrooms would result in highway safety issues, especially for schoolchildren.
 - ii. Loss of natural habitat.
 - iii. Harm to trees.
 - iv. Disproportionate mix of housing.
 - v. Inappropriate/Overintensive scale of 5-bedroom houses on small plot.
 - vi. Loss of privacy to No.35 Chapel Street.
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- 1 representation of support for the original proposal.
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- Any comments on the amended proposal to be reported verbally at the Planning Committee meeting.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P04/E0900 – Erection of 5 dwellings, parking and landscaping. Refused September 2004. Appeal dismissed April 2005.
- 4.2 P05/E0753 – Erection of 4 dwellings, access, parking and landscaping including alterations to access road into the school. Refused August 2005. Appeal dismissed December 2005.
- 4.3 P06/E0515 – Erection of two 2-storey 4-bedroom dwellings and two 2-storey 2-bedroom dwellings, access and car parking. Granted Planning Permission July 2006.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 Policies:-

- G1 – General Policies for Development
- G2 – Improving the Quality and Design of Development
- T1 – Sustainable Travel
- T8 – Development Proposals
- EN1 – Landscape Character
- EN4 – Historic and Cultural Heritage
- H1 – The Amount and Distribution of Housing
- H3 – Design, Quality and Density of Housing Development

5.2 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:-

- G2 – Protection of the Environment
- G5 – Making the Best Use of Land
- G6 – Promoting Good Design
- C9 – Landscape Features
- CON7 – Development in Conservation Areas
- D1 – Good Design and Local Distinctiveness
- D2 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking
- D3 – Plot Coverage and Garden Areas
- D4 – Privacy and Daylight

D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design

D10 – Waste Management

H4 – Towns and Larger Villages Outside the Green Belt

H7 – Housing Mix

H8 – Housing Density

T1 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide – Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5
- Watlington Conservation Area Character Appraisal

5.4 Government Guidance:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 – Housing

PPG13 – Transport

PPG15 – The Historic Environment

6.0 PLANNING ISSUES

6.1 Two previous appeal Inspectors have agreed that the site lies within the built up area of Watlington. Hence Policy H4 is the most relevant and this states that the principle of residential development is acceptable. Consequently, the main planning issues are whether:

- The development would result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- The size and appearance of the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Watlington Conservation Area;
- The living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers would be compromised and the development would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- The development would result in an unacceptable deficiency of off-street parking spaces for the resultant dwelling or other conditions prejudicial to highway safety;
- The mix of housing proposed would be acceptable; and
- The proposal would incorporate sufficient sustainability measures.

Loss of Open Space

6.2 Criterion (i) of Policy H4 of SOLP 2011 requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt. The site is already currently undeveloped and is densely overgrown. However, it has no special public, environmental or ecological value (no protected species have been reported to rely on this area) and the existence of an extant planning permission for four dwellings in a similar arrangement on the site is a material consideration. This criterion would therefore be satisfied.

Character and Appearance

6.3 Criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy H4 of SOLP 2011 require that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development to be in keeping with its surroundings and the character of the area is not adversely affected. Policy CON7 explains that the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas. The table below sets out the differences between the approved and proposed schemes:

Approved		Proposed	
4-Bedroom		5-Bedroom	
Dwellings		Dwellings	
Depth	7.4m - 10m	Depth	9.6m – 10.5m
Width	8m	Width	12.7m
Eaves Height	5m	Eaves Height	5m
Main Ridge Height	7.8m	Main Ridge Height	8.5m
Distance of closest house to No.35	14.2m	Distance of closest to No.35	14.5m
Approved		Proposed	
2-Bedroom		2-Bedroom	
Semis		Semis	
Two Storey Depth	9m	Two Storey Depth	9.7m
Two Storey Width (of pair)	8.8m	Two Storey Width (of pair)	8.5m
Eaves Height	5.3m	Eaves Height	4.9m
Ridge Height	8.5m	Ridge Height	8.4m

6.4

Due to the existence of the extant planning permission, the issue here is whether

the differences between the approved and proposed developments would be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the locality. The changes to the scale and appearance of the detached houses in particular would be significant. However, the Conservation Officer has commented that there are noted improvements in the design:

- 6.5
- The windows have been reduced in size and are more balanced;
 - Timber and not UPVC will be used for the windows;
 - Chimneys have been added;
 - The large and solid looking front porch on the approved detached houses has been deleted.
 - The long flat roofed rear element on the smaller pair of semi-detached houses has been deleted.

Taking into account these improvements, the fact that the layout would be similar (the position of the semis and one of the detached houses has been swapped), which would allow for a similar level of landscaping, and the limited visibility of the development in public viewpoints, the proposed scheme would not be unduly prominent in the local area and would preserve the character and appearance of the Watlington Conservation Area. The replacement of detached garages with integral garages for the detached houses would be unfortunate, but not in itself sufficient reason to resist the application. The internal layouts would be improved and the garden sizes would remain generous and provide an acceptable standard of living for future occupiers of the development. It is considered that the overall differences would be limited and the proposal would comply with the above Policies.

Living Conditions

- 6.6 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. This is supported by Policies D3 and D4. The only residential property that would be directly affected by this development would be 35 Chapel Street, located to the south of the site. The layout of the southernmost detached dwelling was amended to position it slightly further away (when measured corner to corner) from No.35 in comparison with the southernmost detached house on the approved scheme. The distance of this proposed house from the south-eastern boundary and its orientation were also amended to be comparable with the approved dwelling on this part of the site. In spite of the slight increase in the overall ridge height of the dwelling, this would not have a material additional impact over the distance involved. Windows on the rear elevation would only allow oblique views into No.35's rear garden, as before and this is a normal situation in residential area. On the basis of this assessment, the impact on the residential amenity of adjoining residents and future occupiers would not be compromised in conformity with the above Policies.

Parking and Access

- 6.7 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the adopted Local Plan requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. This is supported by Policies T1 and T2. The access arrangements incorporating widening of the existing access to the school and the provision of gates and a rumble strip within the site itself, remain almost identical to

the previously approved arrangements. The main change would be that the access within the site has been narrowed slightly (for instance, from 5 metres to 4.4 metres in width when measured at the rumble strip) and this would help to encourage motorists to drive more cautiously. There is considerable local concern regarding highway safety and the implications of further cars using the school driveway. Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has acknowledged that the safety of school children is a concern but concluded that given the limited number of dwellings, the widening of the entrance drive and the fact that most movements would be unlikely to coincide with the beginning and end of the school day, refusal of the proposals on highway safety grounds would be most unlikely to be upheld on appeal. This view was supported by the Planning Committee on 18th July 2006, when planning permission was granted for P06/E0515. In response to this application the Highways Authority has commented that the increase in the number of bedrooms contained within the detached dwellings from 4 to 5 would not increase the number of vehicular movements beyond the previously projected 8-10 trips per day, using the TRICS database. There would be sufficient parking spaces to meet Council standards and to allow for some visitor parking within the site.

Housing Mix

- 6.8 Policy H7 of the adopted Local Plan requires a suitable mix of housing to be provided and the sub-text indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that developments of a net gain of two or more dwellings would contain 45% 2-bedroom dwellings. The proposal would provide two 2-bedroom dwellings, which would equate to 50%, which would comply with Policy H7.

Sustainability Measures

- 6.9 Policy D8 of the adopted SOLP 2011 requires proposals to incorporate sustainability measures in terms of energy, water and materials efficient design. Policy D10 explains that proposals should include provision for refuse, recycling and composting. The applicant has been asked to provide some information on this matter, which will be verbally reported to the Planning Committee.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan policies and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would preserve the character of the Watlington Conservation Area, would not materially harm the living conditions of nearby residents or the character and appearance of the area or prejudice highway safety and would provide an appropriate mix of housing.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement 3 years**

- 2. Details of materials to be agreed prior to commencement**
- 3. Joinery details to be agreed prior to commencement**
- 4. Conservation type rooflights**
 - 5. Landscaping scheme to be agreed prior to commencement and implemented first planting season following the occupation of the first dwelling**
- 6. Tree protection to be agreed prior to commencement**
 - 7. No development to begin until drainage details agreed prior to commencement**
 - 8. Details of surface water drainage works to be agreed prior to commencement**
- 9. Retain garage accommodation**
- 10. Access to specification prior to commencement of any other development**
- 11. Parking provision to be as shown on drawing reference 07005/100A**
- 12. Relocate existing school gates in accordance with the approved plans**
 - 13. Exclude Permitted Development for windows and doors, extensions, rooflights and porches**
- 14. Details of entrance gates to be agreed prior to commencement**
 - 15. Details of refuse, recycling and composting to be agreed prior to commencement**

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