
APPLICATION NO.	P08/W0002
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL PLANNING PERMISSION
REGISTERED	10.01.08
PARISH	DORCHESTER
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr John Cotton
APPLICANT	Mr G Bumpass
SITE	Land adjoining 86 High Street, Dorchester
PROPOSAL	Erection of single detached 3 bedroom dwelling
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	457723/194617
OFFICER	Miss G Napier

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the officer recommendation conflicts with that of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 The site lies on High Street to the north of the settlement and is currently an open piece of land which provides a break between the road and No.80 High Street and an open space between No.'s 76 & 86 High Street. Although not itself covered by the designation, the site immediately adjoins the Dorchester Conservation Area and also lies within the Oxford Green Belt.
- 1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The current application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling with an 'L' shaped footprint. It measures some 11.4 metres across where it fronts the road and some 12.9 metres at its deepest point. Two flat roof dormer windows are proposed within the roof profile of the street elevation with rooflights indicated within the north, east and south elevations. The property is to be constructed from red brick with areas of weather board cladding and a clay tile roof. Additional information in the form of a pre assessment study was submitted by the agent to show that code level 3 of The Code for Sustainable Homes would be met. It is proposed to create an energy efficient home by introducing a number of sustainable materials in the build and using energy efficient appliances throughout the dwelling.
- 2.2 The plans also show parking provision for 3 vehicles.
- 2.3 A copy of the submitted plans is **attached** at Appendix 2 along with the applicants design statement and the pre assessment study.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Parish Council - Recommend approval; The design statement is good and the design is satisfactory. The off street parking is welcome.

Forestry Officer - The plans do not accurately show the location of existing trees and hedging. The proposal appears to require the removal of a number of trees and the forestry officer objects to the proposed development.

OCC (Highways) Officer - No objection subject to condition

OCC Archaeologist - The site is archaeologically sensitive and as such an archaeological field evaluation should be implemented prior to the determination of the application

Neighbours - No objection. '...the design of the new house is satisfactory and it will not affect my privacy which is my main concern'.

There is a restrictive covenant on the land that restricts any development without the permission of 'the vendor or his assigns...'

Objection to the upstairs window which 'will look directly onto our property and possibly in to our lounge'.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P88/W0621/O. Erection of a single storey dwelling. Ref.of Planning Perm on 05 October 1988.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies (SOLP 2011):

- G6: Promoting good design
- GB2: New buildings in the Green Belt
- GB4: Visual amenity of the Green Belt
- CON7: Protecting the Conservation Area
- CON:12 Preserving archaeological remains
- D1: Local distinctiveness
- D2: Vehicle and bicycle parking
- D3: Plot coverage and garden areas
- D8: Energy, water and materials efficient design
- D10: Waste management
- H5: New housing in the district
- C6: Biodiversity conservation

South Oxfordshire Design Guide:
Part 3, Sections 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4.

Planning Policy Guidance:
PPG2 – Green Belts
PPG16 – Archaeology & Planning

PPS3 – Housing

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Dorchester Conservation Area Appraisal

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main considerations are:

1. The principle of development
2. Impact on the openness of the Oxford Green Belt
3. The effect of the development on the residential amenity of adjoining properties
4. The impact on the character and appearance of the Dorchester Conservation Area
5. Whether adequate standards of privacy and amenity have been provided
6. Whether sufficient sustainable measures have been incorporated into the design of the dwelling

6.2 **Principle.**

Policy H5 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan permits both 'infill' and 'backland' development on appropriate sites within larger villages within the Green belt and smaller villages throughout the district. Dorchester is classed as a larger village within the Green Belt and as such Policy H5 would apply to new residential development *within* the settlement. Infill is defined as 'the filling of an appropriate small gap in an otherwise largely built-up frontage by the erection of one or two detached or up to four small terraced or semi-detached dwellings'.

In this case the site lies on the edge of the settlement of Dorchester where there is a transition in the built form and development becomes more sporadic in its nature. The Dorchester Conservation Area Appraisal refers to Willoughby House, a dwelling to the south of the proposed development site. It lies on the opposite side of the road to the development site and there is a distance of some 100 metres between the two. Willoughby House lies closer to the centre of Dorchester than the site. The Conservation Area Appraisal reads; 'Beyond Willoughby House an important stretch of grass verge curves along the road, signifying a change from the enclosed urban character of the High Street in to rural Dorchester as the buildings become more widely spaced and planting more plentiful. The open fields and avenue of trees at Bishop's Court (directly opposite the site) are a potent and valuable reminder of Dorchester's agricultural past'.

It is your officer's view that the development becomes sporadic and varied around this part of High Street, providing a loose knit edge to the settlement and a transition between the built-up High Street and rural Dorchester as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The site is not within an otherwise largely built up frontage and the principle of new residential development on this site is therefore unacceptable.

6.3 **Impact on the openness and visual amenity of the Oxford Green Belt**

Under Policy GB2 of the Local Plan, limited infilling in those villages that have an adequate range of services and facilities is permitted provided that the development complies with the requirements of Policy H5. For the reasons explained above the proposal would be contrary to Policy GB2 of the Local Plan. As such the proposal does not fall within the limited list of development allowed within Green Belts and is inappropriate by definition.

The proposal is also contrary to Policy GB4 of the Local Plan in that by virtue of its very existence the dwelling would have a detrimental impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Oxford Green Belt.

6.4 **The effect of the development on the residential amenity of adjoining properties.**

The dwelling is to be erected directly in front of No.80 High Street, creating a backland relationship with the new property. A distance of some 20 metres is shown between the rear elevation of the new dwelling and the front elevation of No.80. The profile of the new dwelling has been kept relatively low and no windows are proposed within the rear elevation at first floor level. There are 3 rooflights shown within the rear roof profile but this section of the dwelling is set further back in the plot and there is a back-to-back distance of some 26 between the two properties. This distance accords with Section BP5 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and minimal overlooking of the neighbouring property would occur in your officer's view.

There is a distance of some 11 metres between the new dwelling and No.86 High Street which is a single storey dwelling. The plans indicate that the rooflights would have a minimum floor to cill level of 1.7 in order to avoid any overlooking of the neighbouring properties.

There is a distance of some 17 metres between the new dwelling and No.76 High Street which is a thatched cottage. The existing access to No.80 High Street acts as a break between the two properties. Only one high level rooflight is proposed within the south elevation of the new dwelling and as such, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the occupants of No.76 High Street.

6.5 **The impact on the character and appearance of the Dorchester Conservation Area.** Having regard to the rural nature of this part of the High Street as well as to the existing frontage of the site which comprises trees and hedges which would be removed as part of the development, the proposal to erect a new dwelling on this currently undeveloped site would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area which immediately adjoins the site. Although not specifically identified as an important open space the gap that the site provides between buildings is considered to contribute to the setting and character of the Conservation area and the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CON7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

6.6 **Plot Coverage, density and provision of gardens.** Minimum standards for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in policies D3, H7 and H8 of the Local Plan. These standards seek to ensure that sites are not overdeveloped.

- **Provision of garden areas.** The proposed dwelling would have a garden well in excess of the Council's minimum standards and the proposal is acceptable in this respect.
- **Plot coverage.** The plot coverage is just under 15% which is well below the maximum standard specified in the Design Guide of 30% for detached housing.
- **Density.** PPG3 seeks to ensure that proposals for housing are provided at a density of 30 dwellings or more per hectare (dph) within villages and this is reflected in Policy H8 of the local plan. This proposal equates to a density of approx 13.5 dwellings which is low but not uncharacteristic for this edge of village location.

6.7 **Whether sufficient sustainable measures have been incorporated into the design of the dwelling.** The Council aims to achieve that all new dwellings comply with Code 3 of The Code for Sustainable Homes in order that the development

accords with Policy D8 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The Design Statement includes information on how the new dwelling would achieve a low energy consumption rate and the types of sustainable design features that would be implemented in the construction of the dwelling. Further information was submitted stating that the house would meet code 3 of the Standard and the implementation of these measures could be conditioned were the application to be approved.

Other Issues.

- 6.8 **Parking.** The plans show that the driveway could accommodate 3 vehicles. The Design Guide requirement for a 3 bed house is 2 off-road spaces and the proposal therefore exceeds this requirement.
- 6.9 **Waste management.** The Council's in-house consultant on the management of waste has commented that the plans do not show any refuse or recycling provision and that an area of hardstanding should be provided for this purpose. Having regard to the rural character of the area however, it is not considered desirable to create areas of hardstanding which would have a detrimental impact on the established character of this part of Dorchester. The property fronts on to High Street and it is considered that the leaving of waste on the pavement for collection by the waste contractor would be acceptable in this case.
- 6.10 **Loss of trees and hedges.**
The Council's forestry officer has commented that the plans do not accurately show the location of existing trees and hedging on the site. It is likely that the removal of the Apple trees to the front of the site, the Cherry adjacent to the northern boundary and the Holly Tree and clipped Conifer hedge alongside the access to NO.80 would be required for the development of the new dwelling. The forestry officer therefore objects to the proposal but states that if the application were to be approved, a condition should be attached requiring a landscaping scheme to replace some of the lost trees.
- 6.11 **Preserving archaeological remains.** The OCC Archaeologist has advised that the site lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential 200 metres north of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman Town of Dorchester. A number of buildings and burials have been found around the site and the County Archaeologist has requested that an archaeological field evaluation of the site before the application can be determined.

The agent advised in a letter dated 18th February that his client was unwilling to commit funds to such a project without guarantee that planning permission would be granted and that they would be happy for a condition to be attached to any subsequent permission requesting such work to be undertaken.

In your officer's view this is not satisfactory because if archaeological remains are present the siting of the dwelling may need to be altered or special foundations needed to preserve evidence in situ.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Although the principle of infill residential development may be acceptable on appropriate sites within Dorchester, the filling of this gap on the edge of the village would consolidate this ribbon of development on the edge of the settlement detracting from the landscape setting and rural character of the village and the conservation area.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal would be contrary to Policies G2, G4, GB2, GB4, C4, H5 and CON7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance note 2 “Green Belts”. Policy GB2 (SOLP) lists circumstances where new buildings will be allowed in the Green Belt. Infilling will only be allowed in accordance with Policy H5. The proposal is contrary to Policy H5 in that the development site is not a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage; it is therefore not an appropriate infill plot and the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt by definition. The policies aim to protect the landscape setting of settlements and the character of conservation areas by retaining important open spaces. The proposal to erect a dwelling on the site would fill a gap on the High Street which would consolidate development on the edge of the settlement detracting from the rural character and landscape setting of Dorchester and the character of the adjacent conservation area and from the openness of the Oxford Green Belt.**
- 2. There are a number of trees on the site including Apple trees on the site frontage and a Cherry on the northern boundary which are likely to be lost as a result of the proposal. The trees have an amenity value and their loss would be detrimental to the rural character of the area contrary to Policies G2, C9 and CON7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.**
- 3. The site is archaeologically sensitive and there is insufficient information to assess the impact of the development on archaeological remains contrary to Policy CON12 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16.**

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