
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E0301
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	17.04.2008
PARISH	BERRICK SALOME
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Felix Bloomfield Mrs Susan Cooper
APPLICANT	Mr J W Edwards
SITE	Land at Parsonage Farm Berrick Salome
PROPOSAL	Erection of two semi detached dwellings.
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	462141/193936
OFFICER	Mrs H.E.Moore

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of Berrick Salome Parish Council.

2.0 **THE SITE**

- 2.1 The site lies within the main confines of Berrick Salome, within the Conservation Area. Parsonage Farm Cottage to the north is a Grade II listed building. The site is some 38m wide (including the access track) and comprises orchard/agricultural land. An access track runs along the southern boundary of the site and leads to agricultural buildings to the rear.

3.0 **THE APPLICATION**

- 3.1 The application proposes the erection of two 3 bedroomed semi detached properties to be constructed in brick and flint with clay tiled roofs. The existing access is to be used to serve the new dwellings and parking areas are proposed to the front and side of the houses. Private gardens are provided to the rear.
- 3.2 A lengthy statement in support of the proposals accompanies the application. Full text of the report can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk. The statement draws attention to the refusal for four dwellings on the site in 2004 and advises that the reduction to two dwellings allows a traditional form of development that would be more in keeping with the area and retaining more trees on the site. The statement suggests that the two dwellings can be used as starter homes for local residents and small families who wish to stay and live in the area. Attention is drawn to other dwellings which have been built in the village, and suggests that this plot is suitable for infill development. Whilst Berrick Salome has few facilities, attention is drawn to the facilities in the nearby villages of Chalgrove and Benson. The agent considers that the proposed development is supported by planning policies and planning guidance on a local, regional and national scale. Policies in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and guidance contained in PPS3 – Housing and PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas is quoted.
- 3.3 A location plan and details of the application proposals are **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The application has been advertised as not in accordance with the development plan, affecting the Conservation Area and the setting of a listed building.

4.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 4.1 Berrick Salome P.C.
- No objection, with reservations voiced by villagers –
 - The potential of smaller houses in the village is welcomed.
 - Infill does not seem unreasonable but there are some strong feelings in the village that this may be detrimental.
 - Access to the road is dangerous.
 - Access to facilities in surrounding villages does require transport. Is the on-site parking provision satisfactory?
 - Approval of this proposal could lead to further development on the site.
 - Assurance should be obtained from Thames Water that the sewerage system is adequate to take further development.
- OCC (Highways)
- Objection to intensification of a substandard access.
- Conservation Officer
- Objection raised. The proposal will neither protect nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, and would harm the setting of the adjacent listed building (amplified comments are contained in the main body of the report).
- Monson (Drainage Consultant)
- Details of surface water drainage to be submitted.
- Countryside Officer
- No objection, provided that the remainder of the orchard is retained and the large apple tree in the boundary is adequately protected.
- Forestry Officer
- No objection subject to the imposition of a tree protection condition and the proper management of the remaining orchard.
- Waste Management
- A waste collection point is required.
- Thames Water
- Any approval should be subject to a condition requiring a drainage strategy detailing on and off site drainage works to be submitted and agreed.

Neighbours

- Four neighbour letters of objection. The points raised include the following matters:-
 - The site is inappropriate for development. The land is one of the few remaining green spaces in the heart of Berrick Salome. It is a valuable open space contributing to the character of the Conservation Area forming a natural break in an otherwise ribbon of development. The farmyard at Parsonage Farm was converted to housing some years ago, leaving the orchard as the only roadside remnant of the farm.
 - Access to the site is inadequate and close to a dangerous junction. On the previous application the highway officer objected strongly to the proposal.
 - The village has no services apart from a pub, and there is no public transport service. A car is required to access services in the nearest villages.
 - There is no proven need for further housing to support or sustain the community or local businesses.
 - The proposal fails many of the planning policies set out in SOLP.
 - The existing utilities and sewerage services are already under strain.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 P04/E0221 Erection of four dwellings with detailed garage blocks. Refusal of planning permission. Planning permission was refused on the basis that development of the land would result in the loss of an important open gap that would detract from the rural character of the village, would detract from the setting of adjacent historic buildings and would fail to preserve the character of the Conservation Area. Intensification of use of the access was also considered to be dangerous in highway terms.

P07/E1495/O Outline application for the erection of two semi-detached dwellings. The application was withdrawn as a fully detailed application is required within Conservation Areas.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING GUIDANCE

6.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:-

- G1 – General restraint and sustainable development
- G2 – Protection and enhancement of the environment
- G3 – Sustainable development
- G6 – Promoting good design
- C1 – Protection of the countryside
- C9 – Loss of landscape features

- CON5 – The setting of listed buildings
- CON7 – Development in Conservation Areas
- H1 – Housing
- H6 – Locations where new housing will not be permitted
- H7 – Range of dwelling types and size
- D1 – Good design and local distinctiveness
- D2 – Parking
- D3 – Plot coverage and garden areas
- D4 – Privacy and daylight
- T1 – Highway safety

Oxfordshire Structure Plan Policies:

- G5 – Development outside settlements
- T1 – Sustainable travel
- EN1 – Landscape character
- H1 – Housing

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

- PPS3 – Housing
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

7.0 PLANNING ISSUES

7.1 The main issues to consider in determination of this application are as follows:

- 1) Whether the proposal accords with the Council's housing policies.
- 2) Whether the proposal would detract from the setting of the adjacent listed building and would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Berrick Salome Conservation Area.
- 3) Whether the proposal would detract from highway safety and convenience.
- 4) Other issues.

Housing policies

7.2 Policy H6 of SOLP confirms that planning permission will not be granted for new houses in the countryside, in the smaller villages in the District which do not have a range of services and facilities and on the edge of settlements where the built-up area of the settlement would be extended. In line with National and Regional policies and guidance, settlements in the district have been categorised by the services and facilities they offer. This framework ensures that development takes place within the more sustainable locations in the district. This is in accordance with the objective to provide most housing where a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities exist or can be provided. All settlements in the district have been tested against five criteria, each of which contributes to its sustainability. The criteria are:

- i) primary school within the settlement;
- ii) food shop or post office within the settlement;
- iii) population of over 1000;
- iv) public transport to a local service centre more than once per day; and
- v) community facilities within the settlement (this includes village hall, place of worship or pub).

In order to be suitable for further housing development, a settlement needs to meet three or four of the above criteria. Berrick Salome meets only the last criteria – it has community facilities comprising a place of worship, a village hall and a pub.

Accordingly, Berrick Salome is not a village suitable for further housing development and the erection of two new dwellings would result in unsustainable development, contrary to national and local planning policies.

- 7.3 Policy H7 of SOLP requires a mix of house types to be provided where sites are suitable for two or more dwellings. Forty five percent of dwellings should be two bedroom to meet the demand for smaller houses in the district. In the case of this application, the two dwellings are proposed to be three bedroom, contrary to the requirement set out in Policy H7.
- 7.4 Accordingly, the proposed development is contrary to the housing policies set out in the Local Plan.

Character of the conservation area and setting of adjacent buildings

- 7.5 The proposals are considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of this part of the Berrick and Salome Conservation Area and the setting of Parsonage Cottage, a grade 11 Listed Building. The proposals would also adversely affect the setting of the barns at Grace's Farm which are buildings of historic interest.
- 7.6 The site is a well established orchard that provides an important green space between historic buildings and affords important views of these buildings as well as views through to the orchard to fields beyond. The continued survival of this open space is essential to preserve the historic character and rural setting of the buildings. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy CON5 of SOLP which seeks to ensure that the setting of listed buildings are protected.
- 7.7 The character and appearance of the Conservation Area would also be seriously harmed by the replacement of the orchard with two new dwellings. The character and appearance of the area is defined by the loosely knit rural development. Houses are typically large dwellings set within spacious plots with well-established hedges forming boundaries alongside the road. Interspaced along the street are low key agricultural buildings, which confirm the importance of the agricultural activity in the village. Gaps between the buildings and views into surrounding fields link the village to its landscape setting. The lack of kerbing, pavements and street lighting reinforce the rural character. Important views would be lost and the historic settlement pattern permanently changed. Policy CON7 states that the open spaces between the dwellings can be just as visually important as the buildings themselves in terms of the character of the area. In this case, the erection of two semi detached dwellings would not only result in the loss of the green space but would also result in development that would be visually prominent because of their scale, despite being set back into the site by 10m. According to the topographical survey, the 9m ridge height of the proposed dwellings would be some 2.5m taller than the adjoining building. In addition, the hard surface parking area provided in front of the northern most dwelling would be obtrusive in views across the site towards Parsonage Cottage. In view of the above considerations, the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area and would be contrary to policy CON7 of the adopted SOLP and advice contained in PPG15.

Highway considerations

- 7.8 Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority are raising objection to the application based on the intensification of use of the access which is substandard and lacks adequate visibility. It is also unlikely that the access could be improved to meet the necessary standards. Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be detrimental to highway safety and convenience contrary to Policy T1 of SOLP.

Other issues

- 7.9 There is currently a shortfall on the required five year supply of deliverable housing in the district. Measures are being taken to remedy this. However, para 71 of PPS3 states that where there is less than a five years supply of deliverable sites, planning authorities should determine applications favourably having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in para 69.
- 7.10 In this case, the site lies outside in a village which has very limited facilities and is not considered suitable for further housing development. Furthermore the proposals are considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and
- 7.11 the setting of adjacent buildings, and is served by an inadequate access.

Therefore the lack of an up to date 5 year housing supply is insufficient to override the other planning objections to the development.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Planning permission has already been refused for the erection of four dwellings on this site in 2004. Policies designed to achieve sustainable development have been strengthened since that time, and there are now even stronger reasons to refuse planning permission on this site. The proposal to erect two semi detached dwellings within Berrick Salome would result in unsustainable development contrary to established housing, environmental, highway and conservation policies. The proposals would constitute an intrusive form of development that would be out of keeping with the surrounding development, would detract from the setting of the adjacent listed and historic buildings and would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Berrick Salome Conservation Area.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 **That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 1. The proposal would be contrary to policies G1, G2, G3, G6, C1, H6 and H7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and to advice contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. Berrick Salome is a small village without a range of services and facilities to support new development, and the erection of two new dwellings within the village would result in unsustainable development and a form of development that fails to provide an acceptable mix of sizes of dwellings. Furthermore, the proposed development would result in the permanent loss of an important open space within the village, would appear intrusive and prominent in the street scene, would be out of keeping with the surrounding development and would detract from the rural character of the area.**
- 2. The proposals would be contrary to policies CON5 and CON7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and to advice contained in PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment. The proposals to erect two new dwellings on an open orchard area would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Berrick Salome Conservation Area, would result in the loss of important views across the site, and would compromise the setting of Parsonage Cottage, a grade 11 Listed Building and the outbuildings at Grace’s Farm, which are buildings of historic interest.**

- 3. The proposals are contrary to policy T1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. The proposal would result in the intensification of use of a sub-standard access that lacks adequate visibility, and as such the development would be detrimental to highway safety and convenience.**

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