
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E0302/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	13.03.2008
PARISH	CHINNOR
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Geoff Andrews Mr Christopher Hood
APPLICANT	Oxfordshire County Council Property Services
SITE	Land at St Andrews C of E School Station Road Chinnor
PROPOSAL	Demolition of school building and erection of 11 dwellings as part of residential redevelopment of the site.
AMENDMENTS	As clarified by education statement received on 14 May 2008.
GRID REFERENCE	475569201139
OFFICER	Mr M.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Chinnor Parish Council.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The site, which is identified on the **attached** plan, lies within the well defined confines of existing built development at Chinnor. It has an area of approximately 0.44 hectares and currently contains a school building with two pedestrian access points, from the north (Grafton Orchard) and from the south (Rectory Meadow). The school building currently on the site was constructed in the early 1970's with a variety of building materials. It is essentially a single storey flat roof building with some taller elements (the school hall) and a large chimney for the heating boiler. There are a number of trees on the site covered by a Tree Preservation Order and large areas of tarmac for play areas etc. Vehicular access to the site is taken through the remaining part of St Andrews School adjoining Station Road in Chinnor.

2.2 The site slopes from south to north. To the south, The Rectory Meadow estate, which was constructed in the 1960's, comprises a variety of houses and bungalows. In the vicinity of the application site it is mostly bungalows. To the north is Grafton Orchard, which was constructed in the late 1950's, and again is a mixture of properties. Close to the application the properties generally comprise chalet bungalows.

3.0 THE APPLICATION

3.1 The application proposes the demolition of the existing school building on the site, and the removal of all areas of hardstanding. Having demolished the buildings, the application seeks outline planning consent to erect 11 dwellings. The application is submitted in outline but access and layout are to be determined at this stage. The layout indicates 1 one-bedroomed property, 4 two-bedroomed properties, 4 three-bedroomed properties and 2 four-bedroomed properties. Access would be taken from Rectory Meadow although a retained pedestrian access to the north of the site from Grafton Orchard would provide secondary pedestrian access to the remaining part of the school.

3.2 The application has been accompanied by several documents including an “Education Provision” statement together with a design and access statement and arboricultural report.

4.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 4.1 Chinnor Parish Council - Objection. They express concern about traffic congestion, consider it as an overdevelopment of the site, that it is out of keeping with the area and unspecified concerns about the street scene.
- Neighbours (12) - Objection. They have concerns that the case for losing the school has not been properly made, that the land was gifted to the County Council and that its sale for housing would be against the original gift. Traffic safety and congestion, houses would be out of keeping with the area, they do not consider that it is acceptable to sell off sports fields and local services would be stretched with the additional residents.
- OCC (Highways) - No objection.
- Forestry Officer - No objection. Requires conditions.
- Environmental Health - No objection. Requires land contamination and hours of construction conditions.
- Monson - No objection. Requires surface water drainage and foul drainage conditions.
- Thames Water Authority - No objection.
- Thames Valley Police - No objection. Requires a condition that the new footpaths be gated.
- Sport England - No objection.

5.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

5.1 In January 2007 (P06/E0895/CC) Oxfordshire County Council granted themselves planning permission for extensions to the existing school buildings to the west of the present application site. The extensions would provide 6 classrooms, an IT suite, a new administration block, a resource area and other associated works. This permission has not yet been implemented.

6.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

6.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:

- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G6 - Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings
- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- D1 - Principles of good design

- D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 - Outdoor amenity area
- D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- D8 - Conservation and efficient use of energy
- D10 - Waste Management
- H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- H7 - Housing mix
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- CF1 - Protection of recreational or essential community facilities
- CF2 - Provision of additional community facilities

Government Guidance

- PPS1 - Delivering sustainable development
- PPS3 - Housing

7.0 **PLANNING ISSUES**

7.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be:

- i) Whether the development is acceptable in principle
- ii) Education provision
- iii) Affordable housing
- iv) Housing mix
- v) Traffic and highway issues
- vi) Impact on the trees
- vii) Impact on neighbours
- viii) Sustainability
- ix) Infrastructure
- x) Housing land availability

i) Principle

7.2 Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan provides that generally, within the built up areas of settlements such as Chinnor, planning permission will be granted for sites such as this for housing subject to certain criteria. Officers consider that the development does not constitute backland development and consequently there are four principal issues to consider.

- i) As the site already developed with the provision of the school, it is not considered that it comprises important open space of environmental or ecological value.
- ii) Although submitted in outline, the layout has given clear indication about the height and scale of the proposed development. Linked to this is whether the character and appearance of the area would be adversely affected. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of detached and semi detached bungalows, chalet bungalows and houses. Although in the area of the application site, Rectory Meadow comprises bungalows, the site slopes down from Rectory Meadow and through the provision of chalet bungalows and houses, it is considered that the required reserved matters consent could be in character with the area. The gross internal floor area of the existing school buildings amount to something over 1100 sq metres. As proposed in the application, the footprint of the new dwellings amount to some 700 sq.m. which therefore means there will be a considerable net reduction in site coverage. Under these circumstances, officers consider that the character of the area would not be adversely affected and that the proposed development would be in keeping with the character of the area. The final consideration in Policy H4 is whether there are any other material planning objections. These are considered

below.

ii) Education Provision

- 7.3 Policies CF1 and CF2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan seek to protect essential community facilities. Such applications will only be permitted where suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere. In this case, there are two principal areas of school buildings on this site. To the south-west is the St Andrews Infants School, whilst on the application site is the St Andrews Junior School. **Attached** to this report is a statement from the Education Department. The County Council intention is to use the money obtained from the site the subject of this application to pay for the planned extensions (see planning history) to the other school on the same campus. Although the extensions which have permission are somewhat smaller than the accommodation being removed, they will not involve the current duplication. For instance, there are two halls, two boiler rooms and two breakout spaces (other ancillary accommodation). The school capacity will not diminish as a result of this development provided the extensions are undertaken. Representations from the public have indicated that the case put forward by the County Education Department contains views that are not shared by local residents. However, it is the Oxfordshire County Council who have a statutory duty to provide for education and officers consider that in this case, the extensions which have received planning permission are the equivalent of the facility which would be 'lost'. The County Council have also considered long-term education provision within Chinnor, given that there are a number of other development sites including Siarey's Yard and Chinnor Cement Works. It is considered that any additional provision could still be made on the remaining education site without undue loss of playing fields etc.

iii) Affordable Housing

- 7.4 The threshold for affordable housing in this location is 15 dwellings. Although the site extends to some 0.4 of a hectare and the density proposed (24 dwellings per hectare) is at the lower end of what would normally be considered an appropriate density, due regard must be paid to existing surrounding development and the number of trees on the site which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Officers are therefore of the view that the site is not capable of taking 15 dwellings and therefore affordable housing is not a requirement.

iv) Housing Mix

- 7.5 The housing mix proposed is:

1 x 1 bed = 9%
4 x 2 bed = 36%
4 x 3 bed = 36%
2 x 4 bed = 18%.

This housing mix is not in accordance with the housing mix required by Policy H7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan. This requires the following:

1 bed = 7.5%
2 bed = 48.5%
3 bed = 24%
4 bed = 20%.

The layout has, to a large extent, been determined by existing trees on the site which are covered by a tree preservation order. The relationship between the trees and the development has resulted in the size of each individual plot being almost fixed. In turn, the size of the plot has determined the appropriate size of dwelling. This has not

resulted in an excessive amount of larger properties and consequently, in this particular case, officers consider that the housing mix proposed is acceptable.

v) Traffic

- 7.6 The County Surveyor & Engineer has critically examined the proposals and has raised no objection. Rectory Meadow already serves 22 dwellings with a further 24 using the Church Road access point from Musgrove Road. There would now be no access to the School from Rectory Meadow. In addition, the Grafton Road pedestrian access would be substantially further from the School and consequently is likely to generate less traffic. The increase of 11 dwellings and the traffic that that generates has to be balanced against the existing 46 dwellings using the same access and the lack of school traffic. Adequate on-site parking is proposed and officers accept the views of the County Surveyor & Engineer that there will be insufficient increase in traffic to justify a refusal of planning permission on highway safety or parking grounds.

vi) Trees

- 7.7 The current scheme has been drawn up with the layout being informed by the arboricultural survey. The Forestry Officer is satisfied that with appropriate conditions, the trees can be protected both during and after construction works.

vii) Impact on neighbours

- 7.8 Although this application is submitted in outline, siting is not reserved for subsequent approval and it is therefore possible to judge the direct impact on immediately adjoining owners. There are basically three neighbours involved directly affected by Plots 1, 6 and 9. Bearing in mind that adjoining properties have a normal 'street' relationship, Officers consider that this is merely a continuation of it and that the direct impact on neighbours is limited. There would be an impact arising from the increase in traffic using Rectory Meadow. However, the proposal would also involve a decrease in school traffic and, as such, this in itself would be insufficient to justify a refusal of planning permission.

viii) Sustainability

- 7.9 An energy statement has been included with the design and access statement and advises that the new dwellings will be designed to achieve Code Level 3 in the Code for Sustainable Homes. When designed in from the start, such a standard can be achieved through proper use of materials. Officers consider therefore that a condition requiring Code Level 3 will be satisfactory.

ix) Infrastructure

- 7.10 The County Council have indicated that payments are required towards off-site infrastructure directly as a result of this development. Negotiations are taking place to secure payments towards education, libraries, waste management, a museum resource centre, social and healthcare provision.
- 7.11 During the processing of other applications in Chinnor, it has become apparent that there is a shortage of playing fields. It is possible that a football pitch will be provided as part of the Chinnor Cement Works application. This however does need to be paid for through appropriate contributions. This would require the completion of a Section 106 Agreement. In addition, there is no on-site recreation provision. Other sites in Chinnor have been contributing towards the Parish Council who have a number of projects which require funding. This should also be secured through a Section 106 Obligation.

x) Housing land availability

- 7.12 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.

In this case it is considered that, for the reasons given above, that the development of the site is acceptable and this site will contribute to meeting the shortfall in deliverable housing.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed development is within the built-up limits at Chinnor and, that with appropriate education provision elsewhere, it is considered that the development of the site is acceptable in principle. With the attached conditions it is considered that the development would be acceptable and in compliance with other relevant Development Plan policies.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 **It is recommended that the grant of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning, subject to the prior completion of an appropriate obligation of the County Council to ensure infrastructure payments are made towards education, libraries, waste management, museum resource centre, social and healthcare, public transport, highways/transportation costs and with the District Council to provide for off-site recreation provision and playing fields, and the following conditions:**

- 1) **Outline planning permission with reserved matters being appearance and landscaping**
- 2) **Outline planning permission**
- 3) **Submission of reserved matters general**
- 4) **Sample materials required (all)**
- 5) **Contamination**
- 6) **If contamination found, remediation to take place**
- 7) **No works to take place until school extensions are available for occupation**
- 8) **Tree protection**
- 9) **Detailed tree protection**
- 10) **Hours of work**
- 11) **Surface water drainage**
- 12) **Foul drainage**
- 13) **Construct to Code Level 3**
- 14) **Waste Disposal scheme**

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