
APPLICATION NO.	P08/W0094/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	01.02.2008
PARISH	GORING
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs Ann Ducker Mrs Pearl Slatter
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs S G Hunt
SITE	Ross Acre, Goring-on-Thames
PROPOSAL	Erection of single dwelling house. (As amplified by Flood Risk Assessment received 18 March 2008 and clarified by additional information received 5 June 2008).
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	460154/181549
OFFICER	Miss J.E.Randle

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is before Planning Committee as the officer recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council.

1.2 The application site is part of the garden of a residential property Ross Acre. The site lies within Goring-on-Thames as shown on the **attached** location plan. The site lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The railway embankment forms the east boundary of the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single dwellinghouse with vehicular access. The application was submitted in outline form with all matters reserved for subsequent approval apart from the new access. The amended plans now include a proposed siting for the dwelling and a detached garage as indicated on site plan drawing A003-F1 and site sections showing the relationship of the new dwelling in relation to the adjoining property Temple Gardens. Access to the new plot is via an existing gateway to a private single width road which is part of the Ridgeway public footpath. There are a few small fruit trees on the site. The design of the new dwelling and garage does not form part of the application although the amended information indicates that with the proposed siting the main windows will face south and the main garden will be to the south. The supporting statement dated January 2008 indicates that the dwelling will be designed to achieve Code Level 3 in the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes. The supporting statement is **attached** and copies of the amended drawings.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Goring Parish Council

- Objection to original plans.
- No objection – approval to amended plans. Unique nature of surrounding area, its location and shape mean this will not create a precedent. Fixed position, size and orientation made a decision easier to take.

- Countryside Officer - Plot is part of garden and is principally lawn with a few fruit trees. No evidence of protected species on site and habitat of low ecological value.
- OCC (Highways) - The bridleway is a private section of road part of the Ridgeway serving around six dwellings which is well used. It is a single width tarmac road and not possible for two vehicles to pass until an informal passing place 300 mm from junction with Mill Road. Traffic generated will add to the potential conflict between vehicles and other users of bridleway and visibility at Mill Road junction does not meet standards. Objection raised at appeal on previous proposal not sustained by Inspector subject to provision of a passing place so no objection raised subject to conditions.
- Environmental Health Officer (Contaminated Land) - Recommends a precautionary approach as proposed use would be sensitive to any contamination and as required by PPS23 a condition is suggested.
- OCC (Footpaths) - Goring bridleway 1, part of Ridgeway National Trail is well defined and runs concurrent with the access and to the north of the property.
- Waste Management - No refuse or recycling shown. Property will require provision of storage for waste and wheeled bins. Position close to road suggested.
- Forestry Officer - No objection as effect on existing trees would have little impact outside site and could be compensated for with new landscaping. Condition tree protection and landscaping.
- Environmental Health Officer - Note the proximity of proposed development to the railway. Need noise assessment in accordance with PPG24 Planning and Noise.
- Environment Agency - Objection to original plans. No objection raised following submission of plan showing flood levels at site.

- Neighbours (3) - Objection to original plans – will be unneighbourly and will overlook properties because of elevated position; will increase traffic along Ridgeway and at junction with Mill Road on a section well used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders; will extend village envelope as Mill Road is northern boundary of highly built up area of village; dangerous precedent for other vacant plots along this path; permission previously refused on appeal; without prejudice neighbour adjacent requests that no windows on south side which would look into their property: Ross Acre is a three storey elevated building on an elevated foundation at top of a slope facing south so will overlook any new dwelling.
- Amended plans - (2) position of house as amended will increase extent to which building will overlook buildings and gardens to south. Will still create precedent as there are potential plots to north beyond Bishop's Ride.

4.0 **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P97/W0192/O Outline planning permission for a new house and garage on land adjoining Ross Acre – informal hearing – appeal dismissed 1998. Copy of appeal decision **attached**.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Adopted Structure Plan Policies: G2, EN1, H1, H3

Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies:

- H4 – Towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- H6 – Locations where new houses will not be permitted
- G2 – Protection of countryside and settlements
- G4 – Protection of countryside
- C1 – Enhancement of landscape
- C2 – AONB
- C4 – Landscape setting of settlements
- D4 – Amenity
- T1 – Parking/access

PPG 7 – Sustainable development in rural areas

PPS 3 – Housing

PPS 23 – Contaminated land

PPS 24 – Planning and noise

PPG25 – Flooding

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main issues to consider are whether:-

- i) The principle of development on this site and impact on the landscape setting and AONB

- ii) Impact on the living conditions of the proposed dwelling and neighbouring residential properties
- iii) Other material considerations

Principle of development and impact on landscape setting and AONB

- 6.2 The settlements in the district have been categorised by the services and facilities they have and a hierarchy of policies has been established on this basis. This framework ensures that development takes place in the more sustainable locations and is in accordance with Structure Plan policy. Goring-on-Thames has been classified as a larger village outside the Green Belt where Policy H4 is applicable. Policy H4 indicates that proposals for new houses will be permitted provided a number of criteria are met, if amongst other matters, the area's character would not be adversely affected and there would be no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.
- 6.3 Policy H6 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan indicates locations where new housing will not be permitted. It advises that planning permission will not be given for new houses on the edge of settlements where the built up area would be extended. The supporting text to H6 indicates that:-
- “Development on the edges of towns and villages, including consolidating ribbon development, will not normally be allowed because it would extend the built up area, encroach upon the surrounding countryside and spoil the landscape setting of the district's settlements, contrary to Policy C4”.
- 6.4 The site is the southern part of the large garden to Ross Acre which is a large detached house with its main aspect facing south. The site lies on the northern edge of Goring and is approached from the north along the Ridgeway which has the character of a rural lane. Land to the west drops down a wooded bank to the River Thames. Houses to the south of the site are more compact in character and development is at a higher density. In dismissing an appeal for a house on a smaller plot in 1998 the Inspector considered that the gaps between houses to the north of the wall (southern boundary to site) are important features in the character and appearance of Goring and the AONB and that there is a transition between denser housing to the south and more open countryside to the north.
- 6.5 I consider that this change in character is a crucial point as to whether development on this site is acceptable in principle. I have concluded that because of the proximity of the edge of Goring to the north, the rural wooded character of the approach from the north and its proximity to the Ridgeway footpath that this is an edge of settlement site. I consider that the proposal would undesirably alter the character of this area which has already been consolidated by the two houses at Staddle Stones and Brook House to the south and the gaps between the houses are important features in this part of Goring. The road frontage on the approach from the north still generally appears undeveloped as you approach this site and the density of development only changes to the south of the site boundary wall. I agree with the Inspector dismissing the appeal in 1998 that the gaps between the houses are important features in this part of Goring. This proposal would result in an intensification of development on the site consolidating ribbon development and increasing the urbanisation of this part of Goring and thereby weakening the landscape edge of the settlement. The spacious character of the site would be lost and this would detract from the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal is therefore in conflict with the aims of Policies G2, G4, C2, C4 and H6 and advice in PPS7.
- 6.6 If the site is not considered to be an H6 location, it should be assessed against Policy H4 and criteria (i) and (iii) are most relevant.

Impact on adjacent dwellings and character of the area

- 6.7 Ross Acre is sited in an imposing elevated position at the top of a plot of substantial size being approximately 0.296 hectares in size. The application site divides the plot in two creating two reasonable sized plots of 1515m². Whilst it is clear that a reasonable plot size can be achieved for a new dwelling, the relationship between the new house and existing development needs to be assessed. Ross Acre has all its main windows and patio area facing down the slope towards this site. Whilst there will be a distance of 20 metres between the properties as indicated on the section drawing A004 A, the elevated position of Ross Acre will create undesirable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the new dwelling because it will be overlooked. Furthermore even if the new dwelling were to be repositioned this situation would still occur. More significantly the new dwelling with its south facing orientation would overlook the dwellings to the south, in particular Temple Gardens. For these reasons even if the principle of a new dwelling is acceptable on this site the proposal now submitted would create undesirable living conditions for the new dwelling and have an adverse impact on adjacent properties.
- 6.8 As such I conclude the proposal will undesirably impact on the living conditions of adjacent properties to the south to the detriment of their residential amenities and thereby detract from the character of this part of Goring contrary to Policy D4 and advice in Section 3.2 para 3.2.6 of Oxfordshire Design Guide

Other material considerations

Highways

- 6.9 There is an existing gateway in the south west corner of the site which will provide vehicular access onto the bridleway which is a private road of single width. The highway officer has raised concern that additional traffic will add to the potential conflict between vehicles and other users of the bridleway and that visibility at the Mill Road junction is substandard. However this objection was not supported at the appeal subject to the provision of a passing place to reduce the impact on highway safety. As such the proposal is not in conflict with Policy T1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Whilst a new dwelling and garage could be physically accommodated on this site with an appropriate plot size, the gaps between the houses are an important part of the spacious character of this part of Goring particularly to the north of the high boundary wall to Ross Acre and should be retained. As such the development of this site would undesirably consolidate ribbon development and harm the spacious character of this area and damage the landscape setting of Goring which lies within the Chiltern AONB. Because of the elevated position and south facing orientation of Ross Acre, it will not create an acceptable environment for the occupiers of the new dwelling. The new dwelling will undesirably impact on the living conditions of properties to the south, in particular Temple Gardens. The application is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out below.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:-

- 1. The Development Plan seeks to protect the District’s countryside from adverse developments through generally restrictive policies. The erection of a dwelling and garage on the site would result in an intensification of development on the site undesirably consolidating ribbon development to the detriment of the rural character of this part of the settlement. The development would harm the spacious character and landscape setting of Goring and fail to conserve the special landscape quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal would therefore be in conflict with Policies G2, G4, C2, C4 and H6 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and advice in PPS3 and PPS7.**
- 2. The proposal will undesirably impact on the living conditions of adjacent properties to the south, in particular Temple Gardens, to the detriment of their residential amenities and thereby detract from the character of this part of Goring contrary to Policy D4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and advice in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**
- 3. The elevated position and orientation of the existing dwelling Ross Acre will create undesirable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the new dwelling by reason of overlooking contrary to Policy D4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and advice in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**

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