
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E0985
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	18 th August 2008
PARISH	Henley-on-Thames
WARD MEMBERS	Mr Terry Buckettt Ms Roswitha Myer
APPLICANT	Tapp Associates
SITE	2 Walton Avenue & 4 Harpsden Road, Henley-on-Thames
PROPOSALS	Demolition of the existing dwellings and construction of 7 new flats, associated parking, amenity space, landscaping, carport and refuse/cycle store.
AMENDMENTS	Drawing numbers 07.208.210 E; 07.208.111 B; 07.208.114 B
GRID REFERENCE	476328/181911
OFFICER	Tom Wyatt

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to Committee as the Officer’s recommendations conflict with the views of the Town Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) comprises two existing residential plots located at the junction of Walton Avenue, an unmade private road, and Harpsden Road. The plots are currently occupied by detached bungalows and their garden areas, with individual accesses. The site is located outside of but immediately opposite the Reading Road Conservation Area.

2.0 **THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 Following the demolition of the existing bungalows to facilitate the proposed development, the application seeks permission for the construction of a three storey building to provide seven flats. The flats would consist of three 2 bed units on the ground floor and four 3 bed duplex units spread over the ground and first, and first and second floors. Although the building would consist of three storeys, it should be noted that the second floor would be located within the roof space of the building.

2.2 The proposed building would be ‘L’ shaped with its principal elevations facing Walton Avenue and Harpsden Road. The frontage of the building facing Walton Avenue would be approximately 22 metres in width and the frontage facing Harpsden Road would be 17 metres. The building would have a general depth of 8.5 metres and height of 8.5 metres in respect of the pitched roof element of the scheme. The two pitched roof elements fronting Walton Avenue and Harpsden Road would be linked by way of a flat roof two storey section of approximately 6 metres in height.

2.3 The building has been designed as a contemporary twist to traditional forms of housing. The scale and general form of the buildings, particularly in relation to the pitched roofs, reflects traditional design. However, the two storey flat roof element, the glazing details, and most notably the use of modern materials are entirely contemporary. The walls of the building would be rendered with a vertical strip of terracotta cladding to the gable ends. The flat roofed element would also consist of terracotta banding, whilst the roof of the pitched elements of the building would be finished in slate.

- 2.4 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site would be derived from Harpsden Road some 30 metres with the junction with Walton Avenue. 9 parking spaces are proposed in an area of hardstanding to the north of the main building. 5 of the spaces would be contained within an open car port structure that would abut the northern boundary of the site with 2 Harpsden Road. The car port would be approximately 13 metres in length and 5 metres in depth and would be provided with a mono-pitched roof sloping away from the boundary to a maximum height of 2.5 metres.
- 2.5 A bin/cycle store would be attached to the eastern end of the car port to provide space for recycling and refuse and for undercover and secure bicycle parking. The development would be provided with a communal area of open space, most of which would be contained between the south elevation of the building and the boundary with Walton Avenue. The amenity space would total approximately 200m².
- 2.6 A copy of the plans and design and access statement accompanying the application are **attached** as Appendix B.
- 3.0 **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**
- 3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – Objects on the following grounds: overintensive, increase in traffic on a busy junction, unneighbourly, inadequate car parking, poor design and possibility of part of plot belonging to Highways.
- 3.2 **Henley Society** – Objects.
- 3.3 **OCC Highway Liaison Officer** – No objection to the provision of some additional car parking spaces.
- 3.4 **Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – A gated entrance is recommended, lack of surveillance over parking areas, open stairwell should be avoided, flats should be constructed to Secure by Design standards.
- 3.5 **Environmental Health Officer** – Conditions to investigate for, and if necessary, remediate any contamination on the site are suggested.
- 3.6 **Forestry Officer** – No objections subject to conditions.
- 3.7 **Waste Management Officer** – The collection point should be closer to the road. Recycling provision needs to be made and composters should also be provided.
- 3.8 **Neighbours** – Twenty two letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:
- impact on neighbouring amenity through overshadowing and overlooking
 - lack of parking with likely parking overspill on already congested roads
 - impact on highway safety
 - design not in keeping with the surrounding area
 - impact on adjacent conservation area
 - overdevelopment of the site
 - loss of bungalows that would be suitable for elderly/disabled
 - lack of affordable housing
 - increased pressure on local sewerage system
 - precedent for further redevelopment schemes
 - part of site is not in applicants' ownership

One letter of support has also been received.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P08/E0310 – Demolition of the 2 properties and construction of a new block of 9 apartments and associated car parking, amenity space, landscaping, car port and refuse/cycle storage. Withdrawn prior to determination on 08 May 2008.
- 4.2 P65/H0738 – Addition of dining room and wc. Planning permission granted on 16th December 1965.
- 4.3 P59/H0484 – Addition of 2 bedrooms and erection of garage with altered access. Planning permission granted on 24th June 1959.
- 4.4 P56/H0549 – Erection of bungalow with access (2 Walton Avenue). Planning permission granted on 26th April 1957.
- 4.5 P56/H0537 – Erection of bungalow with access (4 Harpsden Road). Planning permission granted on 24th October 1956.
- 4.6 P55/H0305 – Six building plots for the erection of private dwellings. Planning permission granted on 22nd July 1955.

5.0 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:

-G1, G2, G3, T1, T2, T8, EN4, H1, H3

5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):

-G1, G2, G6, C9, CON7, EP2, EP8, D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D7, D8, D10, D11, H1, H4, H7, H8, T1, T2

5.3 Government Guidance:

-PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, PPG15, PPS23

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

-South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)

6.0 PLANNING ISSUES

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are:

1. The principle of the development
 - i) Housing mix
 - ii) Housing density
 - iii) Affordable housing
2. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
3. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
4. Impact on protected trees
5. Highway considerations
6. Sustainability

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The site lies within the main built up area of Henley-on-Thames, and as such the principle of additional residential development is broadly acceptable having regard to Policy H4 of the SOLP, which recognises Henley as a sustainable location for new

housing development. Government guidance contained within PPS3 is also relevant in relation to the objective to provide housing in suitable locations, 'which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure' (Para. 10), and to provide for the effective and efficient use of land.

i) Housing Mix

- 6.3 The proposal is for seven units, comprising three 2 bed units and four 3 bed units. Guidance within PPS3 advocates the creation of mixed and inclusive communities. A mix of housing is very important in achieving this through providing housing of mixed tenure, size and price. Policy H7 of the SOLP takes the national guidance to a local level and is based upon a needs approach in relation to the type of housing required across the District. Specifically there is an identified shortfall in two bed units, and in this regard it is expected that approximately 45% of dwellings within developments of 2 or more units should be constructed as two bed units. In this regard three of the units are two bed, representing 43% of the development. As such the proposal meets the thrust of the requirements of PPS3 and Policy H7 in relation to housing mix.

ii) Housing Density

- 6.4 Guidance within PPS3 seeks to ensure that land is used in the most effective and efficient way in relation to new housing. At Paragraph 47, PPS3 advises that a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare net (dph) should be achieved, and a density of less than this would need to be justified through, for example, seeking to protect the character and appearance of the area. Policy H8 of the SOLP flows from Government guidance and seeks to provide densities of at least 40 dph in town centre locations and 30 dph elsewhere. In this case, the two bungalows occupy a site area of approximately 0.1 hectares, representing a density of 20 dwellings per hectare. This is a slightly higher density than the remaining dwellings on the north side of Walton Avenue (15dph) but much less than some of the nearby Victorian terracing along Harpsden Road. For example Nos. 1-33 (odd) Harpsden Road are built at a density of approximately 85dph. The proposed development would consist of a density of approximately 70dph, and therefore would be a lower density than some of the surrounding housing but would comply with the thrust of PPS3 and Policy H8.

iii) Affordable Housing

- 6.5 Having regard to Policy H9 of the SOLP there is no requirement for affordable housing provision in relation to the development as the application site area is not more than 0.5 hectares and the site would not accommodate 15 or more dwellings. These are the thresholds for the provision of affordable housing in settlements with a population of over 3000.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area

- 6.6 The application site occupies a visually prominent position at the junction of Walton Avenue and Harpsden Road. The site can be seen in views along a long stretch of Harpsden Road to the south and in views from Reading Road to the north. Although not within a conservation area, the site lies adjacent to the Reading Road Conservation Area and as such the visual relationship of the development to the Conservation Area needs to be considered having regard to Policy CON7 of the SOLP.
- 6.7 The surrounding area is dominated by residential uses with a wide variety of housing in terms of age, size, and design. Housing within the Reading Road Conservation Area to the east consists of traditional Victorian/Edwardian terraces. Contemporaneous

housing is also prevalent within St Marks Road and St Andrews Road to the north and west, which is also within a conservation area. However, the housing within Walton Avenue and further to the south is more recent and has less cohesion in terms of design. The housing on the southern side of Walton Avenue is typical of the 1930s whilst the housing on the northern side is of a more individualised design and stems from the 1950s and 1960s. At the junction of St. Andrews Road and Reading Road a short distance to the north of the application site sits a block of flats constructed in the 1980s whilst further to the north again at the junction of St. Marks Road and Reading Road, there are two blocks of flats dating from the 1970s.

- 6.8 Having regard to the considerable variety to the existing built form, particularly outside of the conservation areas, the proposed development would not be out of keeping with the surrounding area. There are other examples of flats in the locality at prominent road junction positions, including four and three storey development at Caxton Court and Windsor House respectively. Whilst the application proposal is also for a block of flats, the building would appear as a two storey structure with rooms in the roof, and would be of a comparable scale and height to residential built form in the surrounding area. The overall size and footprint of the building would be considerably less than the two blocks of flats referred to above and overall the development would largely respect the varied character and appearance of the surrounding built form. In addition, the building lines of the development in relation to Walton Avenue and Harpsden Road would respect both the existing building lines of the two bungalows and the adjoining properties.
- 6.9 The proposed development would be a landmark building due to its visually prominent location and its design. As discussed above, the scale, siting, height and overall size of the development would generally be in keeping with the varied character and appearance of the surrounding area, and in this regard the development would not be an incongruous element of the street scene. However, the design of the building is somewhat unusual, particularly in respect of the two storey flat roofed corner element that would be clad with terracotta tiles. This feature of the development would be approximately 3 metres from the boundary with Harpsden Road, and would be clearly visible in views from Harpsden Road in particular, although the trees to be retained along Walton Avenue would offer some screening.
- 6.10 Apart from the corner section, the main part of the development would echo traditional design with a pitched roof. However, again non-typical materials are proposed including render and vertical terracotta cladding to the gable ends. The materials and other unusual design features, such as the irregular glazing details, sets the development apart from the more traditional forms of residential development in the locality. However, there are examples of architecture from several eras in the local area, with Victorian/Edwardian terracing, 1930s semi-detached housing, and 1950s/60s detached housing. Each era has a distinctive architectural presence in the area, and whilst the proposed development would pick up on some of the traditional architectural forms, it would represent a unique response to the constraints and opportunities of the site. As the surrounding built form has considerable variety, there is scope for an unusual design and such innovation should not be resisted per se.
- 6.11 The above principle is borne out through Paragraph 38 of Government guidance contained within PPS1, which states, 'Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.'

- 6.12 Having regard to the above guidance, Officers consider that the design of the development is acceptable. However, as alluded to in the PPS1 guidance, the design of the development would not necessarily be appropriate if the development was within a conservation area, such as Reading Road Conservation Area and entirely surrounded by Edwardian/Victorian terracing. In this case, the site is adjacent to, but outside of any conservation area, and is in an area of varied built form, and having regard to this, the rationale behind the design, size and overall scale of the development is appropriate.
- 6.13 As well as the main building, an open car port structure is proposed on the northern boundary of the site where it would abut the rear garden area of 2 Harpsden Road. A bin/cycle store would be attached to the eastern end of this building. This structure would be set back approximately 15 metres from Harpsden Road, and due to this distance, and the low height of the building, the car port would not be unduly prominent in the street scene. Indeed, views of the building would only be possible from a short stretch of Harpsden Road due to the screening effects of adjacent buildings, and new planting. The car port would also serve to screen the car parking area and parked cars from view.
- 6.14 Although the development would be visually prominent in the street scene, particularly when compared to the unobtrusive nature of the existing bungalows, the site is reasonably well screened by trees on Reading Road, and in particular along Walton Avenue. The lime trees to the front of the site on Walton Avenue are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, and these trees would help to soften the development in short range views from Walton Avenue and in longer views from Harpsden Road. The trees to the front of Windsor House would help to screen and soften the development in southerly views from Reading Road. The proposal does include the removal of a small number of unprotected trees fronting Harpsden Road, and this would increase the visibility of the Harpsden Road frontage, however, in light of the above considerations, the lack of vegetation on the Harpsden Road frontage would not be detrimental to the street scene. Harpsden Road, particularly on its eastern side is dominated by buildings fronting the street and the absence of vegetation on this frontage would not be out of keeping with the existing street scene.
- 6.15 In light of the above, Officers consider that the proposal complies with the relevant development plan policies and Government guidance outlined in Section 5.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.16 The application site immediately adjoins two residential properties, 2 Harpsden Road to the north and 4 Walton Avenue to the west. 2 Harpsden Road is also a detached bungalow contemporaneous with the bungalows on the application site. The nearest part of the main building to this property would be approximately 9 metres away, however, this part of the proposed building consists of a gable end 8.5 metres wide. This gable would be in line with the side elevation of the neighbouring bungalow and would not contain any overlooking windows.
- 6.17 The main part of the proposed building would be 18 metres from the boundary with 2 Harpsden Road, and this distance would ensure that there would be no overbearing or overshadowing to this neighbouring property. Some overlooking would be possible from the north elevation of the proposed development, however, this would be effectively limited to two first floor bedroom windows, and given the distances involved such overlooking would not result in significant harm.

- 6.18 The proposed car port and bin/cycle store would abut the boundary with 2 Harpsden Road, and would run for a length of approximately 19 metres along the boundary. However, the car port would only be 2 metres high at the boundary, which is the same height as a fence can be erected under permitted development in this location. The car port would only reach 2.5 metres at its maximum height, and this part of the structure would be 5 metres from the boundary. Given the low height of the car port, it would not result in any overbearing or overshadowing effects to the rear garden area of the neighbouring property. Indeed, the car port would have the benefit of helping to reduce potential disturbance from noise and lights associated with the movement of vehicles close to the boundary.
- 6.19 The western gable end of the proposed building would be approximately 1.5 metres from the shared boundary with 4 Walton Avenue and would extend for a depth of 8.5 metres along the boundary. The building line of the development would be to the front of the building line of the adjacent property. However, a single storey garage to the front of the neighbouring dwelling would help to provide a buffer between the development and the main part of the dwelling, which is set back further from the boundary. Given the separation distances between the main side elevations of 4 Walton Avenue and the proposed development, and the relative window positions it is again Officers' opinion that the development would not cause any significant harm to the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.20 The development would also have an impact on other surrounding properties in the area, however, significant harm would not be caused through these impacts. Numbers 90-104 (even) Reading Road consist of part of an Edwardian/Victorian terrace fronting directly onto Reading Road. However, the relatively modest rear gardens of these properties back onto Harpsden Road. The proposed development would result in two storey development facing Harpsden Road that would allow for overlooking to the rear of the above properties. However, the distance between the rear of these properties and the front of the proposed development is sufficient to ensure that the amenity of the adjacent occupiers is not adversely affected to a significant degree. A privacy distance of at least 25 metres between the main elevations of existing and proposed development is maintained.
- 6.21 The development would clearly be visible from other properties within Harpsden Road, Walton Avenue and St. Andrews Road. However, the development, due to the distances from these surrounding properties, and the buffering effects of the surrounding public and private highways, adjacent trees, and the curtilages of 2 Harpsden Road and 4 Walton Avenue, would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of these properties.
- 6.22 The amenity of the future occupiers of the development is also an important consideration. A south facing communal amenity area of approximately 200m² is proposed between the main building and the boundary with Walton Avenue. Having regard to the size and aspect of this area it would provide a reasonable level of amenity for the occupiers of the building. It should also be noted that the site would be close to public areas of open space, including the River Thames, within Henley.
- 6.23 In light of the above the proposal complies with the relevant development plan policies outlined in Section 5.

The Impact on Protected Trees

- 6.24 The lime trees running along both sides of Walton Avenue are protected as a group through a Tree Preservation Order. The proposed development would encroach no further towards these trees than the existing bungalow at 2 Walton Avenue, and as such would not prejudice the root protection areas of these trees. Indeed, the Council's Forestry Officer has assessed the application proposal and has raised no objections subject to conditions to require tree protection and a landscaping scheme.
- 6.25 A few small trees and other vegetation is to be removed from the boundary of the site with Harpsden Road. This vegetation is not significant in terms of its contribution to the quality of the street scene, however, new planting is proposed adjacent to the new access to the site, and the nature of this planting can be secured by way of a condition.

Highway Considerations

- 6.26 The proposal includes a new access off Harpsden Road whilst closing the existing access serving 2 Walton Avenue. Nine parking spaces, including two disabled spaces, would be provided as part of the development. This equates to one space per unit with two visitor spaces. 14 cycle parking spaces are also proposed within a covered store attached to the car port.
- 6.27 Many of the local residents have expressed concern with regard to the sufficiency of the level of parking proposed with the fear that additional parking will spill over onto local roads. The number of spaces proposed does fall short of the Council's maximum parking standards, which specify two spaces per two or three bed unit. However, these are maximum standards, and a lower parking ratio is often acceptable depending on the location and characteristics of the site. Guidance contained within PPG13 seeks to reduce reliance on the private car and promote more sustainable modes of transport. Thus Paragraph 17 of PPG13 states, 'Local authorities should revise their parking standards to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking provision, particularly for developments in locations, such as town centres, where services are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport'
- 6.28 The site is located in a sustainable location within the built up area of Henley where there is good access to services and facilities via other modes of transport to the private car, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Therefore, the use of the car for future occupiers of the development is not of paramount importance. In line with guidance contained within PPG13, encouragement should be given to the use of alternative modes of transport and the relatively low parking levels proposed would help to achieve this.
- 6.29 The proposed access to the site is sufficient in terms of visibility and the Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.

Sustainability

- 6.30 In accordance with Policy D8 of the SOLP and having regard to guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change- Supplement to PPS1, development should demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials. Guidance within the recently adopted SODG seeks to ensure that developments of between 5 and 9 residential units achieves Code Level 2 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 6.31 The application submission includes a pre-assessment of the development having

regard to the Code for Sustainable Homes, and this indicates that the development can achieve Code Level 3. Therefore, subject to ratification through the use of suitable conditions, the development accords with Policy D8 and related guidance.

Other Material Considerations

6.32 Policy D11 of the SOLP requires that infrastructure, and other services and facilities made necessary by development are provided for as part of the development. In this regard Oxfordshire County Council has requested financial contributions towards local services and infrastructure including education, libraries, health care, fire and rescue and highways. The contributions are to be secured by way of a Section 106 Planning Obligation.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application proposal is broadly in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as, subject to conditions, the proposal would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the site or adjacent conservation area, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 **It is recommended that the grant of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning, subject to the prior completion by 13th October 2008 of a Section 106 planning obligation with the County Council to ensure infrastructure payments are made towards education, transport, libraries, waste management, the museum resource centre and social and healthcare provision and the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement – 3 years**
2. **Existing buildings to be demolished and demolished material to be removed from the land**
3. **Samples of materials to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
4. **Details of hard surfacing to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
5. **Tree protection details to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
6. **Landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
7. **Details of any external lighting to be submitted and approved prior to the occupation of the development**
8. **Parking provided and retained in connection with the development in accordance with the approved drawings**
9. **Formation of new access prior to the occupation of the development**
10. **Existing access to be closed up prior to the occupation of the development**
11. **Cycle parking to be provided in accordance with approved details prior to occupation of the units and thereafter retained**
12. **All dwellings designed and constructed to meet Code 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. A Post construction review in relation to Code 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes to be submitted prior to occupation.**
13. **Details of surface water drainage to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing.**

14. **Refuse and recycling provision to be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the units and thereafter retained.**
15. **Phased contaminated land risk assessment to be carried out and approved prior to the commencement of development**
16. **Unsuspected contamination to be remediated in accordance with details to be approved prior to occupation.**
17. **Fire hydrants to be provided in accordance with details to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.**

Should the Section 106 Planning Obligations fail to be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority by 13th October 2008, it is recommended that the refusal of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning for the following reason:

The development fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or on and off-site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of the development on local infrastructure, services, or amenities. The proposal is therefore contrary to government advice, and Policy G3 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and Policy D11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

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