
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E0598
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	29 July 2008
PARISH	WATLINGTON
APPLICANT	SOHA Housing
SITE	17-35 Pauls Way, Watlington, OX49 5QX
PROPOSAL	Provision of 10 off-street parking spaces including two disabled spaces for existing residents.
AMENDMENTS	One
GRID REFERENCE	468937/194707
OFFICER	Mr P Brampton

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of Watlington Parish Council.
- 1.2 Nos.17 – 35 Pauls Way is a development of 10 old people’s retirement bungalows located on the northern outskirts of the centre of Watlington, managed by SOHA. The bungalows are arranged in a U-shape around a shared communal amenity area, which accommodates a number of fine trees. Parking is currently only available on street, with a bay kept clear for emergency vehicles.
- 1.3 The site of the application is identified on the Ordnance Survey extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 As originally submitted the application proposed eleven new parking bays on the southern boundary of the communal area to allow off-street parking for 17 – 35 St Paul’s Way. However following concerns about the impact on the nearby trees, the application has been amended to provide 10 parking bays, two of which are disabled bays. These are arranged in two bays, one of three spaces measuring 8.2 metres wide by 4.8 metres deep and a larger area of seven bays measuring 18 metres wide by 4.8 metres deep. This amended scheme includes details of the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the affected trees. The Design and Access Statement sets out the benefits this will bring to the existing residents of 17 – 35 St Paul’s Way.
- 2.2 A copy of the submitted plans and the supporting statement from the applicant is **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Watlington Parish Council** – Objection to original and amended scheme due to the detriment to a significant green open space for minimal amount of parking gain.

Forestry – Strong objection to original scheme. Amended scheme addresses these concerns, subject to appropriate tree protection condition being attached to any permission.

OCC (Highways) – Supports the application, subject to conditions regarding size of spaces, vehicle crossovers and pedestrian visibility splays

Neighbour Representations – Six letters received on original scheme – four letters of support and two letters of objection. Objections received queried the need for the development and whether tarmac was an appropriate material when materials that are more porous could be used. One letter received in response to amended plans, expressing concern about the loss of the eleventh parking space.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P59/M0942 – Erection of wardens house, 2 bedroom house, 10 aged persons dwellings and 10 houses – Approved October 1959

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan – Policies G2, G6, C9, D1, D2, D4 and T1

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this application are:

1. Whether the proposal respects the character of the development, the site and the surrounding area.
2. Whether there are any issues regarding the impact on neighbouring properties.
3. Whether there are any issues regarding the impact on highway safety
4. Whether there are any issues regarding the impact on the health of nearby trees.

Design Issues

6.2 Policy D1 states that the principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development. The communal amenity area currently provides an attractive open space within a fairly densely populated residential area. The partial loss of this area to accommodate the new parking bays forms part of the objection raised by Watlington Parish Council. This application only consists of the laying of two areas of hardstanding to accommodate 10 new car parking spaces. No gates, fences or walls are proposed to define this new access and so the area would retain its generally open appearance.

6.3 In total the new car parking spaces would result in a loss of just over 125 square metres of the communal area serving the bungalows. However, this area is over 800 square metres in size, so only around 15% of the total communal area would be lost to car parking. In addition, each bungalow has its own private front and rear garden, and whilst these are individually relatively small, they contribute to the overall amenity space available to the development. Officers do not consider that the loss of the area closest to the road significantly alters the character and appearance of the site. This amenity issue has been weighed against the benefits to the residents and highway safety the proposal offers, and these are outlined in Para 6.6. One representation queried the possibility of using a more porous material in the construction of bays, but Officers do not consider there are sufficient grounds in this location, which is outside any Flood Zone, for such a requirement. The agent has confirmed a surface water

drainage system will be used.

- 6.4 Following the receipt of amended plans, Officers are satisfied that the trees, which are located centrally in the area and form a key part of its character, can be retained and thus the overall feeling of spaciousness in this area will be preserved.

Impact on neighbouring occupants

- 6.5 Policy D4 states development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy. As discussed, the car parking spaces will serve the 10 bungalows that are arranged in a “U” shape around the communal area. There are residential properties opposite, but Officers do not consider that the use of the new parking spaces would have any significant impact on the amenities of the nearest neighbours.

Highway Safety Issues

- 6.6 Policy D2 states planning permission will not be granted for developments that fail to incorporate adequate, safe and secure parking and that such parking should be provided in a discreet or sensitive manner, preferably to the side or rear of a development to reduce the dominance of the private car. Officers consider it regrettable that this proposal will position the car parking will be prominent, but recognise there are few practical alternatives given the arrangement of the site. In addition, the Local Plan advises that communal parking areas should be well overlooked by adjoining development and this will certainly be the case here. Finally, it is recognised that cars currently have to park on-street in front of the site and so this proposal will continue the current dominance of the private car rather than increasing it.
- 6.7 In consultation, the Highways Authority have confirmed their support for the scheme as it will reduce the amount of on-street parking to the benefit of highway safety. However, a number of conditions are required to ensure the parking spaces accord with Highway standards. Namely, each parking space must be a minimum of 2.4 metres wide by 4.8 metres deep, the vehicular crossover must accord with highway requirements and unobstructed pedestrian visibility splays are necessary given the footpath that runs along the southern boundary of the site.

Tree Issues

- 6.8 A number of mature trees are located in the centre of the communal area and contribute to its attractive character. An oak and a group of silver birch would have endangered by the level of excavation required within the original scheme. Consequently, the amended scheme removes the eleventh parking bay, which was within the RPA of the Oak and confirms the remaining parking bays will be located outside the RPA of the birch trees. Officers are now satisfied the trees can now be adequately protected during implementation of this scheme. A condition requiring the prior submission and agreement of a tree protection plan is necessary, and the Council’s Forestry Officer has confirmed no objection on this basis.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Overall, this is a busy residential area where some on-street parking is often inevitable. This application offers an opportunity to redress this situation somewhat, and whilst it will involve the loss of a small portion of an attractive communal area, on balance Officers consider the gains to highway safety outweigh the harm to the character of the area.
- 7.2 The proposal complies with the relevant Development Plan policies and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would

be acceptable in terms of its relationship to the character of the site, in terms of its impact on neighbouring properties and in terms of its impact on the surrounding area. It is also acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and the health of nearby trees.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to:

- 1. Commencement three years.**
- 2. All car parking spaces to measure at least 2.4 metres wide by 4.8 metres deep**
- 3. Vehicular crossovers to be provided to serve all spaces in accordance with Highway Authority standards and carried out by an approved contractor**
- 4. Pedestrian visibility splays of 2 x 2 metres to be achieved.**
- 5. Pedestrian visibility splays to have no potential obstruction exceeding 600mm in height**
- 6. Tree Protection Plan in accordance with BS:5837:(2005) – “Trees in relation to construction” to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to work commencing**

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