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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	P08/E0825
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	Full
<b>REGISTERED</b>	06.08.2008
<b>PARISH</b>	Henley-on-Thames
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Mr Terry Buckettt Ms Roswitha Myer
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Blue Space Twelve Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	347-351 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames
<b>PROPOSALS</b>	Demolition of existing 3 dwellings and erection of 12 flats (amendment to planning permission P08/E0291 to create an additional 2 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flat inside roofspace together with amended parking layout).
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	Drawing 08.245.201 B.
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	476754/181444
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mr T Wyatt

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**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) is located on the southern edge of Henley where it lies on the east side of Reading Road adjacent to a variety of commercial and community uses, including Tesco’s supermarket. Opposite the site to the west lies an extensive area of two storey housing constructed approximately 10 years ago and a 1.5 hectare area of allotment gardens.
- 1.3 The site is currently occupied by three detached bungalows of no significant historic or architectural merit. The bungalows are served by a single access off Reading Road whilst the remainder of the front boundary to Reading Road comprises thin hedging. The land immediately to the north of the site has extant planning permission (P07/E0585) for an MOT testing station and tyre centre, whilst the adjoining land to the north east and east of the site has extant planning permission (P03/E0450) has extant planning permission for the construction of 6 Class B1 business units. The existing bungalows are somewhat dominated by the surrounding commercial uses both in terms of the scale and the amount of this type of development.
- 1.4 Planning permission (P08/E0291) was granted at Planning Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008 for the demolition of the three bungalows and their replacement with two blocks of nine flats. This application effectively seeks an amendment to this earlier approval.

**2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This application seeks planning permission for the construction of twelve flats following the demolition of the existing bungalows. The proposed dwellings would comprise 7 two bed flats, 4 one bed flats and 1 three bed dwelling within two separate blocks. 7 of the units would be located within Block A, which would be sited parallel to Reading Road and at its closest point it would be 1.5 metres from the boundary of the site with Reading Road. However, the individual units within the block would be staggered in terms of their front and rear building lines so that Unit 3 of Block A would

be 5.5 metres from the boundary with Reading Road.

- 2.2 Block A would have a total frontage of 23.5 metres and a depth of 14 metres, which takes account of the staggered building lines. The height of Block A would vary between 6.5 and 9 metres. The materials for the buildings, including Block B, would comprise a zinc roof with powder coated aluminium coping, red brick walls with seamed copper cladding to high level corner details, aluminium windows and a copper rainwater system.
- 2.3 Block B is sited on the southern part of the site where its main elevations would face north and south. The block would comprise four flats and would again be staggered so that the total building would be 15 metres wide, 12 metres deep (allowing for the stagger) and 9 metres high. Blocks A and B are both of a contemporary design with curved monopitch roofs terminating in a higher eaves level to the rear. Large areas of glazing are apparent and generally the size of the window openings varies substantially. Balconies are also a common feature of the development.
- 2.4 The development would be served by parking to the rear of the site, which would provide 14 spaces. Cycle parking would also be provided as part of the parking provision. A communal bin store would be provided adjacent to the single new access, which would be sited at the northern end of the site's frontage to Reading Road. A communal area of external space would be provided between Blocks A and B, which would total approximately 280 m<sup>2</sup> whilst a small private garden area would be provided to the rear of the only 3 bed unit on the site.
- 2.5 The siting and footprint of the buildings and the accommodation on the ground and first floors of Blocks A and B (6 two bed flats, 2 one bed flats and 1 three bed dwelling) has already been approved. The height and general design of the buildings has also already been approved and therefore, the main differences between this scheme and the approved scheme relate to the provision of three additional units of accommodation within the roof space of the two blocks, and the addition of two extra parking spaces.
- 2.6 In Block A the additional roofspace accommodation (2 x 1 bed units) is externally manifested through infilling an area at second floor roof level approximately 1.2 metres wide and related glazing at second floor level in respect of all four elevations. The main external change in terms of additional volume is through the extended glazed stairwell in the rear (east) elevation of the building. In respect of Block B the main external changes are through the extension of the glazed stairwell on the rear (north) elevation, additional glazing at second floor level and the creation of a roof terrace on the south elevation.
- 2.7 A copy of the proposed plans and the design and access statement is **attached** as Appendix B. However, it should be noted that the design and access statement was submitted in relation to the original plans.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – The application should be refused due to being overintensive
- 3.2 **Henley Society** – The design of the development is inappropriate and the scheme is overintensive.
- 3.3 **OCC Highways** – No objections subject to conditions and financial contributions.
- 3.4 **County Ecologist** – No objections.
- 3.5 **Forestry Officer** – Conditions regarding tree protection, submission and approval of an Arboricultural Method Statement and a landscaping scheme should be attached to any permission.
- 3.6 **Environmental Health** – Conditions to require the investigation for and if necessary remediation of contamination should be attached to any planning permission.
- 3.7 **Neighbours** – No representations received.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P08/E0291 - Demolition of existing 3 No dwellings and erection of six two bedroom flats, one three bedroom dwelling and two one bedroom flats. Planning permission granted on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- 4.2 P85/S0402 – Erection of new bungalow. Planning Permission granted on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1985.
- 4.3 P85/S0018 - Extension and alteration to bungalow; new single garage. Planning Permission granted on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1985.
- 4.4 P61/H0762 - Erection of dwellinghouse with vehicular access. Planning Permission granted on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1961.
- 4.5 P52/H0064 – Site for one caravan. Planning Permission granted on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1952.

5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:
- G1 – General Policies for Development
  - G2 – Improving the Quality and Design of Development
  - G3 – Infrastructure and Service Provision
  - T1 – Sustainable Travel
  - T2 – Car Parking
  - T8 – Development Proposals
  - H3 – Design, Quality and Density of Housing Development
- 5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
- G1 – General Restraint and Sustainable Development
  - G2 – Protection and Enhancement of the Environment
  - G6 – Promoting Good Design
  - C4 – The Landscape Setting of Settlements
  - C9 – Landscape Features
  - EP8 – Contaminated Land
  - D1 – Good Design and Local Distinctiveness

- D2 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking
- D3 – Plot Coverage and Garden Areas
- D4 – Privacy and Daylight
- D6 – Design against Crime
- D7 – Access for All
- D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design
- D10 – Waste Management
- D11 – Infrastructure and Service Requirements Policy
- H1 – The Amount and Location of New Housing
- H4 – Towns and Larger Villages Outside the Green Belt
- H7 – Range of Dwelling Types and Size
- H8 – Dwelling Densities
- T1 & T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

5.3 Government Guidance:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3 - Housing
- PPG13 - Transport

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide July 2008 (SODG)

6.0 **PLANNING ISSUES**

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

1. The principle of the development
2. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
3. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
4. Highway considerations
5. The impact on trees and hedges
6. Efficient use of energy, water and materials
7. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The application site is located on the edge of but within the built up area of Henley-on-Thames where the principle of new residential development is broadly acceptable with regard to Policy H4 of the SOLP. Policy H7 of the SOLP requires that 45% of units in schemes of two or more units are provided as two bed units. In this case, the proposal consists of 7 two bed units out of a total of 12 units, and therefore, the requirements of Policy H7 are met.
- 6.3 The site is in a sustainable location close to the amenities and services within Henley. In light of this the site should in theory be developed to its maximum potential in the interests of the efficient use of brownfield land. In this regard, the proposal represents a density of approximately 88 dwellings per hectare, which represents an efficient use of the land, having regard to the indicative minimum density requirements of 30 dwellings per hectare net.
- 6.4 Clearly the principle of the redevelopment of the site has already been established by the grant of planning permission for 9 units under application P08/E0291.
- 6.5 There is currently a shortfall in the required five year supply of deliverable sites for housing in the District. In light of this Paragraph 71 of PPS3 is relevant where it states:

'Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example, where Local Development Documents have not been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS or there is less than five years supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69.

- 6.6 Therefore this application should be considered favourably having regard to advice in PPS 3 and specifically paragraph 69, which this seeks to achieve high quality housing, a housing mix reflecting the requirements of specific groups, the suitability of the site for development including its environmental sustainability, using land effectively and efficiently and ensuring the proposed development is in line with housing objectives'.

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

- 6.7 Policy H4 of the SOLP, along with several other general Local Plan policies, requires that any new development is in keeping with the design, height, scale and materials of the built form in the surrounding area and that the character of the area is not adversely affected.
- 6.8 The site lies in a visually prominent position on the edge of Henley, particularly in views when travelling along Reading Road towards Henley from the south. The existing development on the site is unobtrusive due to the modest size and height of the development and its set back from Reading Road. The relatively open and unobtrusive nature of the existing development on the site is further enhanced by the presence of the open allotments immediately opposite to the west and the softening effects of several adjacent mature trees, particularly adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and fronting the west side of Reading Road opposite the site.
- 6.9 The proposed development, due to the substantial increase in the footprint of buildings, and the overall height, bulk and massing of the development would have a considerably greater visual impact in views from the public highway than the existing development and, overall, the development would present a harder edge to the settlement than the existing bungalows, which, in respect of views from the south, are almost entirely screened by the existing vegetation during the summer months. However, officers consider that the increased visual prominence of the built form is not sufficient reason to refuse the planning application in this case.
- 6.10 The site is not part of the countryside and is immediately adjacent to large commercial developments to the east and north and dense residential development to the west, and the site is clearly part of the urban environment. The amended plans submitted as part of this application have reduced the number of units proposed by one and have consequently reduced the amount of built form on the site. The amended plans have also introduced staggered building lines to the front and rear in respect of the two blocks and varying roof lines and heights. The amended details have retained and increased a proposed area of open space in the south western corner of the site, which is the most prominent part of the site when viewed from the Reading Road to the south of the site.
- 6.11 The amended details through varying the design, height and siting of the individual elements of the two blocks have helped to break up the bulk and massing of the development and helped to provide more visual interest to the buildings. The design of the development is certainly not traditional either in the visual appearance of the buildings or the proposed materials. The principle of contemporary design is acceptable and is becoming increasingly common as developers and individuals seek to carry out unique developments with little reference to traditional forms of

architecture. In this regard Paragraph 38 of PPS1 states:

*'Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. 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 Although within the urban grain of Henley, the application site is not located adjacent to existing residential development but adjoins commercial development to the east and north. The commercial development to the east is sited on lower ground than the application site but the individual buildings, most notably that relating to Tesco's, are substantial in size and display considerable variation in terms of age and design. As outlined above, extant planning permission also exists for two large commercial buildings immediately to the north and east of the site. The housing opposite the site is of a traditional form, however, it is of no particular architectural merit and is located further from the site than the commercial development against which the proposed development would be viewed when travelling along the Reading Road.
- 6.13 Having regard to the scale and general design of the adjoining commercial development, the contemporary design approach adopted in relation to the proposals is considered broadly acceptable. The development would not be viewed in close proximity to the traditional forms of the residential development to the west and there is no requirement to reflect the nondescript functional design of the adjacent commercial development. As such officers consider that there is scope for a uniquely designed development on the application site.
- 6.14 The proposal would add considerable visual interest to this prominent site, particularly when arriving at the edge of Henley from the south. The development on the site will represent a much harder edge to this part of the settlement than the existing bungalows, and this is not deemed to be inappropriate given the transition from the semi-rural and largely open land alongside Reading Road to the south of the site and the much denser urban form of development immediately after the roundabout serving the Tesco supermarket.
- 6.15 The retention of an open area of ground to be used as a communal garden area in the south west corner of the site is an important element of the scheme. This area, with proposed planting would further help to soften the south elevation of Block A and the west elevation of Block B in views from Reading Road, and would, along with the retention of the off-site trees to the south of the site, help to improve the environmental quality of the development.
- 6.16 The size, scale, height and design of the development is essentially the same as already approved. The external changes are largely limited to new glazing to serve second floor accommodation and an extension of the glazed stairwells on the private rear elevations of the buildings, which would not be readily apparent from public view points. A balcony area is proposed on the south elevation of Block B at second floor level, and whilst this area would be visible from the public highway to the south, it would be set into the main roof area, and would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.17 There are no neighbouring residential properties to the site and as such the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on residential occupiers in the locality. This is borne out by the lack of objections to the proposal. The site borders commercial development to the north and east and it is not considered that the proposal would prejudice the occupiers of the adjacent commercial development or the future viability of the businesses.
- 6.18 The amenity of the future occupiers of the development is also an important consideration. Guidance within the recently adopted SODG generally seeks to provide 35m<sup>2</sup> of space per one bed unit, 50m<sup>2</sup> per two bed unit, and 100m<sup>2</sup> per three bed unit. In this regard, a total area of approximately 590 m<sup>2</sup> would be required for the development. An amenity area of approximately 280m<sup>2</sup> is being provided in a single space in the south west corner of the site. This equates to approximately 23m<sup>2</sup> per unit, and therefore falls substantially short of the guidance. However, the amenity area is as approved in relation to the previous scheme, and Officers do not consider that the intensification of the residential use of the site through an additional three units totalling four bedrooms would render the external amenity provision unacceptable.

Highway Considerations

- 6.19 As with the previous scheme, the Highway Liaison Officer is satisfied with the parking layout and access to the site in relation to the amount of parking and the impact of the development on highway safety.
- 6.20 The parking is provided to the rear of the site where it will be discreetly behind the development. As such the parking areas will not be a dominant feature of the site as advocated by guidance contained within the SODG.

The Impact on trees and hedges

- 6.21 There are several trees on the boundaries of the site, the majority of which are just beyond the eastern and southern boundaries. In particular the trees beyond the southern boundary make an important contribution to the environmental quality of the area, and help to soften views towards the site from the south in particular. The footprint of the development is as previously approved, and as such there is no additional impact on adjacent trees as a result of this current scheme.

Efficient Use of Energy, Water and Materials

- 6.22 Policy D8 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that all new development demonstrates high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials. This Policy has recently been afforded greater weight by the Government's Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change, which was published in December 2007. This Statement is a supplement to PPS1.
- 6.23 The design and access statement outlines measures to provide for the conservation and efficient use of energy and water such as high levels of insulation, including sheep's wool, solar heating, rainwater harvesting, hempcrete and ground source heat pumps. A pre-assessment of the development under the Code for Sustainable Homes has been submitted in relation to the proposed development and this indicates that the development can achieve Code 3, which is equivalent to being 25% more energy efficient than a home built to the 2006 Building Regulations standards, and to using no more than approximately 105 litres of water per person per day. A condition is

proposed to ensure that the development meets Code 3 through construction and this can be ascertained through a post-construction review.

Other Material Considerations

6.24 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 in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as, subject to conditions and a S106 Planning Obligation, the proposal would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 **That the grant of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning subject to the prior completion by 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008 of an undertaking or 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.**

1. **Commencement – 3 years**
2. **Samples of materials to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
3. **Tree protection details to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
4. **Landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing**
5. **Details of any external lighting to be submitted and approved prior to the occupation of the development**
6. **Details of finished floor levels in relation to existing and proposed ground levels to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing.**
7. **Permitted development rights excluded for extensions and outbuildings (Unit 1).**
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 details to be submitted and approved 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. **Details of the refuse and recycling collection point to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation.**



**15. Details of fire hydrants to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation.**

**Should the Section 106 Planning Obligations fail to be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority by 5<sup>th</sup> June 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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