
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E1165
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	3 November 2008
PARISH	Sonning Common
WARD MEMBER(S)	Paul Harrison and Alan Rooke
APPLICANT	Fieldgate properties UK Ltd
SITE	Land adjacent to 1 Grove Road, Sonning Common
PROPOSAL	Erection of a detached four-bedroom dwelling incorporating access and parking.
AMENDMENTS	One – labelling errors corrected
GRID REFERENCE	471052/180318
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between the officer's recommendation and the views of Sonning Common Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix 1. The application site comprises an undeveloped plot of land, formerly the lower section of the garden of No.70 Peppard Road (which has been recently redeveloped with flats) and the lower section of the garden of No.72 (which has been sold off to the applicant). The site adjoins the parking area of the flats known as Beechwood Court to the north-east and the side boundary of No.1 Grove Road, a detached bungalow to the south-west. This is the first of several bungalows on this side of Grove Road. The opposite side comprises mostly houses. The site slopes steeply upwards from north-east to south-west, such that the new dwelling would be in an elevated position in relation to Beechwood Court, but set lower than the other dwellings on Grove Road. The site contains some vegetation, with more significant planting on no.1's side of the boundary. The site boundaries are denoted by a close-boarded fence. There is presently no vehicular access onto the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a four bedroom dwelling. The new dwelling would be built into the slope of the land so that the north-east portion would be two storey and the south-west portion would be single storey. It would measure 11.4 metres wide with a single storey depth of 6.6 metres and two storey depth of 10 metres. The dwelling would be set in by 1 to 1.9 metres from the boundary with No.1 and 2.3 to 3 metres from the boundary with the car park. The design would result in a T-plan incorporating a hip roof over the single storey element and an asymmetrical gabled roof over the two storey element. The external materials would consist of high level cedar boarding with facing bricks below, plain clay roof tiles and white painted timber. The main windows would face front and back, with only a door in the south-eastern side elevation. The dwelling would provide 4-bedrooms, two upstairs and two downstairs.
- 2.2 A new access would be created to serve the proposed dwelling, leading to a front hard standing of permeable block paving, capable of accommodating three off-street parking spaces. There would be a refuse and recycling collection point located in the south-western corner of the frontage. A hedgerow would be planted along much of the boundaries at the front of the dwelling. The rear garden would provide about

112 square metres of private amenity space. A Code for Sustainable Homes Pre-Assessment Report was submitted with the application.

- 2.3 The applicant's supporting Design and Access Statement is **attached** as Appendix 2. The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix 3.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 **Sonning Common Parish Council** – The application should be refused due to:

- Overdevelopment of the site; and
- Proposed house sited too far in front of neighbouring house.

- 3.2 **OCC Highways** – No objections subject to standard access and parking conditions.

- 3.3 **Environmental Services – (Waste Management)** – No response received.

- 3.4 **Environmental Services – (Contamination)** – No objection subject to the imposition of a standard condition requiring investigation and mitigation as necessary.

- 3.5 **Forestry Officer** – No objection, subject to a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme.

- 3.6 **Neighbours** – One representation of objection raising the following points:

- Overlooking of No.74's rear garden from first floor rear windows.
- Additional access would have an impact on traffic, which is already high.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P06/E0777 – A planning application for a dwelling on a smaller plot (not including the section of garden purchased from No.72) was refused planning permission in September 2006 for the following reason:

- 4.2 *“That having regard to the restricted size of the site relative to its surroundings, the proposal to erect a new dwelling on the site would appear cramped, prominent, intrusive and out of keeping with the character of the area. In addition, the new dwelling would be erected in front of number 1 Grove Road and in this way would be an unneighbourly and overbearing form of development. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies G1, G2 and H1 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and policies G2, G6 and H4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.”*

- 4.3 A subsequent appeal was dismissed in June 2007. A copy of the appeal decision is **attached** as Appendix 4.

- 4.4 P07/E1372 – A planning application for various extensions and alterations to No.1 to enable first floor accommodation to be created was granted planning permission in December 2007.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:

- G1 – General Policies for Development
- G2 – Improving the Quality and Design of Development
- G6 – Energy Conservation
- T8 – Development Proposals
- H1 – The Amount and Distribution of Housing
- H3 – Design, Quality and Density of Housing Development

- 5.2 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:
- G2 – Protection of the Environment
 - G5 – Making the Best Use of Land
 - G6 – Promoting Good Design
 - 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
 - D8 – Energy, Water and Materials Efficient Design
 - D10 – Waste Management
 - H4 – Towns and Larger Villages Outside the Green Belt
 - T1 – Transport Requirements for New Developments
 - T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

- 5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance:
South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 – Sections 3, 4 and 5.

- 5.4 Government Guidance:
- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 - PPS3 – Housing
 - PPG13 – Transport

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposed dwelling would be located within the built-up area of Sonning Common and consequently the proposal falls to be assessed against the criteria of Policy H4, The planning issues that are relevant to this application are whether:

- The development would not result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- The size and appearance of the proposed dwelling and the extensions to the existing dwelling would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- The living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers would be compromised and the development would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- The development would result in an unacceptable deficiency of off-street parking spaces for the resultant dwellings or other conditions prejudicial to highway safety; and
- The proposal would incorporate sufficient sustainability and waste management measures.

Loss of Open Space

- 6.2 Criterion (i) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt. The site has formed a residential plot with an existing dwelling and as such constitutes previously developed land. It is surrounded by residential properties and their gardens and there is no evidence that it has any particular ecological value and is only visible in public views from Grove Road and Peppard Road against the backdrop of existing dwellings. This criterion would therefore be satisfied.

Character and Appearance

- 6.3 Criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 explain that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings and the character of the area is not adversely affected. The history of the site demonstrates that the Council's resistance to the development of a smaller site was supported at appeal. In that case, the Inspector found that the development would appear unduly prominent in relation to the dwellings to the south, due to its proximity to the road. Whereas that development was 1.7 metres at its closest point and 2.3 metres at its furthest point to the footpath, the proposed development would be staggered from 7.8 metres to 10 metres back from the footpath. Although the bungalows on Grove Road are about 15 metres back from the road, Beechwood Court is much closer than the proposed dwelling, at 3.5 metres. As such, the proposal would represent an appropriate transition between the more spacious character of Grove Road and the denser urban form of Peppard Road. The Inspector found that the appeal proposal was not cramped on its plot and as the current proposal involves an enlarged plot and a dwelling of similar proportions, this would also be acceptable in that respect. The existing ridge of No.1 is 5.9 metres high and would continue to be this height if the approved extension were to be built. The proposed dwelling would be of a comparable height in absolute terms and the slope would reduce its height in relative terms which would prevent the two storey element from being overly dominant. Although the bungalows are similar in appearance they are not identical and having regard to the houses opposite, the design of the proposed dwelling would be in keeping with the mixture of dwelling forms and types on this part of Grove Road. In light of this assessment, the proposed development would comply with the above criteria.

Living Conditions

- 6.4 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. The proposed house would project beyond the front of No.1 by 3.5 metres. Given the amount of separation of about 6 metres between the side wall of the proposed dwelling and the closest dining room window at No.1, any impact in terms of loss of light or outlook would be slight, particularly as the dwelling would be to the north-east of the window. The extant planning permission for an extension to No.1 would introduce a further ground floor window closer to the boundary, but as this would serve a utility, the proposed dwelling would not impact upon a habitable part of No.1. Due to the single storey part of the dwelling being closest to No.1, there would be no adverse affect upon the existing bathroom windows in the side wall, nor would there be any loss of light to the side-facing bathroom windows or bedroom rooflights in the side roof slope of the proposed extension to No.1. The proposed dwelling would not be visible from the rear-facing windows of No.1. Furthermore, the Inspector found the relationship between the appeal dwelling and No.1 to be acceptable, even though the former would have been positioned 13 metres in front of the latter with a garage 6 metres in front.
- 6.5 The occupier of No.74 has raised concerns about overlooking of their property. Whilst the first floor rear bedroom window would face the boundary with the rear garden of No.74, this would be at a distance of 7.5 metres. Therefore any overlooking of the rearmost part of the adjoining garden would be slight. The window would not directly face most of the long garden or the house itself and consequently there would not be a significant loss of privacy to the adjoining residents. Moreover, the plans indicate some tree and shrub planting along the boundary that would further restrict the line of sight from this window and could be covered by a formal landscaping condition. The proposed garden area would comply with the recommended standard of 100 square

metres for a dwelling of this size and the internal room dimensions would be adequate. On the basis of this assessment, the proposed development would meet the above criterion.

Highways and Parking

- 6.6 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the adopted SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. Although a local resident is concerned that the proposal would worsen existing on-street parking congestion, the Highway Authority is satisfied that the proposed access and parking arrangements would be acceptable for a 4-bedroom dwelling, subject to standard conditions. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the above criterion.

Sustainability Measures

- 6.7 Policy D8 of the adopted SOLP 2011 requires proposals to incorporate sustainability measures in terms of energy, water and materials efficient design. A detailed Code for Sustainable Homes Pre-Assessment Report was submitted with the application and refers to a number of measures to be incorporated with a view to achieving Level 3. Section 3 of the SODG 2008 recommends that single dwellings reach Level 1, so this would be a benefit of the development. A planning condition is recommended requiring submission of a post construction review prior to occupation. The implementation of the proposed location for refuse and recycling storage and collection and the addition of composting facilities can also be secured via a planning condition in accordance with Policy D10.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would not materially harm the living conditions of nearby residents or the character and appearance of the area or result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **Grant Planning Permission**

1. **Standard 3 Year Time Limit**
2. **Details of slab levels prior to commencement**
3. **Samples of materials prior to commencement**
4. **Removal of Permitted Development Rights for windows, extensions, porch, outbuildings, hardstandings**
5. **Details of post construction review of sustainability measures having regard to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes prior to occupation**
6. **Refuse and recycling to be implemented as shown and composting facilities to be agreed prior to commencement**
7. **Formation of new access as plan prior to commencement and retained as such**
8. **Parking spaces as plan prior to occupation and retained as such**
9. **Details of hard and soft landscaping prior to commencement**
10. **Details of contamination investigation and mitigation as necessary prior to commencement**

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