
APPLICATION NO.	P08/E0957
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	11 th August 2008
PARISH	Lewknor
WARD MEMBERS	Rev'd Angie Paterson Mr Rodney Mann
APPLICANT	Mrs Linda Howkins
SITE	Highfield, Lower Road, Postcombe
PROPOSALS	Erection of 3 bedroom dwelling
AMENDMENTS	Drawings MDL-1038-PL100; 101; 102; 103
GRID REFERENCE	470905/199998
OFFICER	Tom Wyatt

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to Committee as the Officer's recommendation conflict with the views of the Parish Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) comprises part of the large garden associated with an existing chalet bungalow, Highfield. The site forms part of linear residential development along Lower Road, which is a narrow no through road extending to the northern edge of Postcombe. The majority of the surrounding dwellings comprise bungalows although there is also two storey development at the northern and southern ends of Lower Road. To the west of the application site the built form concedes to open countryside.

2.0 **THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks permission for the construction of a new dwelling. The proposed dwelling would be sited to the south of the existing property and would infill an area of garden between the existing dwelling and the neighbouring property, Charmantus. The proposed dwelling is of a simple design with a single large bedroom and associated ensuite at first floor level within the roofspace. Two further bedrooms could be provided at ground floor.

2.2 The dwelling would have a maximum depth of 12 metres, a width of 10 metres and a height of approximately 6.2 metres, which is comparable to the existing dwelling, Highfield. Two vehicle parking spaces are to be provided adjacent to Lower Road with pedestrian access leading to the dwelling. An area of agricultural land to the rear of the existing property would be incorporated into the garden areas of the proposed and existing dwellings.

2.3 A copy of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** as Appendix B whilst other documents relating to the application can be found on the Council's website, www.southoxon.gov.uk

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Lewknor Parish Council** – Objects to the amended plans due to a lack of drainage infrastructure, the impact on the rural character of Lower Road, and the prominence of the proposed parking area.

- 3.2 **OCC Highway Liaison Officer** – No objections subject to a condition requiring the proposed passing place to be kept clear of any obstruction.
- 3.3 **Forestry Officer** – Further information is required regarding the impact of the proposed pedestrian access on the adjacent protected tree.
- 3.4 **Contaminated Land Officer** – Conditions to investigate for and, if necessary, remediate any contamination should be attached to any planning permission.
- 3.5 **Waste Management Officer** – Refuse and Recycling provision needs to be made for the collection and storage of waste.
- 3.6 **Environmental Health Officer** – No objections.
- 3.7 **Neighbours** – Two letters of objection to the original plans have been received:
- Overdevelopment of the site
 - Lack of sufficient drainage
 - Not in keeping with adjacent bungalows
 - Loss of outlook and amenity to neighbouring occupiers
 - Damage to the surface of Lower Road
 - The passing bay is likely to be used for additional parking
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 P07/E1065 - Erection of a 3 bedroom dwelling. Withdrawn prior to determination on 02 October 2007.
- 4.2 P06/E0279 - Erection of dwelling and change of use of part of paddock to form additional garden. Withdrawn prior to determination on 21 April 2006.
- 4.3 P02/N0753 - Raising the roof and installing 2 no. dormer windows to provide additional living accommodation. Planning Permission on 17 December 2002.
- 5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:
-G1, G2, G3, T1, T2, T8, H1, H3
- 5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
-G1, G2, G6, C1, C4, C9, EP8, D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D8, D10, H4, H5, H6, H18, T1, T2
- 5.3 Government Guidance:
-PPS1, PPS3, PPS23
- 5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance
-South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)
-South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA)
- 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. Sustainability
 5. Highway considerations

6. The impact on trees
7. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The site consists of previously developed land having regard to the definition outlined in PPS3, and lies between existing residential properties on the western side of Lower Road. There is continuous residential development along Lower Road, and Policy H5 of the SOLP allows for infill development within Postcombe. Infill development is defined as ‘the filling of an appropriate small gap in an otherwise largely built-up frontage by the erection of one or two detached or up to four small terraced or semi-detached dwellings’. Although there is no qualification of the term ‘appropriate small gap’ in the wording of Policy H5, the site is garden land extending to approximately 15 metres in width and Officers consider that the site can be classed as a small gap between existing residential development. In addition, the frontage of Lower Road is largely built up as it consists of continuous residential development.

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

- 6.3 The principle of the development is broadly acceptable having regard to Policy H5 of the SOLP, and as such the details of the proposed development fall to be assessed against Policy H4 of the SOLP, which outlines several criteria against which proposals for new residential development fall to be assessed.
- 6.4 Criterion (i) seeks to ensure that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoiled. The site is a largely level area of lawn in private use as part of the garden of Highfield. There is no public access to the site and public views over the site from Lower Road are limited due to the screening effects of thick vegetation forming the site’s boundary with Lower Road. Some of this vegetation would be lost to form the parking and pedestrian access, however, the vegetation to the front of Highfield will not be disturbed, and the majority of the vegetation to the front of the application site will also be retained. Furthermore, the dwelling would be set back almost 30 metres from Lower Road, and would be behind the front building lines of the adjacent dwellings. This would further reduce the visual prominence of the dwelling.
- 6.5 A public footpath runs north-south approximately 120 metres to the west of the proposed dwelling. Currently there are widespread views from the footpath towards the application site and beyond to the Chilterns escarpment. These are attractive views in which the rural landscape and open appearance of the area dominates. The proposed dwelling would be visually prominent in these views, and the extension of the garden area westwards would serve to increase this prominence. However, the dwelling would be viewed in conjunction with Highfield and views of the distant escarpment would still be possible over and to the side of the dwelling. The views relate to a section of approximately 60 metres of the footpath, and Officers do not consider that the impact of the dwelling on public views from the footpath would result in any significant harm to the landscape setting of the settlement.
- 6.6 Criterion (ii) states that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development should be in keeping with the surroundings. The proposed dwelling is a modest building with the first floor contained within the roof. The dwelling would also be set slightly into the existing ground levels and would be below the ridge of Highfield, although it would be higher than Charmantus. The footprint of the dwelling would be substantially smaller than that of Highfield and the dwelling would be generally subservient to this adjacent dwelling. This subservience would be further increased by

the set back of the dwelling behind the front building lines of Highfield and Charmantus when viewed from Lower Road.

- 6.7 The dwellings along Lower Road are generally of modest size but do display a variety of design. The proposed dwelling would be in keeping with the scale and heights of the surrounding built form, and would be constructed in traditional materials appropriate to the built form within Lower Road. The dwelling is of a simple design and Officers consider that the dwelling would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding built form.
- 6.8 Criterion (iii) seeks to protect the character of the surrounding area. Lower Road has a rural character due to the modest scale of the residential development, the abundant vegetation within the road, the proximity of open countryside and the widespread views over this countryside. The proposed dwelling would infill an area of open land but would retain gaps of 5 metres and 9 metres respectively between the dwelling and the side elevations of Charmantus and Highfield. Many of the gaps between individual dwellings in the locality are much smaller than this, particularly on the eastern side of Lower Road.
- 6.9 The dwelling would allow for the retention of the majority of the vegetation on the boundary of the site with Lower Road and importantly a large ash tree to the front of the site would be also be retained. This vegetation would help to screen and soften the development from the east and further landscaping within the rear garden area will serve the same purpose in respect of views from the west. The dwelling is broadly in keeping with the scale and appearance of the surrounding built form and would not represent an overdevelopment of the site. In light of the above Officers consider that the proposal would be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- 6.10 Criterion (iv) seeks to ensure that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections. These issues are assessed under the separate headings below.
- 6.11 Criterion (v) states that if the proposal constitutes backland development, it should not create problems of privacy and access and should not extend the built up limits of the settlement. The proposal does not constitute backland development and would not extend the built limits of the settlement. However, the proposal does include extended garden areas to Highfield and the proposed dwelling. Policy H18 of the SOLP allows for the extension of garden areas provided that there is no adverse impact on the landscape setting of the settlement or on local amenities. The proposed western boundary of the garden areas would line up with the garden areas of adjoining properties to the north and south, and would therefore be in keeping with the form of the surrounding development. Further planting within the extended garden would be required by condition as would agreement to boundary details.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.12 The proposed dwelling would lie between two existing properties, and as such would potentially affect the amenities of the occupiers of these dwellings. Charmantus lies to the south and is currently separated from the application site by a mature hedgeline. The proposed dwelling would be approximately 3 metres from the boundary with Charmantus and would extend some 5 metres behind the rear building line of this property.
- 6.13 The dwelling would allow for the retention of the existing hedgeline and this would continue to provide effective screening between the two properties. The side elevation closest to the boundary with Charmantus comprises a gable approximately 7 metres

deep and 6 metres high. Due to the distance between the proposed dwelling and Charmantus, the relatively low height and depth of the proposed side elevation, and the fact that the dwelling would be to the north of Charmantus, Officers do not consider that the dwelling would result in any harmful levels of overshadowing or overbearing effects. Furthermore, no windows are proposed in the side elevation that would cause overlooking.

- 6.14 The proposed dwelling would be approximately 9 metres from the deep side elevation relating to Highfield. The two properties would be separated by a new fence. The siting of the proposed dwelling would mean that only approximately 8 metres of the depth of the dwelling would be directly parallel with the side elevation of Highfield. The depth of Highfield is over 25 metres, and as such the majority of the side elevation of the existing property would not be affected by any overshadowing effects of the dwelling. In addition there would be no significant overlooking of the side elevation of Highfield. However, the side elevation of Highfield contains several ground and first floor windows that would look directly over the front garden of the proposed dwelling.
- 6.15 Highfield is within the applicant's control and the applicant has put forward proposals for amending the existing window arrangements in the side elevation of Highfield such as moving windows higher up the roofslope to avoid overlooking and to obscure glaze ground floor windows. Overlooking to the front of the proposed dwelling would be possible whether these alterations are carried out or not, however, overlooking to the proposed rear garden area of the dwelling will not be significant and direct overlooking between the windows in the facing side elevations of the existing and proposed dwelling would also not result in any significant harm.

Sustainability Issues

- 6.16 A number of possible measures are proposed for the efficient use of energy and water, including solar water heating, under-floor heating, rainwater harvesting, ground source heat pumps and triple glazed windows. Sustainability measures in accordance with Policy D8 of the SOLP and guidance contained within the SODG can be secured by condition.

Highway Considerations

- 6.17 Lower Road is a narrow single track lane. The applicant is proposing to provide two parking spaces and a passing bay to the front of the site by excavating part of the existing steep bank between the site and Lower Road. The provision of parking space adjacent to Lower Road rather than closer to the dwelling would limit the extent of the earthworks required towards the front of the site and limit the loss of vegetation on the front boundary.
- 6.18 The level of parking meets parking standards for the size of dwelling proposed, and the provision of a passing bay would help to ease traffic movement along Lower Road. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposals subject to the retention of the passing bay for this purpose.

Impact on Trees

- 6.19 There is a prominent ash tree on the boundary with the adjoining dwelling, Charmantus, to the front of the proposed dwelling. The dwelling has been sited so as to avoid disturbance to the root protection areas of this tree, and to avoid any significant future conflict between the tree and the dwelling. Further details can be secured by condition in relation to tree protection measures during construction, particularly in relation to the

formation of the pedestrian access along the northern boundary of the site. The vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site will largely be retained and can be supplemented with additional planting. Elsewhere within the site additional planting can be secured through condition to help soften the development and preserve the rural character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.19 Taking a precautionary approach to the issue of contamination, the Council's Contaminated Land Officer has requested that conditions be imposed on any planning permission to require the investigation and, if necessary, remediation of any contamination on the site.
- 6.20 Due to the narrow nature of the access road there is limited space for the provision of a collection point for waste and recyclables. However, space does exist and a condition is recommended that requires details for the management of waste on the site.
- 6.21 Concern has been expressed by the Parish Council and in the two letters of objection regarding the sufficiency of the drainage in the local area. Drainage details can be secured and agreed through an appropriate condition.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, and would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or highway safety.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 **That planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement – 3 years**
2. **Samples of materials to be approved**
3. **Details of hardsurfacing to be approved**
4. **Details of fencing and other means of enclosure to be approved**
5. **Floor levels and proposed ground levels to be approved**
6. **Hedge on southern boundary to be retained**
7. **Tree and hedge protection measures to be approved**
8. **Landscaping scheme to be approved**
9. **Sustainability measures to be approved**
10. **Provision of parking area and passing place prior to occupation and retention of parking area for the new dwelling**
11. **Passing place to remain unobstructed**
12. **Contaminated land assessment to be approved**
13. **No new openings in the south or north elevations**
14. **Windows in the south elevation of Highfield to be altered prior to the occupation of the new dwelling in accordance with details to be approved**

- 15. Permitted development rights omitted for extensions**
- 16. Details of provisions for refuse and recycling storage and collection to be approved**
- 17. Details of surface and foul water drainage to be approved**

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