

SUBJECT **COMMITTEE SITE VISIT REPORTS** **ITEM 7**
 1 APRIL 2009
 Attendance – Verbally updated at Committee

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P08/W1109
APPLICATION TYPE	Minor
REGISTERED	29 September 2008
PARISH	Wallingford
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Imran Lokhon Mr Marcus Harris
APPLICANT	SOHA Housing
SITE	Land adjacent to 2 Norman Way, Wallingford
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing garages and construction of 3 two bedroom houses and 1 three bedroom house.
AMENDMENTS	Drawing nos. P01G, P03C, P02C, P05,
GRID REFERENCE	460157/189191
OFFICER	Mrs E Hamerton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application has been referred to Committee at the request of the local member Imran Lokhon.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application site is shown on the OS plan **attached** at Appendix 1. The site lies within Wallingford and is in between Norman Way and Green Close. To the rear of the site are a row of terrace properties that front St Johns Road. The site is currently occupied by 12 garages, these garages are in two blocks. The land in between is a hard surface that cars currently park on.
- 2.2 The character of the surrounding area is varied. Norman Way comprises 1960's style terrace houses. Green Close has a row of detached houses which vary in their size and style and to the rear is St John's Terrace that is a row of victorian terrace housing.
- 2.3 The development proposes the demolition of the garages and the erection of a terrace of 4 new houses with associated parking. To the west of the site there is a 3m wide access road that leads to the parking area for 20 St Johns Terrace. Accompanying the application is a Design and Access Statement that includes a Code for Sustainable Homes pre assessment estimator. This indicates that the new houses will reach Code level 3 star for the Code for Sustainable Homes. A copy of the plans is **attached** at Appendix 2, the supporting information is available on the Councils website.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Wallingford Town Council**

- Refusal of original plans – consider the development to be un-neighbourly and an overdevelopment of the site
- Approve amended plans

3.2 **Neighbours**

- 9 letters of objection to original plans (including previous amendments)
- 1 letter of objection to amended plans
- No where for people to park when they visit people on St John's Road
- Lack of parking
- Loss of garages
- Concern about the size and layout of the plans
- Concern about access to parking at the rear of the houses
- Concern about the height of the houses
- Concerned about the boundary treatment along the site and the maintenance of this.

Thames Valley Police Design Advisor

- Recommended that the original plans should be amended to show:
- Reduction in the height of the fence at the rear of the new houses to 1.4m to increase natural surveillance
- Recommend that a side window is installed at the right side of plot one to maximise natural surveillance
- The houses should meet Secured by Design for doors and windows

Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services

- No objection
- The site is located in an area of archaeological potential located 240m west of the Schedule Ancient Monument of The Saxon Town Walls.
- An archaeological watching brief carried out 190m to the north east of the site recorded a series of medieval and early post medieval pits suggesting a settlement outside the walls in the medieval period.
- A Saxon inhumation cemetery is recorded 290m to the south east of the site
- Iron Age and Roman settlements have been recorded to the north of the site
- It is possible that aspects of the Saxon and Medieval deposits recorded in the area could survive on this site.
- Therefore a archaeological watching brief is recommended

Oxfordshire County Council Highway Authority

- No objection
- Remote garage courts have become mostly redundant, generally lacking surveillance
- Car owners prefer to park close to their homes whether on or off street
- Therefore the loss of garages would not have any significant effect upon off street parking provision.
- An appropriate level of off-street parking would be provided for the demand generated by the development
- Condition parking and manoeuvring areas

Monson Engineering Ltd

- No objection

- Surface water drainage details should be submitted and approved prior to development commencing and a scheme implemented in accordance with such

Forestry Officer

- No objection
- Recommend landscaping scheme condition

Housing

- Supports the affordable housing on this site

Environmental Services – Environmental Protection

- The proposed residential use of the site would be sensitive to any contamination and as required by PPS23 a precautionary approach should be adopted
- Therefore a condition is recommended requiring an investigation for contamination is carried out before development commences

Environmental Services – Waste

- The development has refuse and recycling facilities clearly shown

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None relevant to this application

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 and resource conservation
- T1 Sustainable travel
- T2 Car parking
- H1 Housing

Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, policies:

- G1 General restraint and sustainable development
- G2 Protection and enhancement of the environment
- G6 Promoting good design
- D3 Plot coverage and garden sizes
- D8 Energy, water and material efficient design
- D10 Waste management
- H4 Housing in the towns and larger villages outside the green belt
- H7 Range of dwelling types and size
- H8 Dwelling densities
- T1 Transport requirements for new development
- CON14 Archaeology
- C9 Landscape features

Planning Policy Statement 1
Planning Policy Statement 3
Planning Policy Statement 23

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

1. Principle
2. Impact on nearby neighbours

3. Impact on the character of the area / sustainable design
4. Highway safety / parking
5. Archaeology
6. Landscaping

Principle

- 6.2 The principle of new housing development in Wallingford is acceptable as it is a sustainable location where services and facilities are available. This is providing the criteria under Policy H4 are met. Your Officer considers that this proposal complies with the criteria under this policy; the reasons for this are set out below.

Impact on nearby neighbours

- 6.3 Neighbours concerns relate mainly to the loss of the garage accommodation and the loss of parking in this area. In addition, concerns have been raised about the height and layout of the development and the boundary treatment along Green Close.
- 6.4 The issue of parking and landscaping is dealt with below in sections 6.5 and 6.7.
- 6.5 Section 3.2.6 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide recommends a distance of 25m between the backs of properties; this is in order to maintain privacy. The proposed house are approximately 37m from the rear of the houses along St John's Terrace, therefore this complies with the required standard.
- 6.6 The houses along Green Close face the application site. The proposed row of terrace houses would be directly in front of number 4. The site plan (drawing number P01G) shows a distance of approximately 20m from number 4 to the closest proposed new house. In between Green Close and the new houses will be an access track. Given this distance the development is not considered to be oppressive overbearing or lead to an unacceptable level of overlooking.
- 6.7 There is a distance of some 9.9m between number 2 Norman Way and the proposed row of houses. Although the proposed houses will be 0.7m higher than the adjacent houses along Norman Way, this is not considered to be oppressive or overbearing.
- 6.8 Your Officer considers that this development has been sensitively sited in relation to nearby properties and would not be harmful to the amenity of occupants of the neighbouring houses.

Impact on the character of the area / sustainable design

- 6.9 The character of the surrounding area is varied. Norman Way is predominately 1960's style terrace housing. Green Close comprises a row of detached houses of varied sizes and styles, accessed off a track and St John's Terrace which is to the rear of the site is victorian terrace housing.
- 6.10 The application site is on a prominent corner plot. The Town Council previously raised concerns that the proposal was an overdevelopment. Amended plans have been submitted that changed the originally proposal of 4 houses arranged as semi-detached properties to a row of terrace houses. In addition, the sizes of the houses have been reduced.
- 6.11 A row of terrace housing on this site is more in keeping with the character of houses along Norman Way, and although the new houses will be slightly higher than the

adjacent properties, given the distance between them it is not considered to be harmful to the character of the street scene.

- 6.12 The garden sizes of the proposed houses are similar to those along Norman Way, and given there will be a distance of approximately 9.9m and 3m either side of the terrace respectively, this development would not appear cramped within the street scene. Your Officer considers the development of this site for housing, replacing the 1960's garage block will be an improvement to the character of the area.
- 6.13 The proposed houses include a number of sustainable design features; this includes solar panels on the front elevation. From the supporting information submitted with this application the Design and Access Statements states that Code Star 3 level of the Code for Sustainable Homes will be achieved. This complies with Policy D8 of the adopted Local Plan and exceeds the requirements in section 4.4.1 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

Highway safety / parking

- 6.14 A number of the neighbours have raised concerns about the loss of the garages and the parking area around them and that this will lead to increasing parking and congestion problems on the surrounding roads. There is particular concern about the loss of parking the residents along St John's Terrace will face and the loss of vehicular access to the rear of these houses.
- 6.15 In support of the application SOHA produced a Garage Impact Survey. This report includes a survey of the users and sets out the occupancy levels of the garages. According to this report 7 of the 12 garages are vacant. 5 of these are occupied by SOHA licence holders and of this 5 only one is described as an essential user. This is classed as a user that is within 100m of the garage site that uses the garage for vehicle parking and does not have alternative parking.
- 6.16 The Local Highway Authority Officer has not raised any objection to this application. In his view remote garage courts have become mostly redundant and lack surveillance. Car owners prefer to park closer to their homes whether on street or off street. Therefore the loss of the garages would not have any significant effect upon off street parking provision and appropriate level of off street parking will be provided for the new development.
- 6.17 Therefore, although the nearby residents have raised concerns about this impact on parking, the Highway Officer has not raised any objection and the survey that SOHA produced has indicated that only 1 essential user would be affected by this proposal.

Archaeology

- 6.18 This site is located in an area of archaeological potential, therefore an archaeological watching brief is recommended as a condition if planning permission is granted. This accords with Policy CON14 of the adopted Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 6.19 Some neighbours have raised concerns about the impact of the development on the existing trees along the western boundary. Currently the planting along this boundary screens some of the application site. Some of the occupants of Green Close have also raised concerns about the maintenance and ownership of the trees along the western boundary; however this is not a planning matter.

- 6.20 In support of the application an arboricultural report was submitted along with a tree protection plan drawing (drawing number 6947/02 Rev A). This drawing along with the report shows the root protection zones of the existing trees and indicates that this development would not be detrimental to the longevity of the trees. It does however note that some of the trees along the western boundary are of poor aesthetic quality and consideration could be given to removing and replacing these.
- 6.21 The Council's Forestry Officer has not raised any objection to this scheme. None of the trees within or around the site are protected. The Forestry Officer is satisfied with the findings of the arboricultural report and the tree protection plan. They have recommended a landscaping condition if planning permission is granted, to secure the planting of new trees and shrubs.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This application accords with the relevant development plan policies and national planning guidance. The proposal is not considered to cause any significant harm to the character of the street scene, the amenity of nearby neighbours or highway safety and parking. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. **Commencement within 3 years**
2. **Sample materials walls and roof**
3. **Sustainable methods of construction in accordance with the submitted Code for Sustainable Homes pre assessment**
4. **Landscaping scheme**
5. **Details of boundary treatment**
6. **Archaeological watching brief**
7. **Contaminated land survey**
8. **Parking and manoeuvring area as plan**
9. **Surface water drainage details**
10. **Hours of operation – construction and demolition**
11. **External lighting specification**
12. **No gates / means of enclosure onto new access track**

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