
APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0072
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	29 th January 2009
PARISH	Woodcote
WARD MEMBER(S)	Robin Peirce
APPLICANT	Rockwell End Ltd
SITE	Woodpeckers, Reading Road, Woodcote.
PROPOSAL	Erection of a detached three-bedroom dwelling.
AMENDMENTS	One – alteration to access arrangements and to layout and roof accommodation of dwelling.
GRID REFERENCE	464855/182050
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 Woodcote Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix 1. The application site lies on the south side of Reading Road, close to the junction of Greenmore within the built up area of the village of Woodcote. The site contains a 1960's four-bedroom bungalow constructed of beige brick and a hip roof with concrete tiles. There is a flat roofed double-garage attached to its eastern side. There is a 12 metre wide drop-kerb in front of the bungalow allowing two points of access onto the hardstanding. The adjacent dwelling to the east, Haseley, is a similar 1970's bungalow to Woodpeckers in terms of scale and footprint, but with a gable roof.
- 1.3 The boundary between the properties consists of a wire fence towards the front and a wooden fence towards the rear. There is a semi-mature Cedar in the north-eastern corner of the site. The western site boundary and a small section of the front boundary is denoted by a coniferous hedge, which separates Woodpeckers from an open parcel of land. The open land forms part of a 1970's residential cul-de-sac of three bungalows with flat roof dormers providing first floor accommodation. Millaway is a similar 1960's bungalow with a flat roof dormer on the western side of the cul-de-sac. The site backs onto the front garden of White Gables, one of the bungalows on the cul-de-sac and the side garden of Cherry Lodge, a two storey house fronting onto Greenmore. The site appears to be at a slightly lower level than Haseley and slopes slightly downwards from the road. The front gardens to the east and west of the site also contain mature trees and hedges.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling. The dwelling would be built in the space between Woodpeckers and the boundary with Haseley and would require the demolition of the flat roofed double-garage. The dwelling would have a square plan measuring 9.5 metres in width and depth, with a 3.8 metre deep conservatory. The main front and rear building lines would be broadly level with the front and rear elevations of Woodpeckers and Haseley. The main roof would be half-hipped with a ridge height of 6.2 metres and an eaves height of 2.5 metres. There would be two pitched roof dormer windows and a rooflight on the front roof slope and one dormer window and a rooflight on the rear roof slope. The dwelling would be set in by 1 metre from Woodpeckers by a new post

and rail boundary fence and would be set in from the boundary with Haseley at 1.6 metres from the front widening to 2.2 metres at the rear.

2.2 The external materials would consist of dark buff clay facing bricks, dark brown pantiles and white painted softwood windows. The proposed dwelling would be accessed via the formation of a 3 metre wide access on the frontage of the site adjacent to Woodpeckers, leading to a hardstanding forming a parking and turning area in front of the new dwelling, which would be formed using a no-dig method. The frontage would also contain space for a paved bin collection and a composter would be located in the rear garden. The existing drop kerb would be reduced to 4 metres width and would continue to serve Woodpeckers. The rear garden of the new dwelling would be about 100 square metres and the remaining garden for Woodpeckers would be over 200 square metres. The supporting statement submitted with the application refers to several sustainable measures to be incorporated in the new dwelling and can be viewed on the Council's website.

2.3 The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix 2.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Woodcote Parish Council** – Comments on original and amended plans as follows:

The application should be refused due to:

- The development would spoil the street scene. Woodcote is a traditionally open village. Spoils the view on entrance to the village.
- Overbearing loss of light to adjacent property Haseley.
- Overdevelopment of the site.
- Impact on parking, opposite Londis and garage, bus stop and near school.
- No turning space for cars on the proposed site.

3.2 **OCC Highways** – No objection to amended plans, subject to standard conditions relating to drop kerb to specifications and secure surfacing within 5 metres of the highway.

3.3 **Forestry Officer** – No objection to original or amended plans, subject to conditions requiring the submission of a detailed arboricultural method statement and a landscaping scheme.

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

3.5 **Building Control** – Shingle hardstanding unsuitable for wheelchair users.

3.6 **Countryside Officer** – Commented on previous application that there is not a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and affected by the development, therefore no objections.

3.7 **Environmental Services – (Waste Management)** – No response received to date.

3.8 **Neighbours** – Eight representations received raising objections to the proposal as originally submitted, which are summarised as follows:

- Out of keeping with open character of village and intrusive in AONB.
 - Increased density and plot too narrow to accommodate dwelling of this size.
 - Adjoining dwellings lower in height than proposed dwelling.
 - Levels queried on street scene elevation.
 - Damage to Cedar tree in front garden.
 - Dormers would overlook rear gardens of immediate neighbours, particularly Cherry Lodge.
 - Loss of outlook to adjoining properties.
 - Loss of light to Haseley's vegetable garden.
 - Lack of garden space remaining for Woodpeckers and new dwelling.
 - Insufficient turning space for new dwelling leading to reversing onto congested road and highway safety issues.
 - Loss of garage to Woodpeckers and restricted driveway and parking area leading to reversing onto congested road and highway safety issues where there are high levels of speeding traffic.
 - Disabled access substandard.
 - Fails to provide vegetated corridors for passage of wildlife.
 - Not an affordable low cost dwelling.
 - Risk of subsidence due to site being occupied formerly by a village pond
- One representation of support for the proposal, which is summarised as follows:
- Small house would add to mix of stock in the village.
 - Residential road.
 - Infill.
 - Would not adversely affect character of village.

As a result of the amended plans, a further 4 representations were received from local residents who had previously raised objections. The above points were reiterated and the following additional objections were received:

- Overlooking of Haseley from ground floor windows in side elevation.
- Precedent for redevelopment of remaining Woodpeckers site.
- Location of bin storage would be an eyesore.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P08/E0865 – A planning application for the demolition of Woodpeckers and the erection of three detached two storey dwellings was withdrawn in September 2008 following Officers' indication that the proposal would be unacceptable due to being a uniform development out of keeping with the surroundings, having an inappropriate housing mix and a lack of sustainable measures.

4.2 P72/H0621 – Outline planning permission for the erection of a dwelling in between Woodpeckers and Haseley was refused in October 1972 for the following reasons:

“That the proposed development would represent an unsatisfactory sub-division of the curtilage of the existing property, contrary to the proper planning of the area.”

“That the proposal would result in a cramped form of development out of character with the existing properties in the area.”

“That the proposed development would result in detriment to the visual amenities of the street scene.”

4.3 A subsequent appeal was dismissed in May 1973. A copy of the appeal decision is **attached** as Appendix 3.

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
- EN1 – Landscape Character
- 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
- C1 – Landscape Character
- C2 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- C4 – Landscape setting of Settlements
- C6 – Biodiversity Conservation
- 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.
Chilterns Buildings Design Guide – Chapter 3.

5.4 Government Guidance:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3 – Housing
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG13 – Transport

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

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

- The development would 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;
- The proposal would incorporate sufficient sustainability and waste management measures; and
- Any other material planning considerations.

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 is an established 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 the main public views would be from Reading 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 should be in keeping with its surroundings and that the character of the area is not adversely affected. This is one of the main concerns of Woodcote Parish Council and local residents. The surroundings are primarily residential in character, with dwellings located on both sides of Reading Road and behind the application site. There is considerable variety in the form, scale and design of these residential properties and also in the size and shape of the plots on which they sit. The history of the site reveals the Council's previous resistance to the erection of an additional dwelling on the site was supported at appeal. However, this appeal decision only carries limited weight for the following reasons:
1. Government Guidance has changed significantly over the past 35 years. PPS3 advocates making the best use of brownfield land in built up areas to take pressure off greenfield sites with higher density development involving properties with smaller gardens. This is reflected in our current Local Plan policies, particularly in the criteria of Policy H4. The plots for both Woodpeckers and the proposed dwelling would comply with the recommended maximum 40% plot coverage and minimum 100 square metres garden areas.
 2. The 3 dwellings in the cul-de-sac were built after the Inspector's site visit and these have made the immediate surroundings appear more suburban in character.
 3. The Inspector was considering an outline proposal and was concerned that it would lead to uniform frontage development, which would detract from the haphazard character of the development in the locality. The proposed dwelling in this application would be of a sufficiently different form and appearance to prevent this from occurring. The half-hip roof design is repeated on a two storey dwelling called Conways further to the west along Reading Road.

4. The Inspector's decision indicates that the proposed site boundaries would have been within 1 metre of the dwellings on either side. The current proposal would have site boundaries at a distance of 1.5 metres from Woodpeckers and 4 metres from Haseley, which would result in a less cramped arrangement. The side walls of the dwelling itself would be set in over 1 metre from the boundary, which would comply with guidance in the SODG 2008.
- 6.4 The ridge of the proposed dwelling would be 0.8 metre higher than Haseley and 0.5 metre higher than Woodpeckers. However, at a distance of over 10 metres back from the road and with considerable foliage along the street frontage (which may have evolved since the Inspector's decision), including some coniferous planting, this difference would be unlikely to result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.
- 6.5 The Council's Tree Officer is satisfied that the important trees on the site can be adequately protected during the course of development and a landscaping condition could also be imposed to help assimilate the dwelling into its surroundings. Moreover, the other 4 bungalows in the locality have ridge heights of about 6 metres, which is comparable to the proposed dwelling. A neighbour has suggested that the proposed street scene elevation does not take account of the fact that the site is lower than the surrounding land. However, this would mean that the proposed dwelling would appear lower in relation to Haseley than shown on that elevation. In any event, a planning condition can be imposed to require details of levels against a fixed datum point to be submitted prior to commencement to ensure that the ground levels would not be artificially raised in height. The proposed pitched roof dormers would be more attractive than the existing box dormers on the other chalet bungalows in the locality. Although the Chilterns AONB washes over the settlement, the site is surrounded by residential development and the proposal would be unlikely to have any significant adverse impact on the local landscape character or the setting of the village. As such the proposed development would comply with the above criteria.

Living Conditions

- 6.6 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. The proposed dwelling would be broadly in line with the footprint of both Woodpeckers and Haseley, and as such would be unlikely to result in any significant loss of light or outlook to the rear facing rooms or windows of the occupiers. There is a side window in Haseley facing the site, but this appears to serve the integral garage, rather than a habitable room. The amended plans show that there would be two ground floor windows facing Haseley, where the existing boundary is a low chain link fence. As one of these windows would serve an en-suite and the other would be a secondary living room window, these could be conditioned to be obscure glazed and fixed shut to prevent loss of privacy to the adjoining occupiers.
- 6.7 Following the partial demolition, Woodpeckers would have a kitchen window and WC window facing the new dwelling. The kitchen would have another window facing south and would also receive light indirectly from the south through the small conservatory, so the impact on this habitable room would be slight. The proposed rear dormer window would serve a bedroom and as such would introduce views towards the rear garden of Cherry Lodge. However, the boundary between the two properties would be about 11.5 metres from the dormer window and the window would only directly face the part of the neighbour's garden furthest from the house and any views towards Cherry Trees itself would be oblique. The amended plans have replaced a second

dormer on the rear elevation with a rooflight with a cill height of 1.7 metres. There is also established planting close to the boundary, mainly on the Cherry Lodge side, which could be supplemented within the site via the aforementioned landscaping condition. Having regard to these circumstances, the perception of overlooking from these windows would not justify refusing planning permission on the grounds of loss of privacy. The occupiers of Cherry Trees objected to the original application, but have not commented on the amended plans. Any other views across the rear gardens on either side and further to the south would be typical of residential situations and not harmful to residential amenity.

- 6.8 The proposed garden areas for the new dwelling and Woodpeckers would comply with the recommended standard of 100 square metres for dwellings 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

- 6.9 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the adopted SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. Woodcote Parish Council and local residents are concerned that the proposed access and parking arrangements for the new dwelling and the alterations to the existing access and parking arrangement for Woodpeckers would worsen existing on-street parking congestion and lead to reversing manoeuvres prejudicial to highway safety. However, the Highway Authority is satisfied that the resulting access and parking arrangements for both properties would be acceptable, subject to standard conditions. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the above criterion.

Sustainability Measures and Waste Management

- 6.10 Policy D8 of the adopted SOLP 2011 requires proposals to incorporate sustainability measures in terms of energy, water and materials efficient design. Section 3 of the SODG 2008 recommends that single dwellings reach at least Level 1 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The sustainability section of the supporting statement refers to locally sourced materials, insulation, rainwater collection and dual flushing WCs with a view to achieving Level 1. A planning condition is required to ensure this is achieved via submission of a post construction review prior to occupation. The implementation of the refuse and recycling storage and collection and composting facilities can also be secured via a planning condition in accordance with Policy D10.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.11 The Council's Building Control Surveyor has commented that only the proposed shingle hardstanding would be against Part M of the building regulations in respect of disabled access. However the treatment of surfacing could be subject of a planning condition. Building Regulations would also ensure that foundations were sufficient to prevent subsidence. The Council's Countryside Officer has previously raised no objections to a more intensive development of the site from a biodiversity perspective. The Council's policies in relation to housing mix (Policy H7) and affordable housing (Policy H9) only relate to residential development involving a net gain of 2 or more dwellings in respect of housing mix and a net gain of 5 or more dwellings in respect of affordable housing. As such, they cannot be reasonably applied to this proposal. The future redevelopment of the remaining Woodpeckers site can only be assessed on its merits if and when a planning application is submitted.

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

1. **Standard 3 Year Time Limit**
2. **Details of slab levels prior to commencement**
3. **Samples of materials prior to commencement**
4. **Obscure glazed and fixed shut east-facing ground floor windows**
5. **Removal of Permitted Development Rights for new dwelling for extensions, rooflights, porch, outbuildings, hardstandings**
6. **Details of post construction review of sustainability measures having regard to Level 1 of the Code for Sustainable Homes prior to occupation**
7. **Details of refuse and recycling storage facilities to be agreed with the Council's Waste Management Officer and composting facilities to be implemented as shown prior to commencement**
8. **Formation of new access and alteration to existing access as plan prior to commencement and thereafter retained as such**
9. **Formation of parking and turning areas as plan, but to include a secured surface within 5 metres of the highway prior to occupation and thereafter retained as such**
10. **Retention of integral garage for parking only**
11. **Details of hard and soft landscaping prior to commencement**
12. **Details of tree protection including detailed arboricultural method statement prior to commencement**
13. **Details of contamination investigation and mitigation as necessary prior to commencement**

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