
APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0879
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	13.08.2009
PARISH	Watlington
WARD MEMBERS	Mr Rodney Mann Rev'd Angie Paterson
APPLICANT	Lady Teresa Clark
SITE	Highwood House, Christmas Common
PROPOSALS	Demolition of existing house, and erection of replacement house
AMENDMENTS	Yes
GRID REFERENCE	470794/191768
OFFICER	Mr T Wyatt

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to Committee as the Officer's recommendations conflict with the views of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A. Highwood House is an attractive detached property located in an isolated position in Greenfield, which is within the Chilterns AONB. The existing house dates from the 1930s and was built to the designs of Lord Esher. In this regard the building has some historic interest, however, when the building was considered for listing in 2000, it was determined that the 'building is not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit listing'.
- 1.3 The dwelling sits in an envious elevated position overlooking a large swathe of open countryside to the north west. This countryside is gently rolling and is typified by relatively small tracts of open land separated by substantial areas of deciduous woodland. Indeed, immediately to the east of the property lies a large area of ancient woodland administered by the National Trust. A public right of way passes through this woodland very close to the eastern boundary of the site.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Planning permission has already been granted twice for a replacement dwelling (P07/E1598 and P09/E0503) and this application seeks permission for an amended design in the same siting as the previous scheme (P09/E0503) along with the resited swimming pool as previously approved. The differences between the approved scheme and this current scheme are outlined below.

- Lowering of ground levels on north west corner
- Increase in depth of basement eastwards by 1.8 metres
- Addition of dormer windows:- 3 on the south elevation, 3 on the north elevation and 2 on the east elevation.
- Use of the second floor space for two additional bedrooms bringing the total number of bedrooms to six.
- Omission of a garage previously proposed
- Ridgeheight raised by 100mm to improve the insulation value of the roof
- Chimney stacks increased in depth.
- Addition of porch to the front elevation.

-Ground levels to west and north sides adjusted to follow natural ground levels.

2.2 A copy of the proposed plans is **attached** at Appendix B whilst a copy of the previously approved plans relating to application P09/E0503 are **attached** at Appendix C. 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 **Watlington Parish Council** – The application should be refused due to the cumulative impact of a series of minor amendments on the AONB.

The previous application was recommended for approval by the Parish Council.

3.2 **OCC (Rights of Way Officer)** – There should be no encroachment onto the adjacent rights of way.

3.3 **Forestry Officer** – No objection subject to tree protection and landscaping conditions.

3.4 **Countryside Officer** – No objections subject to a condition to ensure the protection of bats.

3.5 **Contaminated Land Officer** – Conditions should be imposed on any permission to investigate for and, if necessary, remediate any contamination on the site.

3.6 **Neighbours** – No correspondence received.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P09/E0503 - Erection of replacement house. Planning permission granted on 9th July 2009.

4.2 P07/E1598 - Erection of replacement house. Planning permission granted on 11th February 2008.

4.3 P02/S0454 - Stable building for 10 horses and outdoor menage 50m x 30m. Planning Permission granted on 13th November 2002.

4.4 P02/S0321 - 6m x 12m swimming pool. Planning Permission granted on 28th June 2002.

4.5 P02/S0121 - Single storey side extension. Planning Permission granted on 25th March 2002.

4.6 P01/S0886 - Conservatory to rear. Planning Permission granted on 26th November 2001.

4.7 P00/S0949 - Demolition of timber lean-to and fuel store. Erection of single storey pitched roof utility room and fuel store. Planning Permission granted on 10th January 2001.

5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 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
- C1 – Landscape Character

- C2 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- C8 – Species Protection
- 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
- H12 – Replacement Dwellings
- T1 & T2 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

5.3 Government Guidance:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3 - Housing
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide July 2008 (SODG)
- Chilterns Buildings Design Guide
- South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment

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

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The principle of the development is largely governed by Policy H12 of the SOLP, which relates to replacement dwellings in the countryside. Criterion (iii) of Policy H12 seeks to ensure that the replacement dwelling is not materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling. This is usually taken to mean that the proposed dwelling is not more than 10% larger than the existing dwelling, in addition to any unused permitted development rights in this case.
- 6.3 The previously approved scheme had a volume approximately 3.9% over the volume of the original scheme for a replacement dwelling (P07/E1598) and 15% over the volume of the existing dwelling. The current proposal would increase the volume again when compared to the previous scheme such that it would be 119 m³ greater in volume, which represents a further increase of 5.6%. A large part of this increase is associated with an extension of the approved basement area, whilst the remainder of the visible above ground increase is associated with the proposed dormer windows and porch. I acknowledge the Parish Council's concerns regarding the cumulative increase in the size of the replacement dwelling, however, the increase is relatively small and I do not consider that there are reasonable grounds to object to the further increase in volume per se in relation to the requirements of Policy H12 of the SOLP. The visual impact of the additional volume needs to be assessed to demonstrate whether it actually causes any significant harm compared to the previous scheme.

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

- 6.4 The application site is in a relatively isolated location, which is dominated by the surrounding countryside. The site is located within the Chilterns AONB.
- 6.5 The existing dwelling is a substantial detached building that has been the subject of large extensions. It lies in an elevated position on the edge of the Chilterns Escarpment from where there are widespread and far reaching views of the surrounding countryside to the north west. Although in an elevated position, the dwelling is not visually prominent from the surrounding area and is only visible in a small number of medium (50-500 metres) and long distance (500 metres +) views due to the large areas of woodland surrounding the site and forming the backdrop of the development when it is viewed from the right of way network to the north west. The site is screened from the south and east by the lie of the land and the thick woodland immediately to the east. As such the dwelling is well screened from the surrounding countryside and is dominated by its woodland setting.
- 6.6 The proposed dwelling has the same footprint of the already approved replacement dwelling. A comprehensive visual impact analysis of the proposed dwelling submitted with the previous application indicated that the replacement would not have had any significant additional visual or landscape impact over the originally approved scheme (P07/E1598). The current scheme proposes relatively minor additions to the approved scheme. The enlarged basement area would extend towards the front of the dwelling and would be contained underground and would therefore have no greater visual impact. The porch to the front elevation would be a minor addition between the two front gables and would not be a prominent feature in the surrounding landscape.
- 6.7 Therefore, any increased visual impact would be as a result of the proposed dormer windows and slight raising of the ridge height by 100mm. The most prominent elevation of the dwelling is the west facing elevation and there are no proposed dormer windows on this elevation. The dormers are contained only on the east, south and north elevations. The north and east elevations face towards adjacent mature and thick woodland and as such would not be visually prominent. The south elevation faces an upwards slope and again is not prominent in the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, the dormer windows are modestly proportioned and would not represent dominant features in the roofslope of the building. Given the height and scale of the replacement dwelling as already approved, the addition of 100mm to the height of the building would not result in any significant additional visual or landscape impact on the surrounding area. It should also be noted that this current proposal has omitted a previously approved detached garage building. The omission of this garage from the current scheme would more than mitigate any increased visual impact as a result of the revisions to the approved scheme as outlined above.

Ecology

- 6.8 A Bat Report has been submitted with the application (a repeat of the previous submissions), which confirms that a small number of bats are using the main loft area of the existing dwelling. Bats are a protected species and Policy C8 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that development does not adversely affect such species. The Council's Countryside Officer has viewed the Bat Report and is content that the development can proceed provided that the recommendations to protect bats are carried out.

Impact on Trees

- 6.9 The trees within and adjacent to the site are not subject of a TPO, however, the adjacent woodland is classified as ancient woodland. The proposal will require the removal of at least three mature trees on the edge of the woodland. However, the trees are not in a good condition and their loss would not cause any significant harm. The Forestry Officer has raised no objections subject to landscaping and tree protection conditions.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.10 The access arrangements remain unchanged as a result of this proposal. A new gravel parking and turning area will be created to the front of the proposed garaging, which will provide improved parking and turning facilities within the site.
- 6.11 A public right of way (Watlington Bridleway 9) passes close to the eastern boundary of the site, however, this right of way would remain unaffected by the development.
- 6.12 Energy and water conservation measures have been put forward as part of the proposal, and sustainability benefits will be also gained through the use of materials.
- 6.13 There are no close neighbouring dwellings to the site, and as such the development has no impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as the proposal would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, or the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the Chilterns AONB.

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 floor and ground levels to be approved**
4. **Details of bat protection measures to be approved**
5. **Details of sustainability measures to be approved**
6. **Permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings restricted**
7. **Landscaping scheme to be approved**
8. **Tree protection to be approved**
9. **Details of levels for swimming pool and spoil disposal to be approved**

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