
APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0934
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	15.09.2009
PARISH	Woodcote
WARD MEMBERS	Mr Robin Peirce
APPLICANT	Landen Maple Homes Ltd
SITE	33 Whitehouse Road, Woodcote
PROPOSALS	Erection of 3 two bed and 1 three bed dwellings
AMENDMENTS	Yes – drawings 01C; 02C; 10; SL2
GRID REFERENCE	464522/181805
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, which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A, is located within the built up area of Woodcote, which is located within the Chilterns AONB. The application site is currently occupied by a modest thatched bungalow and detached garage set within extensive grounds.

2.0 **THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This application seeks planning permission for the construction of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings consisting of 3 two bed units and 1 three bed unit. The proposal includes parking space for 10 cars. This includes the provision of two spaces for the existing dwelling, which would be retained as part of the proposal although its garage would be demolished. Access to the site would be via an existing private driveway off Whitehouse Road.
- 2.2 A copy of the proposed plans is **attached** at 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 **Woodcote Parish Council** – Recommends refusal due to the overdevelopment of the site, the impact on the setting of the neighbouring cottage and the creation of parking problems near to be the post office and bus stop.
- 3.2 **Highway Authority** – Objection raised to the original plans due to the lack of visibility at the access given the intensification of its use and insufficient parking. Parking has been addressed through the submission of amended plans and the visibility objection has been addressed in further discussions with the Highway Authority where it has been agreed that sufficient visibility can be provided at the access if the hedge is cut back and maintained.
- 3.3 **Forestry Officer** – The proposed development will remove a number of small trees, which are not a constraint to the development. No objections to the proposal but conditions to secure landscaping and tree protection should be attached to any permission.

- 3.4 **Contaminated Land Officer** – Conditions to investigate for, and if necessary, remediate any contamination on the site are recommended.
- 3.5 **Waste Management Officer** – The proposed waste and recycling storage provision is acceptable.
- 3.6 **Thames Water** – General advice provided regarding surface water drainage, otherwise no objections with regard to sewerage infrastructure or water supply.
- 3.7 **Neighbours** – Seven letters of objection have been received to the original plans, and three to the amended plans outlining the following concerns:
- Overdevelopment of the site and cramped appearance and impact on AONB
 - Impact on highway safety
 - Loss of trees
 - Noise disturbance from additional traffic
 - Odour and pests from bins
 - Overlooking of adjoining properties
 - Devaluation of property
 - Structural damage from heavy vehicles entering site
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 P03/E0997 – Sunken swimming pool between dwelling and garage. Planning permission granted on 10th February 2004.
- 4.2 P88/S0811 – Detached double garage. Planning permission granted on 28th October 1988.
- 4.3 P87/S0204/O – Erection of one dwelling. Planning permission refused on 27th May 1987.
- 4.4 P86/S0178/O – Building plot in the gardens of The Rosery. Planning permission refused on 14th May 1986 and dismissed at appeal on 14th January 1987. The main issue with this proposal was the impact on the amenity of residents within The Close. This appeal was determined prior to the construction of the dwellings within Abbots Close.
- 5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 Policies of the Adopted South East Plan 2009 (SEP)
- 5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
- G1, G2, G4, G6, C1, C2, C4, C8, C9, EP8, D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D8, D10, H4, H5, H7, H8, T1, T2
- 5.3 Government Guidance:
- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 - PPS3 – Housing
 - PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
 - PPG13 – Transport
 - PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control
- 5.4 Supplementary guidance:
- South Oxfordshire Design Guide July 2008 (SODG)

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 surrounding area
 3. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
 4. The impact on trees
 5. Highway considerations
 6. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The application site lies within the main built up area of Woodcote and is regarded as 'previously developed land' as outlined in Annex B of PPS3. The proposal would fall to be considered mainly against the relevant criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP, which allows for new residential development on sites of up to about 0.5 hectares in the larger villages (excluding those within the Green Belt) of the District such as Woodcote.
- 6.3 In line with Policy H7 of the SOLP, approximately 45% of the dwellings should be two bedroom units to address an identified shortfall in this size of accommodation. In this case, three quarters of the dwellings would be two bedroom dwellings, therefore, the proposal complies with the thrust of this Policy.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

- 6.4 Policy H4 of the SOLP is the main policy in this instance for assessing new residential development, and it outlines five criteria against which new proposals for residential development are judged. Criterion (i) requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost nor an important public view spoilt. The site is not an important open space as outlined above and does not interfere with any important public views.
- 6.5 Criterion (ii) requires that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with the surroundings. The proposal is for two pairs of semi-detached dwellings, which would reflect the type and scale of housing in the surrounding area. The Close and other surrounding development, particularly to the south but also including Abbots Close immediately to the east of the site, largely consists of semi detached and small terraced development. The scale of the development including the plot sizes of the dwellings would generally be consistent with the surrounding built form. The height of the dwellings would be approximately 7.5 metres, which would be comparable to much of the surrounding two storey development.
- 6.6 Criterion (iii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP requires that the character of the area is not adversely affected. The application site lies in a backland position behind existing residential development fronting Whitehouse Road to the west and The Close to the south. The proposed development would be over 50 metres from Whitehouse Road and approximately 30 metres from The Close, and would be largely screened in public views from these roads by the existing development and vegetation. Abbots Close lies immediately to the east of the site, and again views into the site from this cul-de-sac are restricted by thick evergreen hedging on the eastern boundary of the site. As such the proposed development would not be visually prominent in public views.
- 6.7 The application site forms one of several large residential plots between The Close and Gap Way to the north. The spacious nature of these plots is not reflected by other parts of the residential built form in this part of Woodcote. Whilst the development would

result in a less spacious setting to the retained thatched dwelling compared to its existing garden area, the development would respect the general urban grain of adjacent development within the surrounding area.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.8 The new development would immediately impact upon the dwelling to be retained on the site, and would lie adjacent to existing residential development within The Close to the south, and more spacious development accessed off Gap Way and Whitehouse Road to the north and west.
- 6.9 The property most affected by the proposal would be the existing dwelling on the site. This dwelling would retain an east facing garden, which would provide sufficient space for the retained dwelling but would be somewhat overshadowed by Plot 1 as proposed. The development as a whole, but particularly Plot 1, would impact on the outlook and amenity of the existing dwelling, however, the privacy of the remaining garden area of the property would be retained and the outlook from the front elevation of the dwelling would not be significantly harmed as the proposed dwellings are sited to the side of the front elevation.
- 6.10 The development would not adversely affect properties to the north due to the distances involved. Dwellings within Abbots Close to the east face towards the site, however, these properties are located more than 25 metres from the rear elevations of the proposed dwellings, and significant levels of overlooking would not be experienced.
- 6.11 The rear gardens of Numbers 1-7 (odd) The Close adjoin the southern boundary of the application site. The driveway serving the new development lies alongside this boundary and there may be some additional disturbance caused from an intensification in the use of the driveway compared to the existing situation. However, the driveway is existing and Officers do not consider that the rise in traffic levels associated with four dwellings would cause significant additional harm. The south elevation of Plot 4 is located approximately 6 metres away from the boundary with 5 The Close and this distance, along with its aspect would ensure that this part of the development would not give rise to any significant overbearing or overshadowing impacts on the adjacent properties. Four parking spaces are proposed alongside the boundary with 5 and 7 The Close, and a pergola to enclose two of these spaces is proposed. This pergola would be very close to the boundary but would be an open structure of 2.5 metres in height, which will have a limited impact on the rear garden areas of the adjoining properties.
- 6.12 29 Whitehouse Road adjoins the site to the west and shares its southern boundary with the existing driveway. The new dwellings would be set sufficiently away from the western boundary of the site to ensure no significant harm is caused through overlooking or overbearing effects. The main impact on Number 29 will be through the increased use of the driveway, however, again Officers do not consider that this will result in any significant harm.
- 6.13 Overall the development will inevitably have some negative impacts on the amenity of adjacent occupiers, however, Officers do not consider these impacts to be so harmful as to justify the refusal of the application.
- 6.14 Whilst relatively small in size, the garden areas to be provided for the proposed and retained dwellings would be sufficient in terms of providing adequate external amenity space for the future occupiers of the development. The areas of the proposed gardens accords with guidance contained within the SODG.

The Impact on Trees

- 6.15 The proposal does not require the removal of any significant trees on or adjacent to the site, and there is no conflict with Policy C9 of the SOLP, which seeks to avoid the loss of landscape features that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Additional planting can be secured through a condition to help soften the car parking areas to the front of the proposed dwellings.

Highway Considerations

- 6.16 Amended plans have been received to provide two off-street parking spaces for each of the dwellings, including the existing dwelling to be retained. This level of parking is acceptable to the Highway Authority and will minimise the likelihood of vehicles associated with the development spilling onto Whitehouse Road. The driveway to serve the development is existing, however, it has relatively poor visibility at the junction with Whitehouse Road, and this has been a significant cause for concern for the Highway Authority.
- 6.17 The main problem affecting the visibility is a thick hedge forming the front boundary of 29 Whitehouse Road. This hedge has grown relatively unchecked and overhangs the highway verge restricting visibility to the north when exiting the site. The Highway Authority has agreed that the hedge can be cut back where it overhangs highway land and this would achieve the necessary visibility. .

Other Material Considerations

- 6.18 Policy D8 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that new development demonstrates high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials. This Policy is supported by guidance contained within the SODG. A number of energy and water conservation measures have been outlined in the supporting information accompanying the application. Full details of sustainability measures can be secured by condition.
- 6.19 The proposal would include sufficient space for the storage for waste and recyclables awaiting collection in accordance with Policy D10 of the SOLP.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That planning permission be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement within 3 years of this permission**
- 2. Samples of materials, including hardsurfacing, to be submitted and approved**
- 3. Details of finished floor levels against existing and proposed ground levels**
- 4. Landscaping scheme, including hard surfacing and fencing details, to be submitted and approved**
- 5. Details of tree protection to be submitted and approved**
- 6. Contamination land risk assessment to be submitted and approved**
- 7. Sustainability measures to be submitted and approved**
- 8. Class A and E Permitted Development rights removed**

- 9. Windows in side elevations of Plots 1-4 to be glazed in obscure glass and to be non-opening and no additional openings at first floor level.**
- 10. Vehicle parking and turning to be provided prior to occupation**
- 11. Visibility splays at the junction of the driveway with Whitehouse Road to be provided and maintained**

Author: Mr T Wyatt
Contact no: 01491 823154
Email: planning.east@southoxon.gov.uk