
SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 8

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P10/W1458
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	24.09.2010
PARISH	WALLINGFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Imran Lokhon
APPLICANT	Mr T Cottrell
SITE PROPOSAL	Land to rear of 142a Wantage Road Wallingford Erection of 1 x 2 bedroom dwelling and 1 x 3 bed dwelling as a pair, alterations to access and parking
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	459385190571
OFFICER	Miss G Napier

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee at the request of the Local Member. His reasons for requesting that the application be referred to Planning Committee are:

“Previous application raised concerns around access. The applicant has addressed this issue and the Town Council shared the Planning Officer’s concern over access which has now been addressed.

The main issue is around the principle; this is a modest site which would accommodate two new homes. Especially one 2 bed property which meets guidance in policy H7 and from the housing needs survey of 2004. This also assists in breaking the current uniform style of Wantage Road which is contrary to points raised under H7.

Policy H6 acknowledges that the built up form of the settlement should not be extended. This proposal does not extend over the existing settlement of Wallingford. It is contained within a clear hedge line.

The proposal quoting PPG3 will be facilities and also in close proximity from the upcoming decision on the proposed LDF site allocation for Wallingford for up to 750 new homes”.

1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix 1. The site lies on the north-western edge of Wallingford, to the rear of a pair of semi-detached dwellings on Wantage Road. A single access track runs between 142 and 144 Wantage Road and this serves the garden centre which belongs to the applicant.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 It is proposed to erect a pair of semi-detached dwellings with associated amenity areas and parking provision.
- 2.2 The application was accompanied by a Planning Statement and a Sustainability Statement. These can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk. The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix 2.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Wallingford Town Council** – Approve subject to archaeological caveat.

Thames Water - No objection

Contaminated land officer – No objection. The land at the application site may be contaminated as a result of former gravel pits and a vehicle repair shop. A contaminated land investigation condition should be attached to any planning permission.

Neighbour Object (3)-

1. No in principle objection to the development of the plot however, the proposal would provide a significant obstruction to views of the countryside and the first floor window overlooks our property and master bedroom. If the plot is to be developed then a single storey development would be preferable instead of this 'overdevelopment of a small plot'. Reservations over the use of the access and potential for vehicles to reverse up the lane on to the road.

2. No objection to a bungalow on the site which is what the owner has discussed with us but this much larger development would overlook the rear of our home and obscure views of the countryside. Whilst the narrow access may be suitable for agricultural use surely it is inadequate for domestic use.

3. Objection to the windows within the south west elevation of the development which would allow overlooking of living rooms and bedrooms at 144 and 146 Wantage Rd. A single storey building would be preferable.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P10/W0228. Erection of 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom dwellings as a pair, access and parking area. Withdrawn prior to determination on 23 April 2010.

P09/W0869. Erection of 1 x two-bedroom and 1 x three-bedroom dwellings as a pair, access and parking area. Withdrawn prior to determination on 03 November 2009.

P89/W0896/O. Erection of one dwelling. Withdrawn on 06 April 1990.

P89/W0670. Siting of mobile residential home. Ref.of Planning Perm on 04 October 1989.

P88/W0421. Siting of mobile residential home. Withdrawn on 19 September 1988.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies (SOLP 2011):

- C4: The landscape setting of settlements
- D1: Good design and local distinctiveness
- D2: Vehicle and bicycle parking
- D3: Plot coverage and garden areas
- D4: Privacy and daylight
- D8: Promoting efficient use of energy
- D10: Provision for the management of waste
- H6: Locations where new housing will not be permitted
- H8: Density of new development
- G2: Protection and enhancement of the environment
- G5: Making the best use of land
- G6: Promoting good design
- T1: Promoting a sustainable transport network

Planning Policy Statements (PPS's):

- PPS1: Delivering sustainable development
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS22: Renewable energy

South Oxfordshire Design Guide; All sections.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Principle
- Housing mix
- Amenity provision
- Sustainability
- Housing land supply

6.2 **Principle.**

Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan allows for new housing on sites within the built-up areas of the 4 main towns of the district providing that they accord with all 5 criteria of the Policy. Wantage Road lies to the north west of Wallingford and it is lined on both sides by residential development. On both sides of the road the properties generally have deep gardens and they back on to open fields. On the northern side of the road, there is no history of any backland development and there is a definite and established building line. There is a garden centre at the rear of the proposed development site and the buildings are agricultural in character (mainly polytunnels) and they are single storey in height. As a result, they are not readily seen in views from Wantage Road and High Road but in any case, the agricultural buildings are in keeping with the countryside setting.

The garages belonging to 144 and 146 Wantage Road mark the visual boundary to the built up area of the town and the land beyond appears as undeveloped countryside. The proposal to extend the built form beyond the garages would serve to encroach upon the surrounding countryside and would harm the landscape setting of the settlement. As such the application falls to be considered under policy H6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

- 6.3 Policy H6 seeks to prevent residential development in specific locations which are listed as :
- i In the countryside
 - ii In settlements not listed in the Local Plan
 - iii On the edge of settlements where the built up area of the settlement would be extended.

The Planning Statement accompanying the application states that the site has been used for open storage for many years but that it was formerly in agricultural use. There are various piles of building materials and wooden palettes on the land as well as a caravan which is stored there but not occupied. There are however, no permanent buildings on the site which is to be developed. There is an established and regular building line along this part of Wantage Road and the proposed dwellings would break beyond this building line and be prominent in public views from Wantage Road and High Road. The site has a clear relationship with the open countryside directly to the north and as the Planning Statement asserts, whilst the land is currently used for open storage the agricultural use could be resumed at any time. Erecting two new dwellings and providing the associated garden areas and parking would change not only the use of the land but also its character, extending the built-up area of Wallingford and encroaching into the surrounding countryside. The backland location of the development would also be out of keeping with the established character of the area and would set an undesirable precedent for similar development in the immediate area.

As such the principle of erecting a new dwelling in this location is not acceptable.

- 6.4 **Design.** The general design of the proposed dwellings is considered to be acceptable however; the plans show that the exterior of the development is to be finished in facing brickwork and flint panelling. Your officers consider that the flint panelling does not reflect the local character and should be omitted.
- 6.5 **Housing Mix.** Policy H7 requires a mix of housing sizes to ensure the current housing needs are met. The 2008 South Oxfordshire District Housing Needs Assessment provides more up to date figures than those specified in the 2006 Local Plan and the findings of the survey showed that in terms of market sector housing, there is a need for the following mix of sizes:
- 1-bed units - 10%
 - 2-bed units - 60%
 - 3-bed units - 10%
 - 4-bed units - 20%

In this case, the proposed mix is 50% 2 bed and 50% 3 bed. Having regard to the fact that the proposed development is for just two properties and they would be of different sizes, your officers consider that the mix is acceptable in accordance with Policy H7.

- 6.6 **Neighbour impact.** The new dwellings would be erected at a distance of some 27 metres from the rear elevation of No's 144 & 146 Wantage Road. The side elevation of the new properties would face the rear of the neighbouring dwellings and the distance between the properties exceeds the Council's minimum back-to-back window distance of 25 metres. One first floor window is proposed within the side elevation of the new dwellings and this would serve a bathroom. Notwithstanding the objection in principle, whilst the distance between the dwellings is considered to be acceptable, your officers consider that it would not be unreasonable to impose a condition on any planning permission requiring the window to be obscure glazed in perpetuity in order to minimise the perception of overlooking.

The new dwellings would face across the access track and over to the garden belonging to No.142 Wantage Road. Whilst views of the garden would be possible, there is a large amenity area at the rear of No.142 and your officers are satisfied that the occupants of No.142 would still be able to enjoy areas of their garden without being overlooked. The occupants of No.140a Wantage Road have objected to the development on the grounds that it would overlook their property however, the new dwellings would be located at a distance of over 36 metres from their garden which is greatly in excess of the Council's minimum standards and your officers consider that the relationship of the development with neighbouring properties is acceptable.

- 6.7 **Amenity provision & parking.** Policy D4 of the adopted SOLP states that 'new dwellings should be designed to ensure adequate privacy for existing and new residents to enable them to enjoy their homes without undue intrusion from neighbours or from the public. The gardens are more than 100 square metres in size and therefore exceed the recommended standards for private outdoor areas as set out within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

Due to the fact that the distances between the new properties and surrounding dwellings exceed the Council's minimum standards your officers consider that the occupants of the new dwellings would be afforded sufficient privacy.

The required level of parking provision for dwellings of this size is two spaces per property and as the plans show, each dwelling has an integral garage and an additional off-road parking space. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's parking standards.

- 6.8 **Highway Impact.** The application proposes the widening of the access-way through the re-alignment of the hedge on the boundary with No.142 Wantage Road to permit simultaneous access and egress to and from Wantage Road. Whilst passing spaces have not been provided along the single carriageway track, the highway officer has advised that an area wide enough for cars to pass is available in the area of the proposed dwellings and having regard to the relatively low level of intensification of the use of the access that would arise as a result of the development it is considered that the development is acceptable in highway terms, subject to the suggested conditions being satisfied. These include the access being formed and laid out prior to the first occupation of the dwellings and the existing access track being upgraded.
- 6.9 **Sustainability.** The District Council encourages the use of renewable energy technologies, especially where new build is proposed. The Sustainability Statement accompanying the application states that the development would be constructed to Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes which exceeds the current building control requirements.
- 6.10 **Housing Land Supply.** There is currently a shortfall on the required five year supply of deliverable sites for housing. Therefore this application should be considered favourably having regard to the Policies set out in PPS 3 and specifically paragraph 69. This seeks to achieve high quality housing, a housing mix reflecting the requirements of specific groups, the suitability of the site for development including its environmental sustainability, using land effectively and efficiently and ensuring the proposed development is in line with housing objectives.

In this case it is considered that the principle of the development is not acceptable and that the design and siting of the dwellings would have an adverse impact on the character of the area. Therefore the lack of an up to date 5 year supply is insufficient to

override the other planning objections to this development.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development is not acceptable because the site is located on the edge of Wallingford in a visually prominent location. The erection of two new dwellings would extend the built up area of the town and would encroach upon the surrounding countryside to the detriment of the setting of the settlement and contrary to policy H6 of the SOLP. Notwithstanding the objection in principle to this development, the proposed construction materials and siting of the development would also be out of keeping with the established character of the area.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To refuse planning permission for the following reason:**

That the development would extend the built up area of Wallingford when viewed from Wantage Road and High Road (A4130) and would encroach upon the surrounding countryside to the detriment of the setting of the settlement. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy C4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to criterion (iii) of policy H6 which seeks to resist new dwellings on the edge of settlements where the built-up area of the settlement would be extended. Notwithstanding the objection in principle, the proposed construction materials and backland siting of the development would also be out of keeping with the established character of the area, contrary to Policy D1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to advice contained within PPS3.

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