
APPLICATION NO.	P10/W1686
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	09.11.2010
PARISH	BENSON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Felix Bloomfield Susan Cooper
APPLICANT	Mr Mike Sharp
SITE	8 Churchfield Lane Benson
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing bungalow and centralise site access. Erection of 2 no detached properties, each with detached garage.
AMENDMENTS	As amended by drawing numbers NCR/BENSON 01B, 02B, 03B, 04B & 05B accompanying email from Agent dated 5 January 2011 & as clarified by Bat Inspection Survey report dated January 2011.
GRID REFERENCE	461379191689
OFFICER	Mrs S Crawford

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application has been referred to the Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 The site lies within the built up limits of Benson and is currently developed with a bungalow at the rear of the site. The area is developed primarily with detached houses set on large plots; most are set back from the lane or behind mature landscaping. Churchfield Lane is a single track, one way lane. The site has no special designation
- 1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for two detached houses (1 x 5 bed dwelling and 1 x 4 bed dwelling). Amended plans have been received to relocate the garaging to the rear of the site and to reduce the height and bulk of the houses. Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full details of the application and representations can be viewed on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Benson Parish Council Refuse,
Original plans The 2 houses would have reasonably sized gardens with little overlooking of Pensfield but on balance members voted to object on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site as the proposed buildings were very large with the garages coming forward of the existing building line in the road.

Amended plans

It was felt that little had changed in the revised application apart from a small height reduction. The proposed dwellings would take up more of the site than surrounding properties and so members voted to object to the application on the

- 3.2 Countryside Officer grounds that it was not in character with the area. Two surveys have been conducted and have found no evidence of bat occupation within the existing structure. No objection subject to a condition.
- 3.3 Forestry Officer No objection subject to conditions in respect of tree and hedge protection and landscaping.
- 3.4 Environmental Health No objection subject to a condition in respect of contamination.
- 3.5 OCC (Highways) No objection subject to recommendations
- 3.6 OCC (Archaeology) No objection subject to an NB added to the decision notice.
- 3.7 OCC (Developer funding) On the basis of this application as set out above, and using statistical information from our Demography team, this development would generate a net increase of:
- **4 additional residents including:**
 - 0.82 extra primary school-age child
 - 0.588 extra secondary school-age child
 - 0.161 residents aged 65+
- This assessment takes full account of the loss of the existing 3-bedroom bungalow. Contributions of £18,471 are required to cover contributions to education, Library, waste management, museum resources and social and health care.
- 3.8 The Chiltern Society Objection. The two new houses are not in keeping with the widely spaced development in the vicinity. This involves the loss of a bungalow, as the population ages single storey dwellings will be needed more.
- 3.9 Neighbour Objectors 1 Overdevelopment as it replaces one bungalow with two 5 bedroom houses. This will set a precedent for other sites on Churchfield Lane

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 **10 Churchfield Lane** – P10/W1155/O – Erection of 5 dwellings – **Refused** on the grounds of the loss of a community facility (day nursery), layout out of keeping with the character of the area, impact on trees and lack of infrastructure provision.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted SOLP Policies

G2 – Protection of District's resources, G3, proximity of new development to existing services and links to public transport, G6 – Quality of design and local distinctiveness, C1 – Landscape character, C8 – development affecting protected species, EP1 – adverse affects of development, EP3 – proposals for external lighting, EP6 - Surface water drainage requirements, EP7 – Ground water resources, EP8 – Contaminated land, D1 – Principles of good design, D2 – Parking for vehicles and cycles, D3 – Provision of private amenity areas, D6 – design against crime, D8 – Conservation and efficient design, D9 – Renewable energy, D10 – Management of waste, H4 – New housing within larger villages, H7 – Mix of units, H8 - density, T1 transport.
South Oxfordshire Design Guide

- PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development
- PPS3 – Housing
- PPG13 – Transport
- PPS22 – Renewable Energy

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- H4 Criteria
- Provision of gardens
- Mix of units
- Infrastructure issues

6.2 **Principle.** The site lies within the built up limits of Benson where applications for new residential development will be acceptable subject to the criteria specified in policy H4.

6.3 **H4 criteria issues.**

- i. That an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost;

The existing bungalow sits at the rear of the site behind mature landscaping; consequently the site appears relatively open and contributes to the spacious character of this edge of village location. However, the site is not of such importance that it would preclude any redevelopment and there is scope for some frontage development on the site in your officer's view.

- ii. Design, height and bulk in keeping with the surroundings;

The original proposal provided a layout and scale of development that was not in keeping with the character of the area. Namely, two five bedroom dwellings of substantial size, which filled the whole width of the plot and included garaging forward of the dwellings. The amended plans have reduced the height and bulk of the dwellings and relocated garaging to the rear of the site. The height of the buildings is now more in line with the other dwellings on Churchfield Lane and the spacing between buildings has improved. The individual plots provided are narrower than others on Churchfield Lane but on balance they would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area in your officer's view.

- iii. That the character of the area is not adversely affected;

Churchfield Lane provides a less densely developed buffer between the main village and undeveloped land to the south west. The original plans provided a form of development that would have been out of keeping with the character of the area but the amendments have addressed adequately your officer's concerns.

- iv. Amenity, environmental or highway objections; and

Highway issues.

The application proposes blocking up the existing access and providing a new access onto Churchfield Lane in the centre of the site. The access would be shared by both new dwellings. The Highway Engineer is satisfied with the proposed access in terms of safety and has recommended a number of conditions.

Parking provision.

Two parking spaces and turning facilities are provided to the front of each dwelling and a shared drive would run between the dwellings to access two double garages at the rear of the site. The parking provision is in excess of the council's standards and is acceptable.

Neighbour impact.

The new development would have an impact on the immediate neighbours to either side, 10 and 6 Churchfield Lane, and on 12 Pensfield to the rear. 10 Churchfield Lane is in use a day nursery for children. There would be a distance of approximately 19 metres between the new dwelling on plot 1 and 10 Churchfield Lane and the buildings would be on a similar building line. As such this relationship would not be unneighbourly.

6 Churchfield Lane is a detached dwelling with a flat roof garage nearest to the dwelling proposed on plot 2. The distance between the dwelling on plot 2 and the main body of number 6 would be 11m and the building line would be similar. The windows in the side elevations facing neighbours on plots 1 and 2 serve bathrooms or stairwells and a condition is recommended to ensure that these windows are obscure glazed.

12 Pensfield would be some 38 metres away from the nearest new dwelling on plot 1. This distance is well over the minimum 25 metre distance for a back to back relationship and is acceptable in your officer's view.

6.6 v. Backland development issues

Not applicable as the application involves frontage development.

6.7 **Provision of gardens.** Minimum standards for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in policies D3 of the Local Plan. The Design Guide seeks to provide a minimum of 100 square metres for the gardens of houses with 3 bedrooms and above. The gardens for each dwelling are in excess of this requirement.

6.8 **Mix of units.** Policy H7 of the adopted Local Plan 2011 requires an acceptable housing mix to ensure a steady provision of small two bedroom properties. On all sites that are capable of accommodating two or more dwellings, 45% of the development shall be two bedroom units unless this provision for small dwellings would adversely affect the character of the area. In this case, the proposal provides for 1x 5 bedroom dwelling and 1 x 4 bedroom dwelling. Whilst the mix does not accord with Policy H7, given the character of the surrounding area and the size of the plots, a two bedroom unit would appear in your officer's view out of keeping. In addition there is a net gain of only 1 dwelling.

6.9 **Infrastructure issues.** The County Council have requested contributions towards infrastructure improvements. The County Council would not usually request such payments on schemes of 5 houses or below. They justify their request in this case, because of a recent planning application on the adjoining site for 5 houses and the need to consider the overall effects of development on the area. The applicant has questioned whether the infrastructure payments are fairly applied in this case. Whilst the District Council will be aiming to achieve contributions on every new dwelling, this is not the case at present and is unlikely to be so until there is a policy in place regarding the relatively recent Community Infrastructure Levy legislation (CIL). Until such a policy is in place the request for contributions in respect of an application where there is a net gain of only one dwelling is not justified in your officer's view.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Your officers recommend that planning permission is granted because the principle of residential development on appropriate sites in Benson is acceptable. The amended plans have addressed concerns in relation to the layout and scale of development and the scheme now provides two houses which would be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. The proposal would not be unneighbourly and there are no highway objections. As such the proposal accords with the relevant Development Plan Policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions.

- 1. Commencement 3 years**
- 2. Compliance with approved plans**
- 3. Sample materials**
- 4. Close existing access**
- 5. Provide parking and manoeuvring areas**
- 6. Landscaping**
- 7. Tree Protection**
- 8. Protection of hedges**
- 9. Wildlife protection**
- 10. Contamination investigation**
- 11. Obscure glaze windows in side elevations**

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