
APPLICATION NO.	P11/E0536
APPLICATION TYPE	Planning application
REGISTERED	28 March 2011
PARISH	Aston Rowant
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs D Brown
APPLICANT	Mr and Mrs Brine
SITE	3 Plowden Park, Aston Rowant
PROPOSAL	Single and two storey extensions, and front porch (As amplified by drawing number 190411 Rev A accompanying letter from Agent dated 20110509).
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	473148 199238
OFFICER	Mrs H Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to Planning Committee at the discretion of the Development Manager.
- 1.2 The site lies within the main confines of Aston Rowant in an area of housing constructed in the 1960's. The property is a detached house with an attached flat roofed garage, constructed in red brick with a tiled roof. There is a mature oak tree in the front garden protected by a tree preservation order.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is to add single storey and two storey extensions to the property. The single storey extensions comprise a 2.6m long flat roofed extension to the front of the garage, a 5m long flat roofed extension to the rear of the garage and a new front porch. The first floor extension is proposed above the garage and is some 7.6m in depth and 4m in width, with a pitched roof. The extensions are proposed in materials to match the existing property. The extensions would provide an extended garage, a family room and extended kitchen area and porch at ground floor and a recreation room and shower room at first floor.
- 2.2 Additional information has been supplied to show the position of the oak tree in the front garden relative to the proposed development.
- 2.3 The proposal is an amended scheme following the withdrawal of planning application P11/E0064 which proposed a larger extension.
- 2.4 A Design and Access statement accompanies the application. The agent advises that the proposed two storey extension is set back from the front elevation of the property and is set in from the boundary with the adjoining property to reduce the bulk of the extension and the visual closure of the gap between the properties. In his view, the staggered relationship between the two properties further enhances this effect. The single storey extensions should not impact significantly on the street scene or the amenity of the adjoining property. The extensions are proposed in materials to match the existing house. He confirms that the applicants are not proposing any changes to the existing driveway arrangements and that works to the protected tree have always been with the approval of SODC's Forestry Officer. In the agent's view, the proposed extensions comply with the Council's policies and guidance.

- 2.5 In response to the neighbour objections, the agent advises that, in his view, the revised design addresses the design issues raised by officers, and the neighbourly issues raised by the objector. He considers that the proposed extensions would not result in the loss of light to the adjacent property, and confirms that the extension is not required for business purposes. His clients are concerned that the volume of objections raised by the neighbour will adversely impact on the outcome of the application.
- 2.6 Plans **attached** to the report at appendix 1 show the location of the site and details of the proposals.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Aston Rowant Parish Council – No objection raised.

Forestry Officer – No objection raised, subject to the imposition of a tree protection condition.

Neighbour responses - 1 objection from a local resident and 1 objection from a former resident.

Objection from local resident – the extensive correspondence includes the following issues –

- The proposed development, including the storage of materials and re-alignment of the driveway will impact on the root system of the oak tree in the front garden protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- This is already a large house and the proposed increase in size of some 40% is unacceptable.
- The proposed two storey extension is hugely overbearing, being within 2m of our boundary. It will result in significant loss of sunlight to our garden, and loss of view from our windows.
- The size of the proposed extensions exceeds the recommended size criteria set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.
- The two storey extension exceeds the width of the original house and the additional single storey extensions give an overall excessive depth of 17m creating an alleyway between the properties.
- The proposed porch is out of keeping with the style of the existing dwelling and is overly large.
- The proposed two storey extension would fill in the gap between dwellings, detracting from the spacious layout of dwellings, creating a terrace effect, and creating an undesirable precedent for others to do the same.
- The extension may be used as office accommodation and as such, additional parking would be required, leading to further parking on the road. The front extension reduces the driveway area. The property is registered as a trading address.
- The extension to the garage will reduce the available driveway area.
- Neighbours were not consulted by the applicant or their agent prior to the submission of the planning application, and no reason was given for the withdrawal of the first application.
- Parish Councillors do not consult neighbours and have preferential access to submitted plans.

- A full set of plans should be supplied to all neighbours.
- The consultation time period given to neighbours is inadequate.
- Neighbours are denied access to essential planning application information and are placed at a distinct disadvantage. Plans are very difficult to find on the Council's web site.

Objection from former resident –

- Houses in Plowden Park were originally designed to give a harmonious and spacious effect, with space between giving views beyond. Filling in the gap between these houses will encourage others to do the same and create an 'urban terrace'.

3.2 Copies of all correspondence and submitted information can be viewed on the Council's web site www.southoxon.gov.uk

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P11/E0064 – Single and two storey extensions and front porch. Application withdrawn.

P63/M0673 – Site and layout for 14 detached dwellings and garages with roads, installation of sewage disposal plant. Planning permission granted.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) Policies G2, G6, C9, H13, D1, D2, D3, D4, T1

South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2008

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The principal issues to be considered are –

- Whether the scale and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the dwelling and the site and with the appearance of the surrounding area.
- Whether the amenity of occupants of nearby properties is materially harmed.
- Whether adequate and satisfactory parking and amenity areas are provided for the extended dwelling.
- Whether the proposals would prejudice the health of the mature oak tree
- Other issues

Scale and Design

6.2 Policy H13 of the SOLP requires that the scale and design of extensions are in keeping with the character of the dwelling and the site and with the appearance of the surrounding area.

6.3 Design advice in relation to domestic development is contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG). The following paragraphs are of particular relevance –

6.2.3 Retain proportions

Keep the form and scale of the extension proportionate to the house and plot.

The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any extension should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

6.3.2 Side extensions.

- You should normally set side extensions back from the front of the house. This

will keep the proportions of the existing building and reduce the visual impact of the join between the existing and new materials. This is particularly important on symmetrical properties or identical semi detached properties. As a guide, the set back should be at least 0.5metres. You will need to justify anything different in a Design and Access Statement.

- Extensions should relate to the scale and proportions of the original building and should be generally narrower than the original in width of frontage and depth from front to back.
- In general you should set the ridgeline of the roof of a two storey extension lower than the ridge of the original house. However, this does depend on the existing building height, roof pitch and current building regulations. As a guide, the set down should be at least 0.5metres. You would need to justify anything different in a Design and Access statement.
- We would normally refuse permission for extensions that would close an important gap within the street scene or lead to a terracing effect.

- 6.4 The proposed first floor extension at 3 Plowden Park is set back from the front of the house by 1.5 metres and has a ridge line 1.5m below the ridge line of the existing property, in accordance with the SODG. In terms of scale and proportion, the proposed first floor extension is narrower in width than the existing property, and shorter than the depth of the existing house, in accordance with the SODG. Whilst the proposals also include a single storey front extension to the garage, the existing garage already protrudes in front of the house, and a further extension of some 2.6metres would not, in the opinion of officers, detract from the appearance of the dwelling in the street scene. Similarly, the proposed rear single storey extension would not detract from the overall appearance of the dwelling. The proposed enlarged porch is in keeping with the style of the existing porch.
- 6.5 The existing dwelling at 3 Plowden Park is a substantial property of Neo Georgian style, and is one in a row of similar houses. The houses are generally set well back from the road/access track and the overall appearance is one of substantial houses spaciouly laid out. The gap above the flat roofed double garages between the houses add to the spacious feel to the area and the long front gardens, mature trees and views through to open land beyond give a rural feel to the development. In this particular case, number 3 Plowden Park is set back some 20 m from the access road, and there is a gap at first floor between this and the adjacent property of some 7 metres. This gap would be closed to a large extent by the construction of the first floor extension. Accordingly, the closure of the gap by the proposed first floor extension would detract significantly from the spacious setting of the dwellings to the detriment of the setting of the houses and the character of the area. In addition, the approval of this first floor extension would be likely to create a precedent for further similar developments which would detract considerably from the overall character of the area.
- 6.6 Whilst two first floor side extensions have been constructed at the western end of Plowden Park, these extensions were constructed before the publication of the Council's Design Guide which specifically refers to the retention of gaps between houses. In addition, the houses at the western end of Plowden Park are not so spaciouly laid out as the houses at the eastern end.
- 6.7 In conclusion, whilst the general scale of the extensions is considered acceptable in relation to the scale of the house, officers consider that the first floor extension would close the gap between this house and number 2 Plowden Park, to the significant detriment of the setting of the houses and the character of the area.

Amenity of occupants of nearby properties.

- 6.8 Policy H13 of the SOLP requires that proposed extensions do not materially harm the amenity of occupants of nearby properties. Further advice in relation to development close to neighbours is contained in the SODG. The following paragraph is of particular relevance –

6.2.2

Be considerate to your neighbours.

Think about your neighbours when designing your extension. Consider size, how close it will be to them, overlooking and privacy.

- make sure an extension does not intrude upon a neighbour's privacy
- consider the size, position and form of the extension in relation to adjoining properties and the path of the sun so that overshadowing and loss of daylight are minimal,
- any extension should not lead to an oppressive or overbearing impact, which would be harmful to the amenity of occupiers of nearby dwellings,
- new windows should avoid overlooking neighbouring properties,
- a single storey extension should generally not extend more than 3 metres out from the original building where it adjoins or is closely positioned to neighbouring buildings.

- 6.9 In relation to overlooking, the windows in the proposed extensions look over the front and rear gardens of the applicant's property. Side windows to serve the proposed family room look towards the neighbour's fence at 4 Plowden Park. In these circumstances officers consider that the proposed extensions would not result in any significant overlooking of adjoining properties.
- 6.10 In terms of overshadowing, the proposed first floor extension lies to the west of the adjoining property, number 2. The single storey extensions are flat roofed, lie adjacent to the existing boundary fencing/walls and should not result in overshadowing. The proposed first floor extension would result in the loss of some sunlight to the front garden of number 2 Plowden Park. However, number 2 would retain a full southerly aspect to its rear windows, rear garden and sitting out areas. In these circumstances officers consider that the loss of light to the front garden area of number 2 would not result in material harm to the residential amenity of that property.
- 6.11 With regard to whether an extension would be overbearing, the two storey section of 3 Plowden Park is sited some 6 metres in front of the neighbouring property, number 2. The property is, therefore, already significant in views from the front windows and has an impact on the amenity of the neighbouring property. The proposed first floor extension would sit some 4.5m in front of the adjoining property and would lie only 3m from the boundary. In these circumstances, officers consider that the additional bulk of the first floor extension would have an overbearing and oppressive impact which would significantly detract from the amenity currently enjoyed by the adjoining property.
- 6.12 With regard to the impact of the single storey extensions, whilst the rear extension does protrude more than 3m from the original building, the extension lies adjacent to the side wall of the adjoining property. Whilst the whole of the single storey development would result in a long narrow passage between the two properties, as there is already a fence/wall along the boundary, officers consider that the single storey extensions would not result in significant harm to the adjoining property.

- 6.13 In conclusion, officers consider that the proposed two storey extension would result in an overbearing and oppressive form of development that would detract from the residential amenity of 2 Plowden Park.
- 6.14 Whilst it is appreciated that the current proposal reduces the scale of the extension considerably compared with the previous scheme, officers remain concerned that the proposals would still adversely affect the character of the area and the amenity of the adjoining property.

Parking and amenity areas.

- 6.15 The property would retain parking space within the garage and two parking spaces on the driveway. Accordingly, the on site parking provision would comply with the Council's guidelines. Whilst concern has been raised by the neighbour that the extension could be used as office accommodation which would result in the need for additional on-site parking, the extension is not proposed for commercial purposes. Any material change of use of the property to office accommodation would require the further grant of planning permission.
- 6.16 The property sits in large gardens which would be retained and comply with the Council's guidelines for the provision of private amenity areas.

Impact on the tree protected by a Tree Protection Order.

- 6.17 An amplified plan has been supplied by the agent which shows the position of the mature oak tree in the front garden in relation to the proposed development. The Forestry Officer has considered the proposals and has advised that no elements of the proposed development are within the oak's root protection area. Accordingly, he raises no objection to the development subject to the imposition of a planning condition requiring the tree to be protected during construction works.

Other Issues

- 6.18 The principal objector to the application has raised other issues relating to the processing of planning applications.
- 6.19 With regard to consultation with neighbours by the applicant before a planning application is submitted, this is a recommended course of action set out in the SODG, and is not mandatory.
- 6.20 The objector expresses concern that the Parish Council do not consult neighbours, and have preferential access to plans. However, Parish Council processes are a matter for the Parish.
- 6.21 Whilst the objector has requested that a full set of paper plans should be supplied to all neighbours consulted on planning applications, due to the volume of consultations undertaken, this would be prohibitively expensive. All plans are available to be viewed on the Council's web site, and copies can also be viewed at the District Council's Offices, and with the Parish Council.
- 6.22 The objector has complained that consultation times to neighbours, set at 14 days, is too short. In fact, the consultation time to neighbours has now been increased to 21 days from the beginning of June this year.

6.23 Whilst the objector has complained that planning application information is very difficult to find on the Council's web site, the site has been developed in consultation with 'user groups', and the Council is always open to further suggestions concerning improvements to the site.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Whilst the proposed extension satisfies some of the guidelines set out in the SODG for domestic extensions, the proposed first floor extension would close an important gap in the street scene and would result in an overbearing and oppressive form of development that would detract from the residential amenity of the adjoining property.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

1. **The proposals are contrary to policies G2, G6, D1 and H13 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and to advice contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008, in particular paragraph 6.3.2. The first floor extension to the side of the property would fill an important gap in the street scene thereby detracting from the spacious setting of the dwellings and the character of the area.**
2. **The proposals are contrary to policies G2, G6, D1 and H13 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to advice contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008, in particular paragraph 6.2.2. Having regard to the siting of the proposed two storey side extension, the proposals would result in an oppressive and overbearing form of development that would detract from the residential amenity currently enjoyed by the occupants of the adjoining property, number 2 Plowden Park.**

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