
APPLICATION NO.	P11/E1603
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	23 rd September 2011
PARISH	Harpsden
WARD MEMBERS	Mr Malcolm Leonard Mr Robert Simister
APPLICANT	Mr P Butler
SITE	Land at Crosscroft Wood, Devils Hill, Crowsley
PROPOSALS	Erection of Open Sided Timber Barn
AMENDMENTS	Yes
GRID REFERENCE	472619/180631
OFFICER	Tom 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) extends to approximately 16 hectares and comprises of managed woodland with areas of rough grassland.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks permission for the construction of an open sided barn for the storage of timber associated with the management of woodland on the site. The proposed barn would be located towards the highest part of the site within an area of grassland towards the eastern edge of the site. The building as reduced in height by the amended plans, would measure approximately 5.2 metres in height at its front with the rear elevation being slightly set into the slope of the land so that its above ground height would be approximately 4.7 metres. The depth and width of the building would be approximately 6.4 metres and 8 metres respectively. The building would have an open front elevation and mostly open side elevations, and would otherwise be clad with timber boarding beneath a plain clay tiled roof.

2.2 A copy of the plans accompanying the application is **attached** as Appendix B. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council’s website, www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **Harpsden Parish Council** – The application should be refused due to its proposed siting.

3.2 **Sonning Common Parish Council** – No strong views

3.3 **Neighbours** – Two letters of objection received, which raise the following concerns;

- No reason for a clay tiled roof on a log store in a field in the AONB
- There is already an open store on the land which does not appear to be used
- Planting of trees would restrict view from neighbouring property
- The building could be sited on land lower down the slope
- Queries over whether it is proposed to use the facility as a sawmill

Any comments received from the Parish Councils or neighbours in relation to the amended plans will be reported verbally to the Committee.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P10/E0341 - Erection of timber agricultural barn and workshop to store machinery. Withdrawn prior to determination.
- 4.2 P09/E1259/AG - Erection of agricultural building. Deemed not to be agricultural development thereby requiring the submission of a planning application.

5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
- G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, C1, C2, D1, A1
- 5.3 Government Guidance:
-PPS1, PPS7
- 5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance
-South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)
-South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA)
-Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

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
 4. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 The site lies within a relatively isolated rural location where new development is restricted having regard to Policies G3 and G4 of the SOLP. However, the proposed building is being promoted in connection with the management of woodland on the land and therefore the principle of the development is broadly acceptable having regard to Policy A1 of the SOLP, which relates to agricultural buildings or structures.

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

- 6.3 The application site is an area of countryside forming part of the attractive and largely undeveloped wooded valley between Sonning Common and Harpsden. The land also forms part of the Chilterns AONB and Policy C2 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that development does not harm the beauty or distinctiveness of the area. Criteria (i) and (ii) of Policy A1 of the SOLP respectively seek to ensure that the siting of new development is not prominent in the landscape and that the design and materials are in keeping with the surroundings.
- 6.4 The proposed building is modest in size and would be set into the slope towards the highest part of the site. It would be sited on an area of open ground and so would not require the removal of any adjacent trees. The adjacent trees would largely screen the

building in views from the south and west whilst the local topography would ensure that the building would be well screened in views from the north and east. As such, due to the modest size and unobtrusive siting of the building, the development would have a very limited visual impact in the surrounding area.

- 6.5 Although the building would be viewed as a stand alone structure due to the lack of other buildings or development nearby it has been designed as a simple high quality structure that would be appropriate for the proposed storage use. Therefore, in terms of the building's design it would not appear out of place in this rural location, particularly when used for the proposed use.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.6 Criterion (i) of Policy A1 of the SOLP also requires that development does not damage the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties. The proposed building would be located approximately 150 metres from the nearest residential property, which is Kingsfield House to the north. Due to the proposed siting of the building and the local topography only the top of the building is likely to be visible from this neighbouring property. Due to the modest size and height of the building, its proposed use and its distance from neighbouring properties Officers do not consider that the proposed building would cause any significant harm to the amenities of nearby properties. Concern has been expressed that the proposal would relate to a sawmill, however, the applicant has confirmed that there is no intention to use the site in such a way and there is no need to provide electricity at the site.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.7 Access onto the site is via Devil's Hill to the south and access to the site of the proposed building from this initial point of access is circuitous due to the woodland and topography of the site. However, access to the site can be undertaken over the existing grass and there is no intention to provide a more formal access track to the building.
- 6.8 Siting the building on the lower slopes of the site would mean that the building would be closer to the existing access off Devil's Hill. However, the applicant has explained that such a position would be less secure and would mean that the stored timber would be less exposed to the sun and would be subject to a reduced amount of air movement.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy as, subject to conditions, the development would respect the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement – 3 years**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials to be approved**
- 4. No lighting unless agreed**
- 5. Use for storage of timber and associated equipment only**
- 6. No creation of hard surfacing for vehicular access to the building**

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