
APPLICATION NO.	P11/E2277
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	09:02:2012
PARISH	CHINNOR
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Christopher Hood
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs. T Lixton
SITE	14 Keens Lane Chinnor, OX39 4PF
PROPOSAL	Replacement dwelling, with demolition of the existing bungalow; reduction in formation levels; alterations to vehicle and pedestrian access; provision of garage, garden stores and greenhouse
AMENDMENTS	As amended by plans accompanying agent's letter dated 14 March 2012.
GRID REFERENCE	475887/200901
OFFICER	Mrs H.E.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to Planning Committee at the request of Christopher Hood, the Local Member.
- 1.2 The site lies on the north eastern edge of Chinnor. The existing property is a bungalow constructed in brick and tile, with an attached double garage with accommodation above constructed in similar materials. The property is accessed from Keens Lane and sits at a higher level than the lane.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is to demolish the existing property and to erect a replacement dwelling, to be constructed in brick and tile. The proposed replacement dwelling is a two storey structure, with a garage, garden store and green house proposed as separate structures to the rear. Alterations to the existing access are proposed together with a turning area on the frontage. The property is shown as a three/four bed roomed dwelling. The new dwelling is essentially sited in the same position as the existing property, but is orientated further to the east. Amended plans have been submitted during the processing of the application which move the proposed dwelling back on the plot such that it is in line with the adjacent dwelling.
- 2.2 The application is a re-submission following the refusal of planning permission under planning application reference P11/E1847. That application was refused on the grounds that the proposed dwelling was too large and inappropriate in design such that it would result in a form of development that would be out of keeping with the scale and form of adjoining development.
- 2.3 A design and access statement accompanies the application. The agent advises that the existing property is suffering from subsidence, requires considerable renovation/repair, and the associated costs would be uneconomic. A replacement dwelling would be a better use of the site, utilising current building methods and materials. In the view of the agent, the design of the new dwelling reflects the site orientation, the position of the original dwelling and that of the adjacent property, number 12 Keens Lane. He advises that the footprint of the proposals is commensurate

in size to the site area available. He advises that the property has been designed to ensure there is no loss of light to adjoining properties or loss of privacy. A flood risk assessment, planning statements, structural statement, sustainability statement, contaminated land statement, transport and travel statement and a tree report also accompany the application.

- 2.4 With regard to differences between the refused scheme and the current proposals the agent advises that the overall width of the dwelling has been reduced by 2m, the main gable width of the dwelling has been reduced and the land level has been reduced allowing for the dwelling to be set into the ground by 0.7m. As a result, he feels that the differences in height between the adjacent dwelling, number 12 Keens Lane, and the new dwelling has been significantly reduced. In addition, the whole of the basement accommodation has been removed from the dwelling, and the basement garage is now proposed as a separate structure in the rear garden, allowing for more landscaping in the front garden. The agent considers that the revised design complements the character of the area, and that similar height relationships can be seen in many street scenes in Chinnor.
- 2.5 Full details of the submitted information in support of the proposals can be viewed on the council's web site www.southoxon.gov.uk
- 2.6 Plans **attached** at Appendix 1 show the location of the site and details of the proposals.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Chinnor Parish Council – No objection raised.

County Archaeological Services – No objection raised. The Country Archaeologist has requested that if archaeological finds do occur during development, the applicant should notify him in order that he may make a site visit or advise as necessary.

Forestry Officer – Three trees will have to be removed to make way for the development. The trees should be retained as there is insufficient space for their replacement.

Neighbour responses – some 22 letters of no objection have been received from neighbours and local residents. The comments include the following matters –

- This is a large plot which can easily accommodate the dwelling
- The proposed dwelling would be in keeping with houses in Keens Lane, and the design suits the plot
- The development will not affect neighbours
- The design of the new dwelling will complement the new property at 12 Keens Lane
- The new dwelling will be only slightly higher than the adjacent bungalow.
- The current property is affected by subsidence.
- The new dwelling will bring additional services to the lane.
- The revised proposals fully overcome the reasons for refusal specified in the previous refusal.

Two letters of objection have been received which raise the following issues –

- The scale of the proposed house is totally inappropriate for the plot, it is much larger than any adjacent properties and there will be a substantial increase in height. This has not changed significantly from the refused scheme.
- The proposal will set an undesirable precedent for demolition of dwellings and rebuilding much larger houses.
- The proposed dwelling will overlook our garden and house, and result in a

considerable and unacceptable invasion of privacy and undermining the security of our property. The amended plans do not overcome my previous concerns on this matter.

- The design is out of keeping with adjacent properties, including the long unbroken ridge line.
- The increase in size of the property will result in overshadowing.
- To try to counteract overlooking, the boundary planting would have to be increased in height which will adversely affect our property.
- There will be a loss of views to surrounding countryside.

3.2 Any further comments received in respect of amended plans will be reported direct to the Committee.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P11/E1847 – Refused.

Erection of replacement dwelling, garage, garden room and greenhouse.

[P91/N0634](#) - Approved (30/12/1991)
Alterations to and insertion of rooms in roof.

[P88/N0422](#) - Approved (11/07/1988)
Extension to provide utility room.

[P83/N0046](#) - Approved (16/02/1983)
Extension to provide two bedrooms, bathroom and garage.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 The following policies and guidance are relevant –

Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 – Policies G1, G2, G5, G6, C9, EP8, D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D8, D10, H4, T1, T2.

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The proposed development would be located within the built up area of the village of Chinnor which is a settlement where residential development is acceptable in principle. Development proposals are assessed against the criteria of Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The planning issues that are relevant to this application are:

- Whether the development would result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- Whether the size and appearance of the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Whether the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers would be compromised and whether the development would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- Whether the proposals would provide satisfactory vehicle access and on site parking facilities;
- Whether the proposal would incorporate sufficient sustainability and waste management measures.

Loss of open space

- 6.2 Criterion (i) of Policy H4 of the SOLP requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoiled. In this case, the site is already developed by a bungalow which is not of any historic or architectural interest, and no objection is raised to its demolition. Whilst the Forestry Officer raised objection to the loss of trees on the site, these trees have already been removed. Accordingly, an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value would not be lost as a result of this proposed development.

Design, height, scale and character of the area

- 6.3 Criterion (ii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP requires that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings and criterion (iii) requires that the character of the area is not affected. Policies G6 and D1 of the SOLP amplify this requirement. Supplementary Planning Guidance is also set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) relating to development principles. Section 5 of the SODG is particularly relevant. The introduction to that section advises that –
- ‘It is important that building form, architectural style, detailing and materials contribute to the character of the area. Particular attention should be given to local landscape and building traditions, boundary treatments, mix of materials, scale and proportion. New buildings should fit in and make a positive contribution to their surroundings.’
- Paragraph 5.1.1 advises –
- ‘Consider neighbouring properties when designing new developments. Pay attention to their position, height, mass and proportions.’
- ‘House plans should generally be flat fronted, apart from porches, avoiding the use of unnecessary elements and projections on the façade.’
- ‘Avoid using inappropriate historic details and mixing architectural styles.’
- Paragraph 5.3.1 advises –
- ‘Individual roof shapes should be kept simple and uncomplicated.’
- ‘Pitched roofs should cover simple spans with the pitch mostly running parallel to the street, fussy rooflines should be avoided.’
- Paragraph 5.6.3 advises –
- ‘Keep the facade design simple.’
- Align windows and doors vertically and horizontally, and avoid crowded facades.
- Paragraph 5.8.1 advises –
- ‘Design windows and doors to enhance the character and appearance of buildings.’
- ‘Use and adapt the proportions and details characteristic of traditional styles.’
- Paragraph 5.6.2 advises –
- Balance areas of opening and solid wall, with a maximum of one third glazing.
- 6.4 The existing property on the site comprises a low level bungalow, with a ridge height varying from 5m to 5.7m in height, and with a depth varying from 6m to 9m. Development to the north and rear of the site are also bungalows, some with rooms in the roof. The immediately adjoining property to the north, 12 Keens Lane is a recently constructed replacement dwelling, the frontage of which is single storey with dormered accommodation in the roof. Whilst development to the south east comprises two storey dwellings, these are separated from the development site by an access road. Officers consider that the proposed replacement dwelling, in street scene terms, will relate principally to 12 Keens Lane.

- 6.5 Officers appreciate that amendments have been made to the previous scheme. As set out above, these include the reduction in the width of the property and the width of the front gables, a reduction in the height of the land, the removal of the basement area and the re-siting of the garage into the rear garden. However, the new dwelling, as currently proposed, is still considered to be of an excessive size. The proposed dwelling would increase in height from 5m to 7.8m and the depth would increase to a maximum of some 13m. The increased size and height of the proposed building is emphasised by several aspects, including the rising level of the land, the two storey gables on the front and the long unbroken ridge line. Whilst the level of the land is proposed to be reduced by 0.7m, the height of the new dwelling is still shown to be some 1.3m higher than the adjoining property. The eaves of the new dwelling would also be at full two storey height, and the 2 x two storey gables proposed on the frontage of the property would also serve to draw attention to the increased bulk and height of the property. In these circumstances, in the street scene, the new dwelling would still dominate the scale and appearance of the adjoining property. The new dwelling is proposed with an unbroken ridge line some 17m in length, and together with the two storey height of the property, this further draws attention to the mass and bulk of the new dwelling. Notwithstanding the amendments to the original scheme, officers still consider that the proposed dwelling would be out of keeping with the scale of adjoining dwellings, and would not make a positive contribution to the character of the area.
- 6.6 With regard to design, the proposed house comprises a mixture of architectural styles including projecting gables and extensive areas of glazing on the front elevation including balcony areas. Officers consider that the proposed development would result in the erection of a dwelling lacking in architectural simplicity, which would be out of keeping with the simple appearance and proportions of adjoining properties, contrary to the SODG principles set out above.

Neighbourliness and living conditions

- 6.7 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP requires that there are no overriding amenity objections and Policy D4 of the SOLP requires –
‘That all new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will to be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.’
- 6.8 Advice on privacy standards is also included in the SODG. In section 3.2.6 the guide advocates that a distance of 25m between facing habitable rooms is desirable, and confirms that privacy is important for people to feel comfortable in their own homes.
- 6.9 Considerable concern has been expressed by the owners and occupiers of adjoining properties that the proposals would result in the overlooking and overshadowing. These are material considerations to be assessed as part of the planning process.
- 6.10 In terms of overlooking, as set out above, the council seeks to achieve a minimum window to window distance of some 25m. Whilst concern has been raised by properties to the front and to the rear of the site concerning overlooking, the window to window distances between those properties and the proposed dwelling are generally in excess of 25m. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development would affect the privacy of some surrounding properties to some extent, the development would comply with the Council’s standards, and a refusal of planning permission could not be substantiated.

- 6.11 In terms of overshadowing, properties to the rear are a considerable distance away, as is the property to the front, Hill Farm House. The proposed dwelling would sit alongside the blank wall of the existing property 12 Keens Lane. In these circumstances, officers consider that significant overshadowing should not occur.
- 6.12 The increase in height of the proposed dwelling would result in the loss of views from some properties. However, this is not a material planning consideration, and would not therefore be a reason to refuse planning permission.
- 6.13 With regard to the living conditions which would be provided for the occupiers of the proposed dwelling, the new house would benefit from a good sized private garden area, and improved access and parking facilities would be provided. These would be in accordance with the Council's planning policies. Garden buildings are also shown on the submitted plans, and no objection is raised to these structures.

Highways and Parking

- 6.14 The existing vehicle access from Keens Lane is very steep, and the proposals to provide an amended, more level access into the site should improve accessibility to the property. With regard to on-site parking, a garage is provided on site with two additional parking spaces, and a turning area which represents an improvement to the garaging and parking arrangement on the site.

Sustainability and waste management

- 6.15 A sustainability statement accompanies the application which confirms that high thermal value materials will be used in construction, energy efficient light fittings and white goods will be installed, an efficient gas boiler will be installed, rain water butts will be provided and permeable pavements provided.
- 6.16 With regard to waste management, there would appear to be space within the site for an area to be provided for the storage of waste and recycling bins.

Other Matters

- 6.17 Discussions have taken place between the planning officer and the agent and applicants. The planning officer has advised that in her view a chalet style property, with eaves at single storey and dormers in the roof, would be a more appropriate form of development on the site and fit in better with the surroundings. However, these discussions have not resulted in the submission of any further plans for consideration.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Whilst the principle of a replacement dwelling on the site is acceptable, the increased scale and unsatisfactory design would result in the erection of a new dwelling that would be out of keeping with and detract from the character and amenity of the locality.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Refuse planning permission

Having regard to the excessive scale, bulk and massing of the proposed replacement dwelling and to its inappropriate form and design, the proposals would result in development that would be out of keeping with the scale and form of adjoining development and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the locality, contrary to Policies G2, G6, D1 and H4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, to advice contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, in particular in section 5.

Author: Helen Moore
Contact No: 01491 823732
Email: planning@southandvale.gov.uk