
APPLICATION NO.	P11/E2006
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	9.12.2011
PARISH	WOODCOTE
WARD MEMBER	Mr Christopher Quinton
APPLICANT	High Barn Developments Ltd
SITE	Rose Cottage, Goring Road, Woodcote
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a pair of two-storey semi-detached four-bedroom dwellings and formation of access and parking.
AMENDMENTS	One – Design changed from two detached houses to a pair of semis
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee due to a conflict between officers' recommendation and the views of Sonning Common Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is shown at [Appendix 1](#). The site comprises a residential plot in the built up area of Woodcote, which is presently occupied by a late 1800s/early 1900s two storey dwelling with white painted render walls and hipped slate roof, located close to the front of the site. The dwelling has been previously extended in the form of flat roofed single storey additions to the rear and to the south side elevation, including a garage. The dwelling is bordered to the south by the Red Lion pub and to the north by Pear Trees, a late 1900s two storey detached dwelling. The site is in a prominent location opposite the village green, where the existing dwelling is noticeable in public views. This stretch of Goring Road is characterised by relatively spacious plots with significant gaps between buildings at first floor level. There are some significant trees located beyond the rear of the site, lending it a sylvan character appropriate to the heart of Woodcote, where it is washed over by the Chilterns AONB. To the rear of the site lies the recent Olga Mowforth development. There is a recently constructed detached two-storey dwelling located on a plot, which backs directly onto the site. The access to the garage is on the south side of the dwelling and there is evidence of a further drop kerb on the north side, which presently leads to a grassed area of the garden. The remainder of the boundary is dominated by a low mixed hedge. There are bus stops adjacent to and opposite the site. There is no footpath in front of the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and in its place the erection of a pair of two-storey four-bedroom semi-detached dwellings incorporating a shared access and parking area on the frontage. The dwellings would be eaves-fronted and a mirror image of each other in terms of scale and footprint, with gables projecting from the rear-facing slope of the main roof. They would measure 13.5 metres deep including the rear projections and would have a combined width of 16.5 metres. The main ridge height would be 8 metres high, the rear projections would be 7.4 metres high and the eaves height would be 4.7 metres. The front of the dwellings would be set back about 10.5 metres from the road, with the closure of existing access points and the formation of a single access point leading to shared a gravel parking and turning area.

- 2.2 The proposals show that an area of pavement in front of the Red Lion would be extended across the front of the site up to the proposed vehicular access. The facing materials would consist of red brickwork, with a tile or slate roof. Plot 2 on the south side would have a rear garden area of 195 square metres and Plot 1 would have a smaller rear garden of about 155 square metres.
- 2.3 The current plans of the proposed development can be found at **Appendix 2**. Other documents associated with the application can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Woodcote Parish Council** – The original and amended plans should be refused – the amended plans were considered unacceptable for the following reasons:

- Houses still too large and overbearing within the plot
- The position within the plot means the depth of the houses extends too far back therefore intruding on the garden of Pear Tree Cottage causing invasion of privacy to this property
- Because of size and depth and proximity to Pear Tree Cottage, the neighbouring occupiers will still lose sunlight and daylight
- Inadequate parking facility for two 4-bedroom semi-detached houses
- Access has been moved from existing position closer to the busy two bus stops in Woodcote, despite OCC Highways endorsing this new access it is felt that this will cause traffic problems and is dangerous
- Design now very utilitarian, does not consider aspects recommended in the Chiltern Design Guide
- Suggest two semi-detached houses with 3 or 2 bedrooms, no deeper than existing rear building line

OCC Highway Liaison Officer - No objection subject to conditions requiring closure of existing accesses, provision and retention of visibility splays and parking and turning area within the site. Footpath should also be transferred into OCC ownership through a separate voluntary arrangement.

Forestry Officer – Previous comments apply: Although the trees have not been surveyed in accordance with BS5837 (2005), the significant trees would not be affected, no objection subject to detailed tree protection condition.

Thames Water – Previous comments apply: Numerous comments about potential impact on their waste and water infrastructure, which could be covered through informatives.

Countryside Officer – No objection subject to standard bat informative.

Neighbours – Eight representations of objection received to the current plans, summarised as follows:

- Overdevelopment of a prominent site, suitable for one or a pair of smaller dwellings, more in keeping with the emerging village Neighbourhood Plan
- Highly visible and obtrusive to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage (and other neighbouring gardens), resulting in overshadowing, loss of daylight and sunlight, loss of privacy, feeling of being hemmed in and increase in noise
- Inadequate off-street parking and turning space to enter/exit site in forward gear in a location where there are already existing hazards: location of bus stops, dangerous bend, nearby cross roads, proximity of pub car park, no formal crossing point for school children, fatality previously.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/E1306](#) - Refused (06/10/2011)

Demolition of dwelling and erection of two 2-storey 4-bedroom dwellings and construction of shared vehicular access. The reasons for refusal of this proposal are as follows:

“1. The size, bulk and massing of the proposed dwellings, would lead to a cramped and overly suburban form of development, resulting in loss of important gaps between established buildings in a prominent location. As such, the development would detract from the sylvan character of the locality and the setting of this part of the village within the Chilterns AONB. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies G2, G6, C2, C4, D1 and H4 and advice contained within Sections 3 and 5 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 and PPS1 and PPS3.

2. The bulk and massing of the proposed dwelling to Plot 1 combined with its position to the rear of and proximity to the boundary with Pear Tree Cottage would result in loss of sunlight, daylight and outlook to the rear garden of this adjoining residential property and would detract from the living conditions of the occupiers. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies G2, D4 and H4 and advice contained within PPS1 and PPS3.”

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

C2 - Harm to the AONB

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements

C9 - Loss of landscape features

D1 - Principles of good design

D10 - Waste Management

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

D8 - Conservation and efficient use of energy

EP6 – Surface Water Protection

EP8 - Contaminated land

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

G5 - Best use of land/buildings in built up areas

G6 - Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 – Sections 3, 4 & 5

Chilterns Building Design Guide – Chapter 3

South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Character Area 10

Government Guidance: National Planning Policy Framework

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The proposed development would be located within the built-up area of the village of Woodcote, which is a settlement where residential development is considered to be acceptable in principle. Consequently the proposal falls to be assessed primarily against the criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011. 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;
- be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area

- through its size and appearance; and
- compromise the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and the development would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- Result in an unacceptable deficiency of off-street parking spaces for the resultant dwellings or other conditions prejudicial to highway safety;
- Provide sufficient sustainable and waste management measures; and
- Any other material planning considerations.

Loss of Open Space

- 6.2 Criterion (i) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt. There is no evidence of any ecological impact of the proposal. The site is visually prominent due to its location opposite the Village Green, which enables numerous public views of the site from the west, where the site is viewed against the backdrop of some significant trees beyond. Whilst there is already a dwelling on the site, there are significant gaps remaining to both boundaries, particularly at first floor level. The proposed development would retain sufficient separation to the boundaries to preserve these important views, in compliance with the above criterion.

Visual Impact

- 6.3 Criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 seek to ensure that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings and the character of the area is not adversely affected. Policy C2 seeks to ensure that proposals safeguard the landscape quality of AONBs. The current proposal would constitute a significant development of the site incorporating the introduction of an additional dwelling. It would involve an eaves-fronted development taking the form of a single building of similar ridge and eaves heights to the buildings on either side. The dwellings would span most of the width of the site, but their front elevations would be set back about 8 metres further into the site than the existing dwelling. The proposal would also retain significant gaps of 6 to 7 metres between the side gables of the proposed dwellings and the side gables of the Red Lion and Pear Tree Cottage. This would enable continued views through the site to the backdrop of mature trees from across the village green. The simple appearance of the front elevations of the dwellings and the use of a traditional brick finish would be in keeping with the surroundings. The ground floor bay windows and chimney stacks in the side elevations would add some detail to the design. The two storey projections would result in a traditional footprint for the dwellings and as these elements would be set down from the main roof slope and would not span the full width of the rear elevations, they would not be noticeable in the street scene.
- 6.4 Although there would be a large parking and turning area on the frontage, there would be sufficient space for retention of the existing hedge planting to the north of the proposed access and new hedge planting on the southern side of the proposed access, behind the extended section of pavement. There would also be scope for some tree and shrub planting on the frontage, which would also help to soften the visual impact of the development and could be secured through a planning condition. The protection of the mature trees and hedges towards the rear of the site could also be achieved through a planning condition. Although the loss of the existing dwelling, which has occupied the site for many decades would be regrettable, it is of no particular architectural merit and the development could not be resisted on that basis. The removal of the flat roofed structures would be an additional benefit of the application. As the development would be located within an established built-up area in the village, it would not have any discernible impact on the wider Chilterns AONB landscape. In the light of the above assessment, the proposed development would comply with the above policies and criterion.

Neighbour Impact

6.5 Policy D4 and Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. The two storey footprint of Plot 1 would project to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage and would be located due south of the boundary between the two dwellings. Although it would also project beyond the rear of the closest first floor bedroom, the position of Plot 1 would be located outside a 45-degree line taken from the centre point of the window. This indicates that the loss of daylight to this room would be unlikely to be significant. In addition the loss of sunlight to this room would be around the middle part of the day when a bedroom is less likely to be occupied and consequently this element of the impact would not be sufficient to resist the application. The second reason for refusal of the previous application P11/E1306 was due to the impact of the dwellings then proposed upon the rear garden of Pear Tree Cottage. It is acknowledged that the distance from the side wall of the rear projecting element to the boundary would remain at about 6.5 metres and the ridge height would be similar to the refused scheme. However, in comparison with the refused plans, the depth of the proposed two storey rear projection of Plot 1 beyond the end of the single storey rear addition to Pear Tree Cottage would be reduced to about 3 metres – a 2 metre reduction in roofing. In addition, the main part of the dwelling would be moved from a distance of 1 metre to 5 metres from the side boundary with this adjoining neighbour. As a result of this improved level of separation a more significant portion of the proposed dwelling would be screened from the closest part of the neighbours' garden by the established boundary hedge, which is shown to be retained. The combined impact of these changes to the proposed footprint would be to improve the levels of daylight, sunlight and outlook that would be received by the adjoining rear garden to a sufficient degree to result in an acceptable impact on the adjacent occupiers and overcome the previous reason for refusal on amenity grounds.

6.6 There would be no first floor windows proposed in the side elevations, which would serve habitable rooms, the washroom windows could be subject to an obscure glazing/ fixed shut condition. The rear windows of Plot 2 would face directly towards the rear windows of 36 Wood Green, a recently constructed dwelling to the rear at a distance of about 23 metres. Although this would be just under the recommended window to window standard, there is a reasonable amount of intervening foliage on the rear boundary, some of which is evergreen, which would provide some privacy screening. Also, Plot 2 would provide the majority of the garden space between the two dwellings, at about 16 metres and would be unlikely to result in excessive overlooking of the garden to the rear. The occupiers No.36 have not raised objection to the application. The occupiers of Pear Tree Cottage are also concerned about increased noise nuisance, however, officers do not see any reason to object to the application on these grounds as the relationship between the properties would be similar to many other residential situations. The relationship of the proposed dwellings to other nearby residential properties and between Plots 1 and 2 themselves would be acceptable. The proposed outdoor amenity space would also be adequate for dwellings of this size. On the basis of the above assessment, the proposed development would accord with the above policies and criterion.

6.7 Access and Parking

Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. Although many objections have been received from Woodcote Parish Council and local residents concerning highway safety, the Highway Liaison Officer considers that the proposed parking and access arrangements would be acceptable, subject to conditions to secure the closure of existing access points, establishment and retention of visibility splays and parking and turning areas.

- 6.8 It is also recommended that the strip of pavement to be formed within the site, which would be seen as a benefit of this proposal, along with the existing pavement adjacent to the pub is adopted as highway land through a separate voluntary agreement with Oxfordshire County Council. Consequently, although the concerns are recognised, the Council is unable to justify refusing planning permission on highway grounds. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the above criterion.

Sustainable & Waste Management Measures

- 6.9 Policy D8 of the adopted SOLP 2011 requires proposals to incorporate sustainability measures in terms of energy, water and materials efficient design. Section 3 of the SODG 2008 recommends that proposals involving two dwellings reach at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The sustainability section of the design and access statement submitted with the application outlines several measures to be incorporated, including materials, use of natural ventilation and daylight and heating and lighting services. A more detailed statement could be secured through a planning condition. The implementation of appropriate refuse and recycling collection facilities could also be secured via a planning condition in accordance with Policy D10.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.10 Some local residents have voiced opinions that the proposed dwellings should be smaller to reflect a housing need that has been identified in the emerging Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan. However, the development only proposes one additional dwelling, so SOLP 2011 Policy H7 concerning housing mix cannot be applied. The Neighbourhood Plan is at an early stage in its development and has yet to demonstrate conformity with the SOLP 2011/Core Strategy and therefore officers are unable to afford it any significant weight at this stage.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of nearby residents, would not result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety and would comply with sustainability objectives.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

1. **Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
2. **Planning condition listing the approved drawings**
3. **Levels (details required)**
4. **Schedule of materials required (all)**
5. **Obscure glazing restriction in specified windows**
6. **Withdrawal of Permitted Development rights**
7. **Sustainable Homes - Code Level 3**
8. **Refuse & Recycling Collection (Details required)**
9. **Close existing access**
10. **Vision splay dimensions**

- 11. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained**
- 12. Landscaping (access/hard standings/fencing/walls)**
- 13. Tree Protection (General)**
- 14. Contamination (investigation)**

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