

SUBJECT **COMMITTEE SITE VISIT REPORTS** **ITEM 7**
 18 JULY 2012
 Attendance – Verbally updated at Committee

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P11/S0098
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	11.04.2012
PARISH	GORING
WARD MEMBER(S)	Pearl Slatter Ann Ducker MBE
APPLICANT	SOHA Housing Ltd
SITE	Icknield Place Goring
PROPOSAL	Redevelopment of Sheltered Accommodation with Extra Care Apartments for older people and associated Communal Facilities. (Including change of use of public highway and adopted footpath to private land).
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	460579/181520
OFFICER	Mr M.Moore

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Goring Parish Council. In addition, given the amount of public representation, the Chairman agreed to hold a site visit for Members prior to the determination of the application.

1.2 The site, which extends to approximately 0.72 hectares, and is identified on the **attached** plan, lies between Elvendon Road and Springhill Road in Goring. On site at present, is a two-storey block of building comprising sheltered housing accommodation constructed in the mid 1960s. The principal block is 42 metres by 10 metres with a further single storey element some 10.5 metres square. Within the grounds are a further 6 bungalows. Sometime last year a block of 23 garages were demolished. In total there are 23 units of accommodation served by 11 parking spaces.

1.3 The area comprises an eclectic mixture of Victorian/Edwardian semi detached housing, inter war housing, some 1960s developments and a number of infill plots. The development in the area is generally two-storey although there are a number of bungalows as well. The site is bounded on the east by Middle Springs which comprises a development of generally 1960s bungalows. To the south and north are Elvendon Road and Springhill Road with the development of Icknield Road to the east. Vehicular access is taken from Icknield Road whilst there is a substantial pedestrian access from Elvendon Road via a tree lined walk.

1.4 The site itself is generally level although the land then slopes up to both Springhill Road and Elvendon Road. The site is therefore generally below the level of surrounding development.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of all current buildings on the site and the erection of a new extra care facility. Reduced copies of the plans are **attached** to this report. The proposal involves the construction of a mostly two and three storey building in the form an 'H' block. The central part of the 'H' is somewhat longer than the other elements. The maximum length of the block is 70 metres with the limbs being 34 and 37 metres long and the width generally 10 metres. The maximum height of the building will be 10.9 metres although mostly it is 10.3 metres in height. The building would be constructed in brick with render under a concrete tiled roof. In order to minimise the height of the roof a 'false' pitched roof has been used but the inner returns of the roof mean that a proper ridge tile will be used.

2.2 The accommodation will comprise 28 one bed and 12 two bed units giving a total of 40 units to be used for extra care accommodation. 'Extra care' housing provides older and disabled people with various care needs with an assured tenancy in a self contained flat within a purpose built building.

2.3 Access would be taken from Icknield Road using the existing road serving a parking area with 22 spaces. Four existing bungalows currently owned by the applicant will remain at the entrance.

2.4 The application was accompanied by a design and access statement, tree reports, a habitat and bat survey, a statement of community involvement, a transport statement and a travel plan. All these documents are available for inspection on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Goring Parish Council - Object. Comment that the development is too large for the site, three storeys is unneighbourly, consider that the design, height and scale are out of keeping with the surrounding area, concerns expressed about access for emergency vehicles, there is lack of parking and that the sustainability statement submitted with the application is not a 'final' method of construction.
- SODC (Building Control) - Some concerns over access for fire services. However, they further advise that these concerns can be overcome through the imposition of suitable conditions which will relate to sprinkler systems and other detailed arrangements for fire prevention.
- SODC (Countryside Officer) - No objection. Recommends condition regarding the implementation of the recommendations contained within the submitted habitat survey.

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| SODC (Forestry) | - | One tree will create dense shading but development can be constructed without compromising root protection areas. |
| SODC (Housing) | - | Support the proposals. It will assist as part of a countywide strategy to provide a range of housing more suited to the elderly. |
| OCC (Countryside Services) | - | No objection. |
| OCC (Highways) | - | At the time of drafting this report, no formal comments have been received although I have discussed the application at some length with the relevant officer. In respect of the previous, similar proposal on the site (see history) no objection was raised. He advised that his comments on the present scheme are likely to be similar in content and I will report further at the meeting. |
| OCC (Extra Care Housing Officer) | - | No objection. A copy of the representation is <u>attached</u> to this report. |
| Thames Valley Police | - | No objection although would like the conservatory to have further doors to the main building. |
| Chilterns Conservation Board | - | Objection. They consider the development amounts to an overdevelopment of the site, does not enhance or conserve the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it is a contrived roof form. |
| Goring & Streatley Amenity Association | - | Objection. They consider that it is an overdevelopment of the site, it is unneighbourly, it is detrimental to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and has inadequate parking particularly as the development is close to the fire station and that parking on the adjoining road network could lead to difficulties of access for emergency vehicles. |
| Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley (MIGGS) | | They express concerns about means of escape and off site tactile dropped kerbs. |

- Neighbours (180) - Objection. Of these, 87 are on a pro forma letter of objection which suggests that it is an overdevelopment in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, they consider that it is an urban design for a village location, that the development is too high, it is not well located as too far from existing facilities and is 30% bigger than any other building in Goring. Of the neighbours who wrote in individually, their concerns are mainly the scale relative to the surroundings (several comment that it is 30% bigger than any other building in Goring). Concerns over traffic, inadequate parking for the size of development, emergency access will prove difficult, noise both during construction and afterwards, poor design, facilities are too far away (they comment that it is at least 15 minute walk to the station not a 5 minute walk as set out in the agent's statement), the doctors surgery is already stretched, concerns about the capacity of the school, loss of privacy by overlooking, light pollution, loss of trees, would lead to an imbalance in the make up of the community, the site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and this development does not preserve or enhance, impact on wildlife, that previously built extensions to surrounding properties are not shown, that this development is not for Goring residents, that the development is considered to be contrary to emerging core strategy policies on landscape and design and South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy H4, the existing is a perfectly sound building, it is a 52 bed scheme not 40 bed, the development potentially blocks a rear access, and many consider that the submitted documents are inadequate. One objector has produced a range of plans indicating the overshadowing the development would create throughout the year and another has produced diagrams indicating the impact of the development from his property.
- Neighbours (5) - Support. They consider that the latest scheme has improved on a previously withdrawn scheme and has changed their objection to support, and the scheme is better for older residents.
- Neighbours (3) - Comments. They express general support but have concerns over traffic.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The planning history shows that planning permission was granted in the mid 1960s for the development which this application seeks to replace.
- 4.2 An application for a similar development submitted last year with a three storey flat roofed building was withdrawn.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies:

- G1 – Restraint of development
- G2 – Protect district from adverse development
- G3 – Development well served by facilities and transport
- G5 – Best use of land
- C2 – Protection of AONB
- C4 – Landscape setting of settlements
- C9 – Loss of landscape features
- EP1 – Adverse affect on people and the environment
- EP2 – Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP3 – Adverse affect by external lighting
- EP5 – Area at risk from flooding
- EP6 – Sustainable drainage
- EP7 – Impact on the ground water resources
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- D1 – Principles of good design
- D2 – Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 – Outdoor amenity area
- D6 – Community safety
- D8 – Conservation and efficient use of energy
- D10 – Waste management
- D11 – Infrastructure and services secured
- H4 – Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside green belt
- H7 – Mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet district need
- H8 – Density of housing development in and outside town centres
- H9 – Provision of affordable housing
- T1 – Safe convenient adequate highway network for all users
- T2 – Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

The National Planning Policy Framework

Emerging Core Strategy, particularly Policy CSH4

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 I consider that the planning consideration are:

- i) Principle of development
- ii) Whether the form and density of development is acceptable
- iii) Impact on Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- iv) Highway and pedestrian safety
- v) Adequacy of parking
- vi) Direct impact on amenities of occupants of nearby properties
- vii) Any special circumstances
- viii) Affordable housing
- ix) Any other issues

- i) Principle of development
- 6.2 The site is wholly contained within the well defined confines of built development at Goring and comprises previously developed land. I consider that there is no objection to the principle of replacing the existing sheltered accommodation with new residential accommodation.
- ii) Whether the form and density of development is acceptable
- 6.3 The site is surrounded by a mixture of different types and styles of residential development. The main features are that it is generally two storey development in the form of detached, semi detached and a few terraced properties. However, the site does not lie on a through route but is rather in a location behind existing surrounding development. There is at present on site a substantial two storey block with a full pitched roof which is much larger than existing surrounding development. However, given its backland location lying slightly below existing surrounding development, other than from surrounding properties, only glimpses are caught of the building and its site from public view points. There have been many iterations of the development as the architect has attempted to balance the competing demands of appropriate design with the impact on neighbours. The development has an overall footprint of approximately 1594 sq m but the extent of development has been broken up by its form and a number of features on the elevations. A substantial part of the development is two storeys and there are a variety of dormered features and varying heights sufficient to give visual interest to the building. Although not of a ground breaking or innovative design, I consider that it does represent a design suitable for the area given its location.

The applicant has produced a comparative plan showing the footprint of the existing development (including the now demolished garages) and the proposals and is **attached** to this report.

- iii) Impact on Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 6.4 The site lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In this case, the site is clearly in an urban situation being completely surrounded by existing development. This proposal would not therefore intrude into open countryside. It is previously developed land and the footprint of all existing buildings and hardstandings on the site (including the now demolished garages) is approximately the same as the currently proposed development. The NPPF places great priority on the protection of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and considers that major developments in such areas should be refused. However, it also emphasises that the document should be looked at as a whole. The document suggests that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that decisions should meet objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing. In this case, the provision of extra care housing allows a concentration of resources in a manner which secures better schemes and, as set out by the OCC (Extra Care Manager) is an area where there is currently an identified shortfall. It lies within the well defined confines of existing development, and although it is recognised that services are some distance away, they remain within the village. Consequently, I consider that the impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is insufficient to justify fully a refusal of planning permission.
- iv) Highway and pedestrian safety
- 6.5 The existing junction of Icknield Place with Icknield Road has adequate vision splays. Given that the development will be for extra care housing, I consider that the increased use of the junction is unlikely to give rise to any highway issues. In terms of pedestrians, the existing pedestrian access onto Elvendon Road provides a very safe and attractive entrance to the site. Off-site the MIGGS concerns could be met through appropriate dialogue with the applicant. In view of the limited increase in numbers, I do

not consider that the use of tactile dropped kerbs on Elvendon Road can be secured by this development although I anticipate the applicant would respond positively to any suggestions.

v) Adequacy of parking

- 6.6 Extra care housing is a relatively new concept for providing for the needs of active elderly. The only purpose made unit in South Oxfordshire is the recently completed scheme at Thame which is for a similar sized development. That has 17 parking spaces on a site of 0.43 hectares. Despite this lesser number of parking spaces, I am unaware there being any parking difficulties on the surrounding streets. The occupiers of extra care housing tend to not have cars. OCC (Highways) have confirmed no objection to the development.

vi) Direct impact on amenities of occupants of nearby properties

- 6.7 In terms of direct overlooking, the development complies with the normal standards between overlooking windows required by the Council's Design Guide. To the residents' properties in Middle Springs, the impact, if anything is a considerable improvement on the existing situation. At present they have the full extent of the existing building along the whole of their back gardens. The current proposal will be a minimum of 19 metres away from rear windows with the main bulk of the development a further 10 metres away. There are a number of secondary windows on that elevation which will be proposed to be obscure glazed. From properties in Springfield Road the minimum distance between the rear walls of the properties and the development is 25 metres. However this distance is to the two storey elements of the development and Springhill Road does sit higher than the application site. The principal three storey element is some 35 metres away from the rear walls. To Elvendon Road the nearest part of any building is 34 metres away from the rear walls and generally is greater. Again, Elvendon Road sits slightly higher than the application site. A number of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order will be retained which assist in breaking up the bulk of the development. In addition, planting is proposed which will further assist. Members will have had the opportunity to consider the direct impact on neighbours during their site visit. Taken overall, I do not consider that the development is unneighbourly in a manner sufficient to justify a refusal of planning permission.

vii) Special circumstances

- 6.8 The Oxfordshire County Council Extra Care Programme Manager has confirmed that there is already a demand for 38 extra care housing flats in Goring alone. These figures will only rise as the population ages. At present, the only specific extra care flats in South Oxfordshire are those in Thame which I have previously referred to. Policy CSH4 of the draft Core Strategy recognises the information obtained from the housing needs assessment and gives the Council's preference for meeting the needs of the elderly, which is for extra care housing to meet the current and forthcoming needs for specialist accommodation for older people. In this case, the applicant is a registered social landlord and all the units will be affordable. Although this should not be taken to override other legitimate planning considerations, I consider that the fact that this will make a significant contribution towards specialist accommodation for older people is a material planning consideration.

viii) Affordable housing

The applicant is a registered social landlord who has confirmed that 30 of the units will be social rented and 10 units will be intermediate housing. This would mean that all the units would fall within the definition of 'affordable housing' as required by policy H9 of the adopted SOLP. However, the site could be sold on and I consider that it is necessary to secure at least 40% of the units as affordable in the long term and therefore a section 106 agreement is considered to be necessary to achieve this policy

objective.

ix) Any other considerations

- 6.9 To be acceptable, I consider controls will be required over waste collection, impact of lighting, controls over the construction phase, protection of trees which are presently on site and protected by a tree preservation order and the provision of obscure glazing in appropriate locations. In addition, the development should be built to an appropriate standard to achieve Code Level 3 in the Code for sustainable homes. All of these issues can be covered through the imposition of appropriate conditions.

In addition, my conclusions on the merits of this application have had regard to the nature of the development and the accommodation provided. A condition to control the use is essential to ensure that the building is not used for general purpose housing which could cause parking difficulties and would need to be assessed on its own merits.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The site lies within the well defined confines of the built up part of Goring-on-Thames and there is no objection to the principle of development. The density and design is considered to be appropriate for the area in view of the circumstances of the site and the scheme would provide much needed accommodation for older and disabled people in a sustainable location. The development therefore generally accords with the relevant Development Plan policies and the emerging Core Strategy.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission is delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control subject to the prior completion of an appropriate legal agreement to provide that 40% of the units will be affordable and the following conditions:**

1. **Commencing date 3 years**
2. **Compliance general**
3. **Samples of materials**
4. **Landscaping scheme**
5. **Tree protection**
6. **Scheme for waste collection**
7. **Surface water drainage scheme (to include measures for the road and parking areas.**
8. **Foul drainage scheme**
9. **Lighting scheme**
10. **Controls over timing of demolition and construction**
11. **Provision of parking areas prior to first use**
12. **That the development will be used for extra care accommodation as specified in the application**
13. **Bat mitigation measures**
14. **Obscure glaze specified windows as shown on approved drawings.**
15. **Build to code level 3 and submit post construction certificate.**

The decision notice would also include a number of informatives including one to cover the adoption of the drainage system and the requirement for a Section 278 notice for the proposed alteration to the status and layout of the highway.

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