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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	P08/E1270
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	Full
<b>REGISTERED</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2008
<b>PARISH</b>	Harpsden
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Mr Malcolm Leonard Mr Robert Peasgood
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr A J Wrigley
<b>SITE</b>	Perseverance Farm, Harpsden
<b>PROPOSALS</b>	Demolition of existing dwelling and farm buildings and erection of replacement dwelling.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	474607/180161
<b>OFFICER</b>	Tom Wyatt

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**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) comprises a farm complex extending to approximately 2 hectares. There are several agricultural barns on the site used until recently for the purposes of an intensive beef cattle rearing enterprise. A bungalow also exists on the site, which was originally granted planning permission in 1988 subject to an agricultural occupancy condition. However, this condition was effectively removed as a result of a permission granted in November 2007.
- 1.3 The buildings within the site are clustered towards its eastern end, with the western half of the site comprising open grassland. Access to the site is via an unmade private drive to the east. The site is within a relatively isolated location within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.4 Whilst the vast majority of the buildings on the site were used in connection with the cattle enterprise, a large building towards the eastern edge of the site is in use for vehicle storage by a car repair business based in Binfield Heath. The planning permission for the storage of the vehicles is personal to this particular business.

**2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for the construction of a replacement dwelling at the site. All of the existing buildings within the site would be demolished to facilitate the development and to allow for an appropriate landscape setting for the new dwelling. The proposed dwelling would be sited in a similar position to the existing bungalow but would be two storey and would be of a substantial size measuring approximately 18 metres deep, 24 metres wide and 8.5 metres high (although it should be noted that these are maximum measurements for the dimensions). The external facing materials for the dwelling would comprise a solid oak frame with red brick, clay peg tiles, and oak windows and doors. The existing drive would be reused and along with the parking/turning area it would be surfaced with pea shingle/gravel.
- 2.2 A copy of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** as Appendix B.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Harpden Parish Council** – The application should be refused: ‘too suburban a design for this prominent and sensitive position in the Chilterns AONB and too tall a building to be effectively screened by trees in less than 10-20 years’.

3.2 **OCC Highway Liaison Officer** – No objections

3.3 **Environmental Health Officer** – Conditions to investigate for, and if necessary, remediate any contamination on the site are suggested.

3.4 **Forestry Officer** – No objections subject to landscaping condition.

3.5 **Countryside Officer** – The existing buildings have limited potential for use by protected species and there is not a reasonable likelihood of bats being present. There are no objections subject to a condition requiring provision for artificial nesting boxes for swifts.

3.6 **Neighbours** – One letter of support received.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P07/E0769/LD - Retention of dwelling without agricultural occupancy condition. Certificate of Lawful Use or Development granted on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

4.2 P06/E1296 - Raising of existing bungalow roof to create first floor accommodation. Addition of Dormer windows. Planning Permission granted on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

4.3 P05/E0685/R - Renewal of application P02/S0253/RET - Change of use from agricultural barns to storage of motor vehicles. Planning Permission granted on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

4.4 P87/S0894 - Single storey two bedroom house as agricultural dwelling. Planning Permission on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1988.

5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:

-G1, G2, G3, G5, T1, T2, T8, EN1, EN2, H1, H3

5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):

-G1, G2, G6, C1, C2, C5, C8, C9, EP8, D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D8, D10, D11, H6, H12, E6, T1, T2

5.3 Government Guidance:

-PPS1, PPS3, PPS7, PPS23

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

-South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)  
-South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA)  
-Chilterns Building 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. Sustainability
5. Highway considerations
6. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

6.2 The site lies outside of any defined settlement, and as such is within an area of countryside where there is a general presumption against new residential development having regard to Policy H6 of the SOLP. However, in such countryside locations the principle of replacing an existing dwelling with a new dwelling is broadly acceptable having regard to Policy H12 of the SOLP. Policy H12 comprises several criteria, including that the replacement dwelling is not materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling, and that the overall impact would not be any greater than the existing dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. A further requirement is the need for the siting, design and materials to be in keeping with the locality.

6.3 The issues of design and impact on the site and surrounding area are dealt with in the relevant sections below. In the first instance the main issue governing the principle of replacement dwellings relates to the size of the replacement dwelling over the existing. The supporting text of Policy H12 of the SOLP defines the term ‘not materially greater’ in relation to the replacement dwelling as not being more than 10% larger in volume than the existing dwelling plus any unused ‘permitted development’ rights. In this case, the existing dwelling, including the extant planning permission for extensions granted in March 2007 under application P06/E1296, has a volume of approximately 864m<sup>3</sup>. The applicant has also sought to include a detached building used for car parking adjacent to the dwelling in the volume calculations. However, the supporting text of Policy H12 is clear in stating that the volume calculation should exclude unattached outbuildings. However, the proposed dwelling includes an integral double garage and the garage outbuilding can be used to offset the volume of this part of the dwelling.

6.4 The volume of the replacement dwelling is approximately 1758m<sup>3</sup>, which represents an increase of approximately 103% over the volume of the existing dwelling. Evidently this increase is substantially greater than that usually permitted against Policy H12, and there is direct conflict with Criterion (iii) of the Policy. However, the proposal includes the demolition of agricultural buildings on the site with an estimated volume of over 6000m<sup>3</sup>, and the benefits arising from this and the cessation of a car storage use in one of the buildings needs to be weighed against the significant increase in volume proposed in relation to the replacement dwelling.

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

6.5 The site lies in an area of countryside within the Chilterns AONB. Within such areas there is duty to conserve, and, where possible, enhance the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the area. The application site is visually prominent in views from the adjacent highway to the east, however, there are no nearby public rights of way

passing close to the site, and views from Perseverance Hill, a highway to the north, are blocked by the adjacent topography. Therefore, public views towards the site are generally limited to the stretch of road approximately 250 metres long to the east of the site.

- 6.6 From the highway the existing bungalow and farm buildings are clearly visible across an area of open grassland, and the built form within the site dominates the immediate landscape. Whilst Officers acknowledge that agricultural buildings are part of the rural landscape, the existing buildings are entirely functional in design and have little architectural merit. Whilst the existing buildings do not harm the character and appearance of this part of the countryside their removal and the opportunity to replace them with open grassed areas and new soft landscaping will enhance the character and appearance of the site and natural beauty and special landscape qualities of this part of the AONB.
- 6.7 The proposed dwelling would clearly be much more visually prominent than the existing bungalow, and therefore, the site would take on a much more domestic appearance than the agricultural appearance of the site as existing. Such an increase in size and prominence would, without the loss of the agricultural buildings, form a strong reason to object to the proposal. However, given the substantial benefits from the removal of the agricultural buildings and associated hardstandings, the increased size of the dwelling can be justified on the basis of a significant overall reduction in the amount of built form on the site and a significant net reduction in the visual impact and intrusion of the built form on the surrounding area. The removal of the agricultural buildings and hardstandings would allow for considerable soft planting that would help to soften the proposed development and assimilate it with the surrounding countryside.
- 6.8 Whilst the area surrounding the site is dominated by open countryside, there are numerous examples of residential development in the immediate locality. Indeed, the area is typified by sporadic residential development interspersed with areas of woodland and agricultural and equestrian uses. Many of the dwellings in the area are substantial in size, such as Bellehatch Park, which is located a short distance to the south east of the site. As such, the proposal for a large two storey dwelling on the site would not be at odds with the landscape character of the surrounding area, and the scale of surrounding development.
- 6.9 The proposed dwelling is of a traditional appearance with twin front facing gables, and traditional detailing in terms of individual elements such as chimneys, windows, and porch. The external facing materials consists of oak framing, red brickwork and clay tiles. Although of an individual design, the dwelling, through its traditional form and use of materials, would respect the local vernacular.
- 6.10 A further benefit of this proposal is that it would involve the cessation of a car storage use associated with a commercial garage. This use takes place in a former agricultural building at the eastern end of the site. This use has little visual impact on the surrounding area but could have a significant impact in terms of traffic on the local highway network, which consists of narrow rural lanes, and in terms of noise and general disturbance. The site is not in a sustainable location for such a commercial use and the cessation of this use would be a substantial benefit in terms of reducing traffic movements.
- 6.11 In terms of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, the site is within an area described as 'semi-enclosed dipslope' which is typically level or gently sloping ground with comparatively open fields, contained within a strong structure of woods and hedgerows. These areas also have a distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular

field boundaries and scattered rural settlements. The strategy for this landscape is one of conservation. Having regard to the landscape character of the area, the proposed development would be in keeping with, and even enhance the landscape character of the site and its surroundings.

#### The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.12 The proposed dwelling would be over 30 metres from the boundary of the application site area and would be a much greater distance than this away from the nearest neighbouring residential property. Due to these distances the proposal will have no detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.13 Having regard to the agricultural and commercial storage use of the site as existing, the proposal would considerably reduce the amount of traffic to and from the site and a single residential use is also likely to significantly reduce the general noise and disturbance associated with activities on the site, to the benefit of the neighbouring occupiers and also the tranquillity of the AONB.

#### Sustainability Issues

- 6.14 The loss of the commercial storage use would be a significant gain in sustainability terms in relation to removing a potentially intensive storage use from this unsustainable location.
- 6.15 The applicant intends to ensure that the dwelling would achieve Code Level 2 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. To help meet this the following measures will be taken:
- Most of the concrete on the site will be reused
  - AAA rated energy appliances will be used
  - Energy efficient lighting will be used
  - The heating system will be in the form of a ground source heat pump which will also provide summer cooling
- 6.16 In light of the above, the proposal complies with Policy D8 of the SOLP.

#### Highway Considerations

- 6.17 The proposal will reuse the existing access drive. There is sufficient space for parking and turning for vehicles associated with the proposed dwelling. In terms of traffic generation the proposed dwelling will result in a significant reduction in vehicle movements compared to the existing agricultural and commercial storage use of the land. No objections have been received from the Highway Authority.

#### Other Material Considerations

- 6.18 The proposal will not affect any existing vegetation of any significance and will facilitate a substantial amount of additional planting through the demolition of the existing buildings.
- 6.19 Due to its previous use, the site has the potential to be contaminated. An initial assessment submitted with the application indicates that any contamination of the site is not significant, however, conditions should be attached to any permission to allow for this issue to be assessed further.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, or the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the Chilterns AONB, and would not be detrimental to 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. **Demolition of all existing buildings prior to occupation**
3. **Samples of materials to be approved**
4. **Details of hardsurfacing to be approved**
5. **Details of external lighting to be approved**
6. **Details of fencing/means of enclosure to be approved**
7. **Floor levels to be approved**
8. **Soft landscaping to be approved**
9. **Details of provision for nesting birds to be approved**
10. **Sustainability measures to be implemented**
11. **Contaminated land assessment to be approved**
12. **Contaminated land remediation to be approved if necessary during development**
13. **Permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings restricted**

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