

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee

held on Wednesday, 11 December
2024 at 6.00 pm in Meeting Room 1,
Abbey House, Abbey Close,
Abingdon, OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: David Bretherton (Chair), Peter Dragonetti (Vice-Chair), Ali Gordon-Creed, Katharine Keats-Rohan, Axel Macdonald, Jo Robb and Ed Sadler

Officers: Emily Hamerton (Development Manager), Sharon Crawford (Team Leader Applications West), Will Darlison (Planning Officer), Victoria Clarke (Planning and Development Officer), Paul Lucas (Senior Planning Officer), Becky Binstead (Democratic Services Team Leader), Luci Ashbourne (Democratic Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Councillors: Stefan Gawrysiak
Officers: Bertram Smith (Broadcasting Officer)

67 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

68 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Ken Arlett and Tim Bearder.

69 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes for the meeting on 11 November 2024 were not yet available.

RESOLVED: that the minutes from the previous meeting on 11 November 2024 be taken to the next meeting on 29 January 2025.

70 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

71 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

72 Public participation

The list showing members of the public who had registered to speak was tabled at the meeting.

73 P23/S4036/FUL - The Mount, Rotherfield Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1NR

The committee considered planning application P23/S4036/FUL:

Demolition of existing house and associated outbuildings and structures and redevelopment to provide two dwellings with associated access, hard and soft landscaping and other infrastructure (DLL certificate received 1 February 2024 and Plot 2 repositioned and redesigned, waste storage point added, updated landscape assessment and additional heritage assessment as shown on amended documents received 19 July 2024 and amended site plan to show Plot 1 bin presentation received 20th August 2024 and revised biodiversity metric received 8th October 2024).

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history, were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer present the report to members. This application sought full planning permission for the demolition of one dwelling and the erection of two dwellings.

This application followed a previous refusal of planning permission for the demolition of one dwelling and the erection of three dwellings on the site in 2023. It was a material planning consideration that this previous application was not refused due to a conflict with the council's housing distribution strategy.

Officers considered that the proposed residential development would constitute development within the built-up area of Henley and was therefore supported by Local Plan Policy H1 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy H4, as discussed in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.5 of the report.

As outlined in paragraphs 7.8 to 7.14 of the report, the council's landscape officer considered that the current proposal had addressed the first reason for refusal of the previous application, such that it would conserve and enhance the setting of the nearby Chilterns National Landscape (CNL). This was based on the use of appropriate materials and planning conditions to secure a revised landscaping scheme and its

long-term maintenance and low reflectivity glazing. The introduction and maintenance of significant tree planting would further the conservation and enhancement of the setting of the CNL over time. The council's tree officer had no objection to the proposed tree protection measures.

The council's conservation officer had raised no heritage objections to the loss of the existing building and no harm to the setting of the nearby listed building, as set out in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 of the report. Officers considered that the design of the dwellings and garages would be appropriate to the character of Rotherfield Road.

Officers considered that the inter-relationship between the proposed dwellings and their closest neighbours would be acceptable in respect of light, outlook, and privacy, due to the level of separation and the current and proposed vegetated boundary conditions, and subject to planning conditions to secure privacy screens for balconies and obscure glazing for upper floor side-facing windows, as covered in paragraphs 7.18 to 7.20 of the report. The proposed outdoor amenity space would accord with the design guide recommended standards for dwellings of this size.

In the opinion of the Local Highway Authority, the proposed access and parking arrangements would not give rise to conditions prejudicial to highway and pedestrian safety in compliance with Local Plan Policy TRANS5, as outlined in paragraph 7.22 of the report.

Officers considered that the requirements of Local Plan Policy ENV2 and ENV3 in relation to biodiversity and protected species would be met by the proposal, subject to the imposition of various planning conditions, thereby addressing the second and third reasons for refusal of the previous application, as set out in paragraphs 7.23 to 7.24 of the report.

Matters relating to external lighting, drainage, and carbon reduction could be dealt with through the recommended conditions, to the satisfaction of the relevant specialist officers.

Officers considered that the application would comply with the relevant development plan policies and on that basis, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions in the report.

Councillor Tom Buckley spoke on behalf of Henley on Thames Town Council objecting to the application.

Adam Warby spoke objecting to the application.

Henry Venners, the agent representing the application, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak, a local ward Councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The Chair noted that the Councillor for Harpsden had sent in a written objection to the application.

The discussion began with a focus on tree protection and landscaping. A member enquired if the trees on site would remain. The officer responded that some trees have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and must be retained. If the application is agreed upon, the site would have a revised scheme for planting throughout, with the landscape officer recommending more planting at higher levels to provide better screening impact.

Questions were raised about the planning history of the neighbouring property. The officer confirmed that the Council initially refused the application, but it was granted permission on appeal. During a site visit, the committee discussed long-term landscape conditional planning, with the officer noting a minimum period of 20 years. Concerns were raised about whether the trees could be removed after this period, but the officer assured the committee that this timescale would allow the trees to fully develop and they would likely have TPOs by then.

The committee debated whether this was backland development and if it was now allowed. The officer explained that policy H1 of the local plan states that residential developments on this site should be within the built-up area. While backland development can be acceptable in certain situations, this development aligns with the council's policies.

Biodiversity was another topic of concern. The officer mentioned that previous concerns, including the population of great crested newts, had been mitigated, and the general biodiversity now complies with policy. It was noted that planning applications cannot be rejected based on setting a precedent.

Members questioned the numerous conditions attached to the application, suggesting concerns about the impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The officer explained that adding conditions ensures the development is acceptable. It was noted that the landscape officer had concerns about the visual impact, but the officer assessed that this site has a lesser impact than the neighbouring site, with more scope for planting.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application fell on being put to the vote.

The committee expressed concerns about the impact on the views and setting of the Chilterns national landscape, the urbanising appearance, and the encroachment into the national landscape. The planning officer noted that the bulk, scale, and massing were contrary to policy ENV1.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P23/S4036/FUL for the following reasons:

Due to its bulk, scale, siting and massing, this development would have an urbanising effect on the landscape setting of the Chilterns National Landscape and would fail to conserve and enhance its landscape and scenic beauty. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, Policy SD3 of the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, and advice contained within paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

74 P24/S3030/FUL - Roundwood, 20 Walton Avenue, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1LA

The committee considered planning application P24/S3030/FUL:

Demolition of existing residential property and construction of single self-build dwelling.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history, were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer presented the report. The site was located in a built-up residential area of Henley and fronted onto Walton Avenue; a private road lined by trees protected by a tree preservation order.

The site did not fall within any special areas of designation, but the rear boundary adjoined St Mark's Road Conservation Area and a grade II listed church lay opposite the site.

The application proposed the demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and their replacement with a three-storey dwelling with a basement.

The proposed dwelling would be large, but its design, with distinct elements such as the smaller front and rear gable features, broke up the appearance of the mass, and officers considered it would not appear bulky.

The main part of the dwelling was sited so that it more closely reflected the building lines of adjacent neighbouring properties compared to the existing dwelling, which extended at great depth into the site.

The proposed dwelling would sit comfortably within the street. Its height would respect the stagger in property heights along the road, and gaps would be retained to the side boundaries and to neighbouring built form.

Officers considered the design and scale of the proposed dwelling would be proportionate to the plot. It would be in keeping with the character of the street, where there was great variety in the scale, design, and materials of properties, and it would not harm the setting of the conservation area or the listed church.

The proposed dwelling would have the greatest impact on the neighbour to the north-east, but officers did not consider this impact would be harmful. The proposal would result in built form closer to the boundary with an increased eaves height. The neighbouring bedroom window facing the proposed dwelling would be most affected,

but the bedroom was served by a secondary window on the rear of the neighbouring property. The proposal would not, therefore, result in a harmful loss of light to the room, and the side wall of the proposed dwelling would be sited sufficiently far from the window so that it would not be overbearing or result in a loss of outlook.

Proposed windows had been carefully placed and positioned to avoid overlooking.

In summary, the proposal complied with the relevant development plan policies, and officers therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Councillor Tom Buckley spoke on behalf of Henley on Thames Town Council in objection to the application.

Alice Bromley, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Simon Mack, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Members praised the thoughtful and sensible approach of the proposal, noting that the build form had been reduced in terms of impact and that issues with the neighbours had been addressed. Members added that the variety of designs on the road meant that the proposed design was appropriate.

Members thanked the applicants for their presentation, noting that the concerns about shading had been addressed.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P24/S3030/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within three years
2. Development in accordance with the approved plans
3. Sample or schedule of materials to be agreed
4. Parking & manoeuvring areas to be provided and retained
5. Tree protection (implementation as approved)
6. Location of subterranean drainage and services to be agreed
7. Surface water drainage scheme required
8. Bird and bat boxes and planting to encourage wildlife
9. No external lighting unless wildlife sensitive scheme agreed
10. Energy Statement Verification

Note: a comfort break was taken at 19.18. The meeting resumed at 19.23.

75 P24/S1879/FUL - Littlewick House, Mill Lane, Chinnor, OX39 4RF

The committee considered planning application- P24/S1879/FUL:

Erection of 2 new build 1.5 height eaves detached dwellings with associated parking and access (layout and design revised and daylight/sunlight assessment as shown on amended and additional documents received 4th September 2024 and width of access reduced as shown on amended plan received 20th September 2024).

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history, were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

This application sought full planning permission for the erection of two dwellings.

The planning officer highlight that the application followed a previous refusal of outline planning permission for the erection of three houses on the site in 2022. It was a material planning consideration that this previous application was not refused due to a conflict with the council's housing distribution strategy.

Officers considered that the proposed residential development would constitute development within the built-up area of Chinnor by Local Plan Policy H1 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy CH H7, as discussed in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.5 of the report.

As outlined in paragraphs 7.6 to 7.9 of the report, officers considered that the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the adjacent recreation area and existing residential area would be acceptable.

Officers noted that the proposed dwellings would achieve the recommended horizontal separation distances and a 25-degree line of sight from the centre of the closest ground floor rear windows, as set out in the Joint Design Guide. On this basis, officers considered that the inter-relationship between the proposed dwellings and their closest neighbours would be acceptable in respect of light, outlook, and privacy, as covered in paragraphs 7.10 to 7.12 of the report. The proposed outdoor amenity space would accord with the design guide recommended standards for dwellings of this size.

The Local Highway Authority was consulted on the current site plan and was also asked to comment on third-party concerns relating to fire engine access. Their response dated 26th September 2024 was omitted from the council's website in error but has now been uploaded.

In the opinion of the Local Highway Authority, the retained fence line would not obstruct the required 2 metre x 2 metre pedestrian vision splay and the width of the entrance is 4.4 metres. The dotted gates shown on the plans are the existing ones to be removed. The access point would be suitable for fire appliance access and the current proposed access and parking arrangements would not give rise to conditions prejudicial to highway and pedestrian safety in compliance with Local Plan Policy TRANS5, as outlined in paragraphs 7.14 and 7.16 of the report.

Officers considered that the requirements of mandatory BNG and Local Plan Policy ENV2 would be met by the proposal, subject to the standard BNG condition, on-site biodiversity enhancements, and control over external lighting, as set out in paragraph 7.18 of the report.

Officers considered the provision of two, three-bedroom dwellings would contribute towards the identified district-wide need, in general conformity with Local Plan Policy H11, as discussed in paragraph 7.19 of the report.

Matters relating to drainage, tree, and hedge protection, landscaping, and carbon reduction could be dealt with through the recommended conditions, to the satisfaction of the relevant specialist officers.

Officers considered that the application would comply with the relevant development plan policies and on that basis, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

Cllr Maggie Mackenzie spoke on behalf of Chinnor Parish Council objecting to the application.

Mrs S Hull spoke objecting to the application.

Nathanael Hill, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Ed Sadler, a local ward councillor spoke on the application.

Members began by discussing why this application differed from the previously refused application. The officer explained that this application was for two dwellings, whereas the last one was for three. The main concern previously was the lack of provision for turning within the site, which had been addressed in the current application. The new layout provided space and adequate visibility, and the elevations and clear height were now included, which were missing last time. The two detached properties were designed as chalet bungalows, stepping down in height to reduce visual impact.

Members questioned which local plan took priority, Chinnor Town Council or South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). The officer clarified that the plans sit alongside each other and do not conflict. Concerns were raised about the development creating more build outside the current site and its speculative nature. The officer explained that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) would be supported when consistent with development policies, and this application met the policy requirements as it was within the settlement boundary.

The committee discussed whether this was backland development. The officer stated that the recreation area is part of the settlement and, although unusual, this is not backland development. The main issues from the last application—highway safety, visual impact, and proximity to neighbours—had been addressed in the current application.

Members questioned how the application met policy H16. The officer explained that policy H16 concerns development in smaller villages and does not apply in this instance.

Members discussed continuing development in Chinnor, noting the village's limited infrastructure and capacity to accommodate more housing.

Members expressed concerns about parking issues, as this is an established residential area not used to traffic and building. The impact during the build process was also a concern, particularly regarding safety and amenities for residents. The efforts of the parish to put together a neighbourhood plan to steer development appropriately were acknowledged.

It was noted that the objections from the previous application had been addressed, and this application met planning considerations and policy requirements within the settlement of Chinnor. Members noted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises approval of development within existing schemes and that concerns had been addressed.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P24/S1879/FUL subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within three years
2. Development in accordance with the approved plans
3. No change in levels
4. Schedule of materials (prior to slab level)
5. Obscure glazing
6. Withdrawal of permitted development rights
7. Energy statement verification
8. Air source heat pump(s) - MCS certification
9. Parking & manoeuvring areas retained
10. Cycle parking facilities (prior to slab level)
11. Landscaping (including hard surfacing and boundary treatment)
12. Landscape management plan (prior to slab level)
13. Tree protection (general)
14. Construction environmental management plan (prior to works)
15. Integrated biodiversity enhancements (prior to slab level)
16. External lighting - bats (prior to installation)
17. Surface water drainage works (prior to commencement)
18. Foul drainage works (prior to commencement)
19. Electric vehicle charging point (implementation)

76 P24/S2426/FUL - Middle Road, Stanton St John, OX33 1EX

The committee considered planning application P24/S2426/FUL:

Demolition of existing stonewall and addition of new 5 bar gate to provide agricultural access to neighbouring fields. Realignment of the stone wall either side of the gate to provide the necessary vision splays for the new access. The wall to be rebuilt from material derived from the demolished existing stone wall (amended by drawing numbers 877- P01 G and 877-P03 A received on 22 October 2024).

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history, were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer explained that the application was before members because the Officer recommendation for approval conflicted with the views of Stanton St John Parish Council.

The application site comprised a section of stone wall located adjacent to Middle Road, in the village of Stanton St John. It fell within the Stanton St John Conservation Area and the Oxford Green Belt, with listed buildings, The Star Inn and Bassett House, in the vicinity.

Planning permission was sought for the demolition of a section of the stone wall to create a vehicular access to the field beyond, which would be served by a 5-bar gate. It would involve the rebuilding of the stone wall on either side of the gate to provide vision splays.

This was a resubmission of a lapsed permission that was granted in June 2020 for the same development. The access was required due to an existing access to the fields through the car park of the Star Inn, which would be lost due to planning permission being granted for the redevelopment of the public house site.

The highway liaison officer, after having undertaken a site visit, confirmed that they had no objection to the proposal on highway safety grounds, subject to conditions. They highlighted that the carriageway fronting the site was subject to a 20mph speed limit, was part of a one-way system, and there would be a level of setback and visibility appropriate given the levels of vehicular traffic and speeds along Middle Road.

The objection from the Parish Council was based on the request to add a condition restricting the tonnage and number of axles for vehicles that could use the new access. The Highway Authority stated that they had concerns that such a condition would not be enforceable. Officers agreed with their concerns about enforceability, and in conjunction with such a condition not appearing on the previously granted permission, it was not recommended.

In terms of the appearance of the works, whilst it would result in the loss of a section of historic, although not listed, wall, it was considered that it would not be inconsistent with the character of the area. The proposed five-bar gate would be in keeping with other agricultural accesses and preserve the rural character of the area. In addition, the rebuilt sections of wall would utilise the stone rubble resulting from the demolition.

There was a change required to the recommended condition 3, as the method statement for the rebuilding of the wall had already been provided as part of a previously approved discharge of condition application. The condition would instead refer to those approved.

Officers concluded that the development was in compliance with National and Local Development Plan policies and was therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Steve Pickles, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Members agreed that the application seemed straightforward, as it involved reinstating a previously granted permission that had lapsed. Members noted that there were no objections from highways and no material planning concerns. The consensus was that there were no reasons for refusal, given the simplicity of the application and the lack of objections.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P24/S2426/FUL subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within three years.
2. Compliance with approved plans.
3. Method statement as approved
4. Submission of details for mortar specifications.
5. Construction of new vehicular access as per specifications.
6. Vision splay protection

The meeting closed at 8.14pm

Chair

Date