

APPLICATION NO.	P16/S2638/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	5.8.2016
PARISH	WATLINGTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Anna Badcock
APPLICANT	Mr Simon Ryde
SITE PROPOSAL	Land to rear of 14 and 16 High Street, Watlington Erection of a two storey 3-bedroom dwelling following the demolition of existing brick walls and timber fencing within the site (position of dwelling revised to improve garden space as shown on amended site plan received 21st October 2016)
AMENDMENTS OFFICER	One – see above Paul Lucas

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Officers recommend that planning permission should be granted. This report explains how officers have reached this conclusion. The application is referred to Planning Committee due to the Parish Council's objection.

1.2 The application site is shown at **Appendix 1**. It is located within the built-up confines of Watlington in the village centre where there are a mixture of uses. The site consists of a parcel of land to the rear of No's 14 (a retail unit with living accommodation above) and 16 (a vacant bank) on the north side of High Street. It comprises a gravel hardstanding historically used for parking by the two frontage premises and an undeveloped area of overgrown grass wrapping around the northern and eastern sides of the hardstanding with a close-boarded fence separating the two areas. The site is bordered by commercial buildings to the east and west belonging to 3A Shirburn Road and 18 High Street, respectively. To the north of the site is another commercial unit No.5 and a parking area that serves it. The site lies within Watlington Conservation Area. The frontage buildings on this stretch of the northern side of High Street are listed, with the exception of No.16.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a two-storey 3-bedroom dwelling and realignment of the parking area to provide three parking spaces, as shown on the current plans and described in the documents submitted in support of the application. An amended site plan was submitted to reposition the dwelling so that a greater portion of the outdoor amenity space would be concentrated on the south-eastern side of the dwelling. The applicant has confirmed that the three parking spaces could be shared evenly between the proposed dwelling, No.14 and No.16. The site location plan confirms that both No's 14 and 16 are within the applicant's ownership.

2.2 Copies of the current plans are provided at **Appendix 2** whilst other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the Council's website: www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Watlington Parish Council** – The application should be refused due to:
this proposal would intensify the use of an existing substandard access. This is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare in the town where increased vehicle movements from a substandard access can only increase the risk to highway safety and in particular to pedestrians. This application has not demonstrated adequate parking and turning provision for the neighbouring establishments, as set out by the OCC Local Highway Authority.

County Archaeological Services (SODC) - No objection

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – Objection - The proposal would intensify the use of an existing substandard access. High Street, Watlington is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare in the Town Centre, where increased vehicle movements from a substandard access can only increase the risk to Highway Safety and in particular to pedestrians. The proposal has not demonstrated adequate parking and turning provision for the neighbouring establishments.

Conservation Officer (SODC) – Verbal consultation raising no objections

Neighbours – One representation raising concerns about access, parking, loss of important gap in the street scene, lack of daylight to bedrooms and gardens and lack of refuse collection point.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None directly relevant.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) policies

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSM1 - Transport

CSQ3 - Design

CSR1 - Housing in villages

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;

C9 - Loss of landscape features

CON5 - Setting of listed building

CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area

D1 - Principles of good design

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

D10 - Waste Management

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

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

5.3 Watlington Neighbourhood Plan – Consultation Stage 2 completed, draft being prepared

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance:

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 – Section 7 Plots and Buildings

Watlington Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2011 (WCACA 2011)

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

The policies within the SOCS and the SOLP 2011 of relevance to this application are considered to be in general conformity with the provisions of the NPPF and therefore this application can be determined against the relevant policies above.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are whether the development would:

- be in accordance with the Council's strategy for housing development in rural areas;
- result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Watlington Conservation Area and maintain the setting of the nearby listed buildings;
- safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers of the development;
- demonstrate safe and convenient access and adequate off-street parking provision for the development; and
- give rise to any other material planning considerations

6.2 Principle of Development

The SOCS classifies Watlington as a "larger village". Under Policy CSR1, residential development on infill sites of unlimited size is acceptable in principle in "larger villages". The supporting text for Policy CSR1 states, "Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage, or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings." In officers' opinion, the site is surrounded by buildings on four sides. Under these circumstances, officers consider that the principle of housing on the site is currently acceptable. Consequently the proposal falls to be assessed primarily against the criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 for new dwellings, which are addressed below.

6.3 Loss of Open Space

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. The site is not accessible to the public and there is no evidence of any protected species or habitats on the site. The site can be glimpsed in public views from High Street when passing the entrance, however from these vantage points the development of the site would be seen in the context of the buildings on either side. There is no particular reference to this site in the WCACA. Given these circumstances, it could not be said to result in the loss of an important public view. On this basis, the proposal would be in compliance with the above criterion.

6.4 Visual Impact

Criterion (ii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 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. The SOCS Policy CSEN3 seeks to preserve or enhance the District's designated heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings. The SOLP 2011 Policy CON5 sets out the Council's statutory duty to protect the setting of listed buildings. The SOLP 2011 Policy CON7 sets out the Council's statutory duty to ensure that development would preserve or enhance conservation areas.

- 6.5 The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the position or design of the proposed dwelling, concluding that it would not be unduly prominent and would preserve the character and appearance of the Watlington Conservation Area and would not detract from the setting of the listed frontage buildings. The commercial buildings on either side and to the rear are utilitarian in appearance and the proposed dwelling would be a more visually attractive building. It would have traditional proportions and external finishes could be secured that would match the local vernacular. In the light of the above assessment, the proposal would satisfy the above policies.
- 6.6 Residential Amenity Impact
Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. Policy D4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that all new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. The main impact of the proposed dwelling would be on the rear aspect of the residential occupiers of the upper floors of No.14. The first floor windows of the proposed dwelling would be about 14 metres from the rear facing upper floor windows of No.14, which would be significantly less than the 25 metre standard set out in Section 7 of the SODG 2016. However, one of these windows would serve an en-suite shower and the other would serve a corridor into a bedroom and would therefore be secondary to the north-east facing window serving the main bedroom area. Consequently, both of these windows could be subject to an obscure glazing condition to protect neighbouring privacy of the rear facing rooms and small garden area whilst also ensuring adequate daylight for future occupiers. The orientation of the proposed dwelling to the north of No.14 and its modest ridge height of around 6 metres would be sufficient to prevent any discernible loss of light or outlook to the adjoining occupiers.
- 6.7 The relationship of the proposed dwelling with the rear of No.12, which also appears to have a residential use on upper floors, would be more oblique and views towards No.12 from the aforementioned first floor windows would be blocked by the position of the front gable element of the proposed dwelling. Officers deem that a planning condition is necessary to remove permitted development rights for any additional windows from being inserted in the first floor of the south-west elevation, particularly the front gable, to prevent future loss of privacy from taking place. The proposed garden area would be 85 square metres. This would be below the 100 square metre standard set out in Section 7 of the SODG 2016. However, this would be an acceptable shortfall, because the dwelling would be located in the centre of the village with good access to public open space. On the basis of the above assessment, the proposed development would accord with the above policies.
- 6.8 Access and Parking
Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. The Highway Liaison Officer (HLO) and Watlington Parish Council have both objected to the application on highway and pedestrian safety grounds due to intensification of use of an access with substandard visibility. For many years the access has been used as a car park by Barclays Bank (No.16) for 2 members of staff and a parking space has been more recently created for the residential occupiers of No.14. The applicant has explained that since 2008, further cars have parked there blocking in the staff cars with no turning circle. In spite of the HLO's objection, officers consider that the proposal would not increase the number of parking spaces and would widen the turning area to allow this to occur within the site, even when all three parking spaces are occupied. The three parking spaces shown on the plan could be allocated to specific properties (a combination of No.14, No.16 and the proposed dwelling) and this could be secured through a planning condition. The site is in a sustainable location within the village centre, with good access to public transport and there is a lack of

dedicated parking for other residential units along High Street.

- 6.9 Under these circumstances, officers consider that it would not be reasonable to insist on the maximum standard of two parking spaces for the proposed dwelling, therefore a single parking space for the proposed dwelling would be acceptable. In the absence of a garage for the proposed dwelling, a planning condition requiring a cycle store to be provided prior to occupation and thereafter retained for this purpose is also considered reasonable in order to make travel by bicycle more convenient for future occupiers to further reduce the reliance on private vehicles. As No's 14 and 16 are within the applicant's control, it is likely that the staff associated with these businesses would be aware of the allocated parking and they would not attempt to park additional vehicles in that area. The HLO has confirmed that he has no objections to the displacement of a parking space available for No.16 by the parking space to be allocated to the proposed dwelling. This is because the site is within 120 metres of the public car park. Having regard to the presence of double-yellow lines on High Street, any customers carrying out business in the village centre by car, are likely to have parked in the nearby public car park when visiting the ground floor businesses at No's 14 and 16 (albeit that No.16 is currently vacant). The applicant has also agreed to a planning condition to install signage at No.16 to indicate that the parking area is private and not available to customers.
- 6.10 Taking into account the above factors, officers consider that the number of vehicles accessing the parking area at the rear of the premises would not be any greater than is possible at present. In our view, the reverse manoeuvring scenario that the HLO is concerned about would be an unlikely occurrence and the risk to highway and pedestrian safety would not be severe as required by Paragraph 32 of the NPPF in order to justify refusal of planning permission. In the light of this assessment, the proposal would comply with the above criterion.
- 6.11 Other Material Planning Considerations
Matters relating to refuse and recycling collection could be dealt with by a planning condition. Officers consider that a planning condition to remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings is necessary in order to enable the Council to retain control over any future development that might otherwise be harmful to the historic environment or neighbouring amenity. Officers are also mindful that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a deliverable 5 year supply of housing. Although the site lies within and adjacent to Designated Heritage Assets, the proposal has been found to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and not to detract from the setting of listed buildings. Consequently, the relevant test at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF can be applied, which is approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. This lends further support to the proposal.
- 6.12 The proposed dwelling is liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL charge applied to new residential development in this case is £150 per square metre of additional floorspace (Zone 1). 15% of the CIL payment would go Watlington Parish Council in the absence of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the other relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable in principle and would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and not detract from the setting of listed buildings or the living conditions of nearby residents or result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

1. Commencement of development within three years.
2. Development to proceed in accordance with approved plans.
3. Details of levels prior to commencement.
4. Schedule of materials prior to commencement.
5. Obscure glazing of south-west facing first floor windows.
6. No additional openings in south-west facing first floor elevation.
7. Withdrawal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings.
8. Details of refuse and recycling collection point prior to commencement.
9. Allocated parking and manoeuvring areas retained as shown on plan.
10. Details of cycle parking facilities prior to commencement.
11. Details of signage prior to commencement.
12. Details of hard and soft landscaping prior to commencement.

Author: Paul Lucas
Email: Planning@southandvale.gov.uk
Telephone: 01235 422600