

APPLICATION NO.	P16/S1476/O
APPLICATION TYPE	Outline
REGISTERED	3.5.2016
PARISH	Nuffield
WARD MEMBERS	David Nimmo-Smith and Charles Bailey
APPLICANT	Huntercombe Golf Club
SITE	Huntercombe Golf Club, Nuffield Hill, Nuffield
PROPOSAL	Outline application with all matters reserved for demolition of 2 existing dwellings and the erection of up to 8 dwellings (indicative access arrangements and layout altered to take account of arboricultural impact assessment and revised drainage strategy as shown on amended plans received 13th April 2017).
OFFICER	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 continued objection to the application.

1.2 The application site is shown at **Appendix 1**. It is located within the built up confines of Nuffield and extends to an area of 0.59 hectares. The site comprises land within the ownership of Huntercombe Golf Course on either side of the entrance driveway onto the northern side of Nuffield Hill. The site includes two bungalows, occupied by golf club staff, located on the south-eastern side of the driveway and an undeveloped area of land on the north-western side of the driveway occupied by a large group of mature trees. The roadside boundary with Nuffield Hill to the south-west and Timbers Lane to the south-east consists of mixed hedging with some mature and semi-mature trees and shrubs with a highway verge in front. The north-western site boundary is with the rear of dwellings forming part of Ridgeway Close, a 1990's social housing development. The north-eastern site boundary is with the golf club car park. There are two dwellings, Holmsdale and Magnolia Cottage that take their vehicular access directly off Nuffield Hill opposite the site. Some of the trees on the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (Ref16S22). A group of 66 Pine and four Beech trees on the western side of the site are of particular importance and five other individual trees are also protected by the TPO. The site lies within the Chilterns AONB. The Ridgeway National Trail crosses the golf club land to the north, within 55 metres of the site at its closest point.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the residential development of the site with up to eight dwellings with all matters reserved. Although a site plan was submitted with the application and subsequently amended to remove the proposed relocation of the entrance drive and adjust the position of the eight dwellings, the layout shown on the latest version is only indicative. In the event of outline planning permission being granted, this would be assessed at the reserved matters application stage. Other plans showing visibility splay details, tree constraints, drainage strategy and swept path for a refuse vehicle, which are all also illustrative were provided and updated during the course of the application. The applicant has also agreed to revise the description to "**up to**" eight dwellings.

- 2.2 Copies of the illustrative plans are provided at **Appendix 2** whilst other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the Council's website:
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P16/S1476/O>

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Nuffield Parish Council** – The application should be refused due to the following:

Although the revised plans do address some of the issues regarding the previous position of the entrance opposite Magnolia Cottage, numerous issues still prevail in objection to the proposed plans.

Traffic issues. There are more entrances on to Nuffield Lane and in particular close to the junction on to Timbers Lane which is often taken at speed by traffic from the Stoke Row direction in particular. Also increased traffic on Nuffield Lane which is approximately two miles long with very few passing places.

Street Scene. Removal of some of the hedge and trees with further entrances on to Nuffield Lane will contribute to the continued decline of Nuffield as a quiet rural village high in the Chilterns.

Hedge. Removal of the existing hedge will remove the privacy accorded by it to residents across Nuffield Lane. Currently the existing two properties are very well screened.

The new houses. Removing some of the trees and replacing the existing bungalows with 8 houses will mean a number of houses opposite the entrance will now become overlooked.

Infrastructure. Nuffield is lacking in infrastructure. Mains sewerage is an ongoing issue, lack of places at the local primary school and other facilities, including almost no public transport, shop or pub.

Financial case for development by the golf club. The golf club states that the development is proposed to help the club invest in facilities at a time of lower revenues and secure the long term future of the club. The Parish Council do not believe that the granting of planning to support the finances of a private members club is a valid planning justification. Also some residents have questioned just how poor the financial position of the club is, when it has recently purchased a 1m+house adjoining the course to protect its interests.

Creeping development. Residents have also expressed concern about creeping development at the site in to the field owned by the club to the north west of the proposed development.

County Archaeological Services (OCC) – No objection

Thames Water Development Control - No objection subject to informatives

Countryside Officer (SODC) - No objection subject to condition

Leisure - South – Support

Drainage Engineer (South Oxfordshire - MONSON) - No objection subject to condition

Urban Design Officer (SODC) – Revised layout has demonstrated that previous concerns could be addressed at the reserved matters stage

Waste Management Officer (SODC) – Concern about refuse vehicles overhanging private land

Housing Development (SODC) - No objection subject to completion of Section 106

agreement to secure affordable housing contribution

Highways Liaison Officer (OCC) - No objection subject to conditions

Forestry Officer (SODC) – Concern about relationship of Plot 8 with protected Pine trees

Neighbours – 17 representations of objection and concern relating to the original plans. 6 representations reaffirming objection and concern on the basis of the amended plans, summarised as follows:

- Overdevelopment – there are approximately 52 existing dwellings in Nuffield and currently 4 properties under development which is a 7.7 percentage increase, another 8 dwellings on this development would mean Nuffield village has accepted over 23 percent increase in the last year [a net gain of 6 would equate to a 19.2% increase]
- Additional driveways onto Nuffield Hill and increase in on-street parking resulting in highway and pedestrian safety issues due to proximity to junction between Nuffield Hill and Timbers Lane
- Out of keeping with rural character of this part of the Chilterns AONB:
 - Position of houses further forward than closest bungalow
 - Loss of trees, hedgerows and highway verge to make room for driveways
 - Introduction of parked cars and bins
- Traffic calming measures required
- Improvements to the communal sewage system should be secured
- Affordable housing would just be for golf club staff [the affordable housing would be provided in the form of an off-site contribution]

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P73/H0224](#) - Approved (12/04/1973)
Erection of two staff bungalows. Alteration to access.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) policies;
CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
CSEN1 - Landscape protection
CSH3 - Affordable housing
CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
CSM1 - Transport
CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
CSQ3 - Design
CSR1 - Housing in villages
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- 5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;
C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
C9 - Loss of landscape features
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
EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment

- EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP4 - Impact on water resources
- EP6 - Sustainable drainage
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- 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 Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance:

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 - Section 7 Plots and Buildings
South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Character Area 10

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

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 NPPG 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;
- be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surroundings, bearing in mind the site’s location within the Chilterns AONB;
- ensure that important trees are retained;
- 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;
- secure an affordable housing off-site contribution;
- provide an appropriate mix of market housing; and
- give rise to any other material planning considerations

6.2 Principle of Development

Within Appendix 4 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Nuffield is listed as a ‘smaller village’. Within such settlements Policy CSR1 of the SOCS allows for infill housing development on sites of up to 0.2 ha – equivalent to 5-6 houses. Infill 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’. The site area is 0.59 hectares, which would be larger than the infill limit. However, Policy CSR1 also states that “redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable, but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.” As such, officers are satisfied that the principle of this development is acceptable under the SOCS as a redevelopment of a site within the village confines, containing two bungalows and other land located between those bungalows and the adjacent dwellings on Ridgeway Close. In addition, the net gain of six dwellings would be in keeping with the level of infill development that Policy CSR1 envisages for settlements of this size. Consequently the proposal falls to be assessed primarily against the criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011, 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 presently undeveloped, but there is no public access to it. The Countryside Officer has recommended a condition to address any potential impact on ecological habitats. In any public viewpoints from Nuffield Hill, Timbers Lane and The Ridgeway National Trail, the site is seen in the context of existing residential plots fronting onto these roads to the south and west and the golf clubhouse to the north of the site. Views through the site towards the countryside are therefore limited and also obstructed by established foliage. This criterion would therefore be satisfied.

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. Policy CSEN1 aims to ensure that the District's landscape is protected. There has been some criticism of the proposed layout from third parties, particularly in relation to the introduction of more access points and the position of dwellings closer to Nuffield Hill than the nearest of the existing bungalows. However, layout is a reserved matter and not for consideration at this stage. Nonetheless, the Council's Urban Design Officer is satisfied that the latest illustrative plan demonstrates that a layout of up to eight dwellings could be achieved in a manner that would be respectful of the grain of development in the village and not appear unduly prominent in this part of the Chilterns AONB. In this respect, a development incorporating dwellings presenting a street frontage onto Nuffield Hill as shown on the current layout plan would better reflect the design principles in the SODG 2016 than the original layout which indicated that dwellings would be backing onto the road. Matters of scale and appearance are also reserved and as such it is reasonable to conclude that the form and design of the proposed dwellings could reflect the local vernacular. As such, the proposed development could comply with the above policies.

6.5 Important Trees

During the application process, a Tree Preservation Order was served on 71 trees within the site to ensure their retention. These trees represent a constraint to development and the proposed residential development therefore has to be designed around them. The Council's Forestry Officer has no objections to the latest layout apart from Plot 8. Units 7 and 8 need to be reduced to a single unit to accommodate for the extensive shading cast by the Pine trees and provide space for all associated ground works to be positioned out of the RPA of the adjacent Pine trees. The current illustrative design would leave Plot 8 with a very shaded rear garden from midday onward and does not allow sufficient separation for the future growth of the Pines. The drainage plan also shows the soak-away for unit 8 would need to be excavated in the RPA of some of the Pine trees. By reducing this pair of houses to a single dwelling more usable garden space will be available and sufficient separation from the tree group could be achieved. Care will need to be taken to address the change in ground levels in this area. Officers consider that there is sufficient scope for these issues to be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage through a revised layout and possibly a reduction in the number of dwellings from the eight currently shown. There are no in principle arboricultural objections to the formation of gaps in the boundary hedge and shrubbery to allow vehicular accesses to be created onto Nuffield Hill as this foliage is not of sufficient merit to be worthy of any statutory protection. As such the proposed development could be in accordance with the SOCS Policy CSEN1 and the SOLP 2011 Policy C9.

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. Officers consider that a layout of up to eight dwellings could be arranged at the reserved matters stage in a manner that would demonstrate compliance with the minimum separation distances as set out in Section 7 of the SODG 2016, so as to avoid any significant loss of light, outlook or privacy to the occupiers of the adjoining occupiers at Ridgeway Close or on the opposite side of Nuffield Hill. Officers are also of the opinion, taking into account the Forestry Officer's comments above, that sufficient garden space could be achieved for the proposed dwellings to accord with the minimum standards also set out in Section 7. The above policies could therefore be met.

6.7 Access and Parking

Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. Several objections have been received from local residents, concerned about the impact of the proposed access arrangements. Although access is a reserved matter, the Highway Liaison Officer is satisfied that the illustrative access arrangements and off-street parking provision would not give rise to any conditions prejudicial to highway and pedestrian safety that would cause severe harm as required by Paragraph 32 of the NPPF. On this basis, the proposal would comply with this element of the above criterion.

6.8 Affordable Housing

In rural areas, the NPPG requires developments with a net gain of between six and ten dwellings to provide affordable housing in the form of a commuted sum. The Council's Housing Development Team have confirmed that SOCS Policy CSH3, requires this to be achieved at 40% of the market value of the sixth unit. The applicant has agreed in principle to make such a payment. This can be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement to be completed before outline planning permission is issued. The agreement will have to be flexible to waive the payment of the commuted sum in the event that any reserved matters approval is for a scheme of less than eight dwellings (a net gain of less than six dwellings). The annotation referring to two of the dwellings to be set aside for the golf club staff whom presently reside in the bungalows as "affordable" dwellings has been removed. The Council is therefore satisfied that the requirements of this policy can be achieved.

6.9 Housing Mix

A planning condition can be imposed to ensure that the reserved matters for the scheme would be designed to secure an appropriate housing mix for market housing, in accordance with Policy CSH4 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and having regard to the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment April 2014.

6.10 Other Material Planning Considerations

The Council's Waste Management Officer has raised a concern that the refuse vehicle tracking plan shows that the cabin of the lorry would overhang the land on the north-western side of the driveway. However, this appears to be a strip of verge and would not create conflict with the private gardens of any future residents. In any event, this is an illustrative detail to be re-examined at the reserved matters stage. In spite of reports of existing sewage issues, the Council's Drainage Consultant, Monson, has confirmed that matters relating to surface water and foul drainage could be dealt with through planning conditions. Matters relating to the financial position of the golf club are not material to the consideration of this application, given officers have concluded that it is in accordance with the SOCS Policy CSR1. Any proposal to build houses in the adjacent field would be assessed as and when any such application is submitted.

6.11 Community Infrastructure Levy

As an outline application, the proposal is not CIL liable at this stage, but in the event of a future application for reserved matters or a full application being submitted, the proposed dwellings would require a payment based on £156/square metre.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies and Government guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would safeguard protected trees. It could also be laid out in a manner that would not materially harm the character and appearance of the area including the Chilterns AONB landscape or the residential amenity of nearby residents and result in satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers of the development and provide an off-site affordable housing contribution and an appropriate mix of market housing.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To delegate authority to the Head of Planning to grant outline planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement to secure a commuted sum towards affordable housing and subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Development in accordance with approved plans.**
2. **Commencement - outline with reserved matters.**
3. **Levels (details required) to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
4. **Market housing mix to be secured at reserved matters stage.**
5. **Schedule of materials to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
6. **Tree protection details to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
7. **Wildlife mitigation to be carried out in accordance with agreed details.**
8. **Surface water drainage works to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
9. **Foul drainage works to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**

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