

APPLICATION NO.	P17/S1752/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	2.6.2017
PARISH	SONNING COMMON
WARD MEMBERS	Paul Harrison & Will Hall
APPLICANT	Mr C Court
SITE	Songlow Peppard Road Sonning Common, RG4 9NJ
PROPOSAL	Proposed replacement of single residential dwelling (As amended by plans received 2017_08_09 to reduce width of property by 1m and move dwelling away from northern boundary by 1m).
OFFICER	Marc Pullen

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee because the officer's recommendation conflicts with the view of Sonning Common Parish Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) contains a detached bungalow to the south of Sonning Common. The site is surrounded by residential properties. The site does not belong to any specially designated area of land.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 This application seeks planning permission to demolish and replace the existing property.

2.2 A copy of all the current plans accompanying the application is **attached** as Appendix B. 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 **Sonning Common Parish Council – Object**

- Concern relating to the siting of the gable ends near neighbours; neighbours outlook would be harmed
- New landscaping should be required to respect the site's sensitive setting next to the Chilterns AONB

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) - No strong views, subject to conditions requiring parking and access standards

Countryside Officer (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No strong views, subject to condition requiring development to be implemented in accordance with ecological survey

SGN Plant Protection Team - No strong views, advisory note due to proximity of Scotia Gas Network pipe

Neighbours - Object (22)

- Proposed development would result in overlooking, loss of light and spoil the view of immediate neighbours and outlook
- Proposed development would be a contravention to local character of bungalows and out of keeping with the street scene
- There is a need for single storey accommodation within the SCNP and loss of this bungalow would worsen this problem

- Existing access to rear should not be used for construction traffic if approved
- Proposed house is too big for the site, an overdevelopment of the site
- Proposed development would set a precedent for future/similar development
- Concern about the impact on bat roosts within the site
- Proposed development would abut the Chilterns AONB and would be seen from a distance – proposal must be sympathetic to local environment and isn't
- Proposed development is contrary to infill policy

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P79/S0116](#) - Approved (19/04/1979)

REMOVE FLAT ROOF OF GARAGE, EXTEND FRONT AND CONSTRUCT NEW PITCHED ROOF OVER COMPLETE GARAGE.

[P70/H0571](#) - Approved (23/10/1970)
CAR PORT

[P56/H0544](#) - Approved (24/10/1956)
ERECTION OF BUNGALOW AND GARAGE WITH VEHICULAR ACCESS.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework & National Planning Practice Guidance**

5.2 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 policies;**

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
CSQ3 - Design
CSR1 - Housing in villages
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.3 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;**

C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
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
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

5.4 **South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016**

5.5 **Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan 2016**

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1
- Principle of development
 - Impact on character and appearance
 - Impact on the amenity of neighbours
 - Parking and access
 - Protected species
 - Other matters

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The site lies to the south-east of the main built up area of Sonning Common, within a group of housing between Kennylands Road and Peppard Road. In this location the principle of residential development is largely governed by Policy CSS1 and CSR1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS, 2012), which allows for new housing in Sonning Common on suitable infill or redevelopment sites. Policy H3 of the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) supports this definition.
- 6.3 The definition of infill as stated within the SOCS is 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. Whilst this group of housing does lie somewhat divorced from the main built up area development has been recently granted in the immediate locality which has supported this area as falling within the settlement of the village.
- 6.4 It is officer's view therefore that this site should also be regarded as within the settlement. With this in mind officers are satisfied that the replacement of this dwelling would meet the definition of infill as the site would be closely surrounded by other buildings. As such the principle of the development would be broadly supported by Policy CSR1 of the SOCS and Policy H3 of the SCNP.

Impact on character and appearance

- 6.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms a presumption in favour of sustainable residential development, but also confirms a requirement for good design. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) elaborates on the NPPF, stating that: "new development should look to respond appropriately to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces...there may be an existing prevailing layout that development should respond to and potentially improve" (paragraph 24).
- 6.6 Policy CSQ3 of the SOCS allows for new development that is of a high quality and inclusive design that responds positively to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings, enhancing local distinctiveness and ensuring that new development is of a scale, type and density appropriate to the site and its setting. Policy D1 and G2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) seek to protect the district from any adverse development and seeks to support development that reinforces local distinctiveness and settlement types and their character.
- 6.7 Policy H4, criteria (i) (ii) and (ii), of the SOLP require development to: be of a design, height, scale and appearance that responds with its surroundings; to be in keeping with the character of the area and not result in an important open space of important value being lost. Policy H3 of the SCNP seeks to ensure that all new dwellings, where found acceptable in principle, positively respond to, where appropriate, the prevailing size, height, scale and mass, materials, layout, density and access of the surrounding area. All new dwellings should reflect the existing character of the village. Similar aims are identified by Policy D1 and D1b of the SCNP.
- 6.8 The surrounding area varies in architectural design and scale. The immediate properties are smaller, single storey properties with some two storey properties nearby. The existing property is relatively small with a ridge height not too dissimilar to the immediate neighbouring dwellings. Owing to its size the existing property benefits from a spacious relationship with the neighbouring dwellings.
- 6.9 The proposed development would retain a shallow height and massing, but would be taller than the existing dwelling and the two immediate neighbouring properties. The

massing and appearance of the proposed dwelling would broadly be in keeping with the area. It is clear that there are a number of other two storey dwellings in the immediate setting of this site. The proposed replacement dwelling would continue the linear pattern of development along Peppard Road, in line with other dwellings.

- 6.10 Officers appreciate that the application site and its immediate neighbours are consistent in terms of their scale and height and that this development would diminish their collective contribution to the character and appearance of this short section of the street. However, given the differing architectural design and varying size and height of nearby properties officers consider that the development would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered within the context of the wider street scene.
- 6.11 It is accepted that the spacious relationship between immediate neighbours would be lessened by this proposed development. However a distance of more than 5 metres to either neighbouring property is still sufficient enough in officer's view to maintain the spacious character of the site and the wider street scene.
- 6.12 In officer's view the use of external materials is a matter for later consideration and can be a condition of approval. There is a variety of external materials used nearby, but it is clear that clay tiles and red brick is common.
- 6.13 Officers do not accept that the development constitutes an 'overdevelopment' of the site. Adequate space would be provided to park vehicles to the front of the dwelling. The private amenity space provided exceeds 150 square metres, which exceeds the recommended 100 square metres set out within the SODG. Comparatively with the local area, the private amenity area provided would be acceptable.
- 6.14 The site does not lie within the Chilterns AONB but it does lie within close proximity to its boundary. Council policy and guidance states that new development should conserve and enhance the Chilterns AONB for its landscape character and key features. Similarly, Policy ENV1 of the SCNP states that all new development inside the Chilterns AONB must demonstrate how it conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty. Policy ENV2 of the SCNP states that development proposals should take account of the locally valued landscape setting of the village. Officers are satisfied that the proposed development does not adversely harm the landscape or scenic beauty of the area. However it is appreciated that landscaping of the site would soften the development and that it would be reasonable to request details of soft landscaping as a condition of approval.
- 6.15 This proposed development draws from the character of the area and the variety of the local built form. The replacement dwelling does not represent an incongruous form of development in the locality and subject to details of materials and details of landscaping, the development would not adversely harm the character or the appearance of the area.

Impact on neighbour amenity

- 6.16 The Council's policies and guidance seek to ensure that new dwellings are considerate to neighbours by way of ensuring that the development does not intrude upon a neighbour's privacy, does not overshadow, obstruct daylight or have an oppressive or overbearing impact, which would be harmful to the amenity of occupiers living in neighbouring properties. Furthermore Policy H3 of the SCNP seeks to ensure that all development for new dwellings, where found to be acceptable in principle, should demonstrate that the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers will not be

adversely affected through overbearing development and loss of light.

- 6.17 A number of consultation responses refer to the potential impact on neighbours that would arise as a result of this development. Neighbours' light, privacy and outlook are of concern for both immediate neighbours and those neighbours to the west (rear). Some neighbours have stated their concern relating to the loss of their private view or their vista. This is not a material planning consideration and is not considered reason therefore to resist this development.
- 6.18 Privacy – Neighbours to the west of the site lie some 50 or so metres away from the proposed closest windows. It is appreciated that first floor windows are proposed, where currently there are none. However it is anticipated the views out of these windows would be similar to that of other neighbouring properties that have first floor windows. Views from the proposed first floor windows would not offer any direct sight into neighbour's habitable rooms and these views would be restricted to neighbours front and rear gardens. Whilst it is appreciated that these neighbours are not subjected to excessive levels of overlooking, especially neighbouring La Maison whose neighbours have no first floor windows, having the front and rear gardens overlooked by neighbours is not uncommon within a density of built form such as this. It is certainly not uncommon within the immediate area to the north and west. Officers do not consider that this proposed development would materially harm the privacy of neighbours and instead the design of the dwelling would allow these neighbours to retain a reasonable degree of privacy.
- 6.19 Loss of light – Neighbours are concerned that owing to the increased height and width of the replacement dwelling, compared to the existing property, the immediate neighbour's access to daylight and sunlight would be compromised to the detriment of their amenity. Following a visit to both neighbours it is appreciated that the original siting of the dwelling was to the south of and in close proximity to neighbouring Winterburn to the possible detriment to their kitchen window and to a lesser extent their secondary living room window. As such amendments were secured which brought the dwelling away from this boundary by one more metre. These windows would remain unobscured above an angle of 45 degrees. It is officer's view that this does not detrimentally prevent these windows from accessing daylight during the day. Officers are satisfied that the replacement dwelling would not significantly obstruct the side facing kitchen window of neighbouring La Maison. Indeed the demolition of the existing single storey garage along the boundary to this neighbour would open up and provide a greater expanse of openness to this boundary.
- 6.20 Outlook – In addition to the above, neighbours are also concerned that the outlook of the affected windows would be compromised. As explained above, officers are of the view that the demolition of the existing garage building would improve the boundary to neighbouring La Maison. The dwelling itself would be closer to this neighbour and taller than the existing, however the spacing between the development and this neighbour and the alleviation on this boundary, in officers view would ensure that this neighbour's outlook from their kitchen window would not be materially compromised. The other window affected is a bathroom window which is obscure glazed. The outlook of neighbouring Winterburn is also considered to be acceptable as the spacing would ensure that the boundary is not imposed upon.

Parking and Access

- 6.21 The Council's policies and guidance seek to ensure that in determining planning applications, the Council should, in consultation with the local highway authority, ensure that new developments are designed to a standard that ensures a safe and attractive

environment and does not result in an unacceptable level of traffic on the local highway network or have a detrimental impact on the amenities and environment of the area. Policies H4, T1 and T2 of the SOLP seek to ensure among other things that all developments make provision for safe and convenient access to the highway network and be served by an adequate road network. Development should provide for sufficient parking and access arrangements in accordance with the Council's parking standards.

- 6.22 On behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, the highways liaison officer raises no objection to the proposed development, citing that the development is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on the highway network. The proposed replacement dwelling would be served by up to four parking spaces. The proposed new access would allow for unobstructed views along Peppard Road between 0.6 metres and 2 metres. Conditions are requested by the highways authority to ensure sufficient visibility splays are achieved and the parking and manoeuvring areas are retained for their purpose. In addition, details of how the existing access is to be closed off are requested for consideration.

Protected species

- 6.23 There are no known ecological constraints on the application site. The habitats on site are not considered to be a constraint to the proposed development. The site resides within a rural locality, close to grassland, trees and arable fields. The habitat connectivity of the site to the wider landscape is considered to be good. The area likely supports a good bat population. Policy CSB1 of the SOCS and Policy C8 of the SOLP afford protection to protected species and seek to prevent any development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting any specially protected species. The council's countryside officer raises no objection to this development, subject to a condition requiring the implementation of recommendations made in the supporting ecology survey.

Other matters

- 6.24 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - The council's CIL charging schedule has recently been adopted and will apply to relevant proposals from 1 April 2016. CIL is a planning charge that local authorities can implement to help deliver infrastructure and to support the development of their area, and is primarily calculated on the increase in footprint created as a result of the development. In this case CIL is liable for the new dwelling and is charged on floor area. The CIL charge applied to new residential development in this case is £150 (index linked) per square metre of floorspace (Zone 1). Of this payment, 25% will go directly to the parish council (as they have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan) for spending towards local projects.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Planning permission should be granted as the proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies and, subject to the attached conditions would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, potential protected species on site, the local highway network or the amenities of those occupants living in neighbouring properties.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

- 1 : Full Planning Permission – development to commence within 3 years of date of permission**
- 2 : Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans**

- 3 : A schedule of all materials to be used in the external construction and finishes of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA**
- 4 : Existing access to be improved and laid out in accordance with local highway authority's specifications**
- 5 : Means of closing up existing access and details of such shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA**
- 6 : Vision splay for pedestrians shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA in accordance with plan 013371 03c**
- 7 : Visibility splays measuring 2.4m by 90m shall be provided to each side of the proposed access and shall not be obstructed at a height exceeding 0.9 metres**
- 8 : The parking and turning areas shall be provided in accordance with drawing no. 013371 03c, and shall be retained unobstructed except for the parking of vehicles associated with the development at all times**
- 9 : Development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations made in the supporting ecological survey report**
- 10 : Soft landscaping scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA**

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