
APPLICATION NO.	P17/S2409/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	29.6.2017
PARISH	WHEATLEY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Toby Newman
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs Robinson
SITE	4A Farm Close Road, Wheatley, OX33 1UQ
PROPOSAL	Side extension to existing flatted block to provide two 2-bed flats. (4 flats in total).
	Provision of 3 off street parking spaces with new highway access, (extant) secure cycle storage and bin enclosures (as amended by plans received 25 August 2017 reconfiguring openings on front and side elevations and providing a streetscene plan)
OFFICER	Katherine Canavan

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application has been referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council. The objections raised are as follows:
- Overdevelopment of the site
 - Detrimental impact on neighbours
 - Contrived and cramped relationship with adjacent properties
- 1.2 The application site is located within the built limits and in the southern area of Wheatley. The surrounding area is characterised by 1960s residential development.
- 1.3 Nos 4a and 4b (flats) face onto Farm Close Road, and are located close to the junction with Station Road and the Co-op shop. Nos 6a, 6b, 8a and 8b are orientated perpendicular to the street, although one of the accesses faces the street. The area between the buildings is laid to grass and adjoins the footpaths serving 6a and 6b and leading to the rear of 4a and 4b. Until recently a tree was located on the grassed area. Two off-street parking spaces are located to the side of 4a.
- 1.4 The site is identified on the OS extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The applicant seeks full planning permission for two 2-bed flats (adjoining the flats 4a and 4b Farm Close Road). The application includes provision of 3 off-street parking spaces with new highway access, secure cycle storage and bin enclosures.
- 2.2 The application follows the submission of a similar proposal at the beginning of 2017, which was refused by Planning Committee in May 2017, on the grounds of the adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupants. The applicant has sought to address this matter by reducing the height and width of the addition.
- 2.3 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full copies of the plans and consultation responses are available for inspection on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1	Wheatley Parish Council	Objection: Overdevelopment of the site Detrimental impact on neighbours Contrived and cramped relationship with adjacent properties Objection maintained: Changes do not significantly alter the proposal and do not address previous concerns
	Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)	No strong views: Subject to parking condition
	Environmental Health - Contaminated Land	No strong views

3.2 Comments were received on the original plans and revised plans from 9 neighbours and are summarised below. The full responses can be viewed on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

Objections raised in response to original plans and information – July 2017

- Overdevelopment of site – the height and width of the development is only part of the problem associated with this impact
- No significant change from previous proposal which was refused at planning committee
- Even by setting down the development, it would result in overlooking and loss of privacy to 6a, 6b, 8a, 8b, and 1b, 3b, 2.
- Impact on outlook for 6a, 6b, 8a, 8b, facing a large, blank flank wall
- Loss of light to adjacent properties and no. 3a
- Parking pressure and congestion to immediate residential streets - recent planning proposals in the area will only exacerbate the parking problem further
- Farm Close Road is at capacity in terms of parking pressure
- Conflict with traffic calming measures near junction
- The orientation of 6a, 6b, 8a, 8b was originally designed to be laid out differently, to allow the front elevation to take advantage of the open area
- Insufficient information on construction methodology and storage arrangements for materials
- Pressure on utilities and services – there are frequent water / sewerage issues in this area

Objections raised in response to revised plans – September 2017

- The reconfiguration of openings and parking as revised plans do not address the issues raised above.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P16/S4254/FUL](#) - Refused (30/05/2017)

Side extension to existing flatted block to provide two No. two bed flats. (4 No flats in total). Provision of 3 no. off street parking spaces with new highway access, (extant) secure cycle storage and bin enclosures
 (as amended by plan received 27 February 2017 providing additional parking space - 3 spaces in total, and as amplified by updated block plan received 13 March 2017 showing land ownership, and contamination questionnaire received 16 March 2017)

[P16/S2800/HH](#) - Approved (14/10/2016)
Erection of single storey rear extension.

[P11/W0441](#) - Approved (18/05/2011)
Gravel hardstanding for two vehicles

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSS1 – The overall strategy

CSR1 – Housing in villages

CSQ3 – Design

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan policies

G2 – Protect district from adverse development

H4 – Proposals for houses

D1 – Design

D2 – Parking provision

D3 – Plot coverage and garden areas

D4 – Privacy and overlooking

T1 – Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 – Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

5.3 South Oxfordshire Design Guide

5.4 Neighbourhood Plan

Wheatley Parish Council are in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, and have formally designated the NP area. The plan is in an early stage and has limited weight.

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The key considerations in determining the application are:

- Principle of residential development
- Impact on neighbouring occupants
- Highways and parking provision
- Additional matters

6.2 **Principle of residential development**

6.2i The application site is located in the built-up area of the settlement, and within an area predominantly characterised by residential development. Wheatley is categorised as a 'larger village' in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, and a sustainable location where infill development is appropriate. In establishing the principle of residential development on the site, consideration has been given to policy CSR1 of the SOCS. In assessing the detail of the proposal, consideration is given to policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

6.2ii Policy H4 permits housing on sites within the built up areas of the four main towns and within the built-up areas of villages provided that:

- i) *an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt;*

The proposal site comprises an area of land between the buildings housing numbers 4a and 4b, and 6a, 6b, 8a and 8b – part of the land is in the ownership

of 4A. The area is laid to grass and adjoins the footpaths serving 6a and 6b and leading to the rear of 4a and 4b. Until recently a tree was located on the grassed area. While the grassed area provides a clear division between dwellings and is visible within the public realm, it is not an important space of public value, or environmentally significant, and the development of part of the green area would not result in an important public view being spoilt.

- ii) *the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings;*
the character of the area is not adversely affected;

In seeking to minimise the height and scale of the addition, the proposed elevations and the proposed street scene plan indicate that the development is to be set into the ground at a depth of 0.7m (following the topography of the site), and the roof height is to be set down by 1.2m (in comparison with the previous proposal - P16/S4254/FUL). In addition, the width of the development would be 6.55m (a reduction of 0.5m from the previous proposal), resulting in a separation distance of 12.4m to the front elevation of neighbouring properties.

The development would be subservient to the adjoining flats, and would be lower in ridge height than the neighbouring block. Given the reduction in overall scale and ridge height and the increased separation distance, I am satisfied that an appropriate relationship is retained to avoid an overly dominant or enclosed relationship with nearby properties.

There are no area or character designations that require a particular design to be followed in development terms, and the proposal does not introduce elements or design features that conflict with the character of the surrounding residential area.

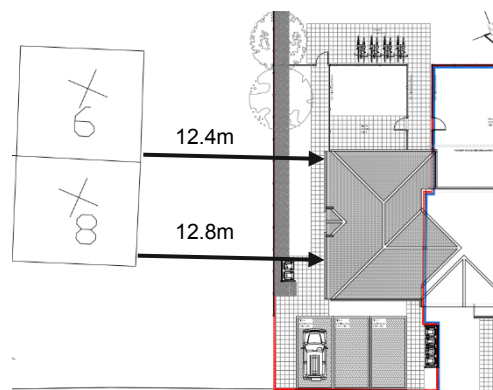
- iii) *there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections; and*
Residential amenity is considered in section 6.3.
Highway implications and parking standards are addressed in section 6.4.

- iv) *if the proposal constitutes back land development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.*
The proposal is not considered to be back land development as it fronts directly onto the street and adjoins a side elevation of 4a and 4b.

6.3 Impact on neighbouring occupants

6.3i Policies D4 and H4 of the SOLP consider the development's impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants.

6.3ii Nos 6a, 6b, 8a and 8b are orientated perpendicular to the street and all have habitable rooms on the western elevation (facing the side of 4a and 4b), although the entrances face the street / the rear of the site. The development presents a side-to-front relationship with 4a / 4b.



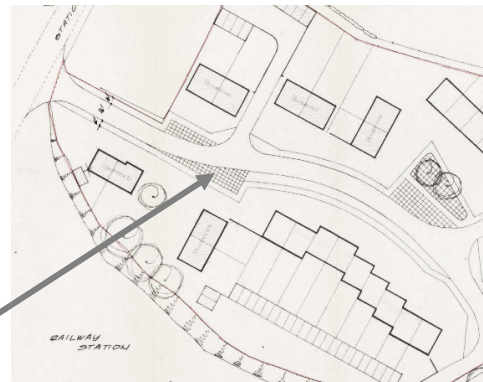
The South Oxfordshire Design Guide, 7.14, requires that applicants check that ‘back to back distances are a minimum of 25 metres; back to side are a minimum of 12 metres; front to front a minimum of 10 metres [...]’.

In this case, if a front-to-front arrangement had been proposed, a minimum distance of 10m would meet the requirements - the proposed development has a greater distance than this. A rear-to-side relationship (where there is a greater need for rear garden space to be safeguarded) requires a minimum separation of 12m – the grassed area is not private space and is visible within the public environment. Therefore the distance which exceeds 12m, does not present a loss of privacy or conflict with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

- 6.3iii The proposal includes two ground floor windows (serving a bedroom and a kitchenette), and one upper floor window on the side elevation (facing 8a and 8b) serving a kitchenette. The proposed boundary fencing is sufficient to safeguard the privacy of ground floor living space opposite, and the separation distance of 12.4m is sufficient to safeguard the privacy of upper floor rooms and residential amenity of neighbouring occupants opposite.

6.4 Highways and parking provision

- 6.4i The South Oxfordshire Local Plan – Appendix 5, and policy D2 of the SOLP, set out the car parking standards for residential developments. Two spaces are required for dwellings with 2 bedrooms, and are required to meet the dimensions specified in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide of 2.5m wide by 5m long.
- 6.4ii The Highway Officer has assessed proposal, and made a recommendation based on the existing on-street parking arrangements available to residents and the sustainable nature of Wheatley:
- The original development P62/M0464 (2 houses and 18 flats) provided parking in the form of on-street bays and garages, but no off-street parking or allocated spaces.
 - Within this context, 4a, 4b, 6a, 6b, 8a and 8b do not have dedicated on-site parking provided as part of the original development, but have access to garages off-site. This is consistent with other residential properties within the development.



- In 2011, 4a was granted permission for 2 parking spaces to the side. This was requested for convenience of the occupiers and did not respond to any development requirement or a need to meet planning policy requirements.
- Parking standards indicate that a maximum of two spaces should be provided for a two bedroom unit, with the parking situation for the existing dwellings remaining unchanged, i.e. no loss of parking. However, given the sustainable nature of the site in terms of walking, cycling and public transport opportunities and in its proximity to the village centre the Highways Officer advised this could be reduced to one space per unit. (Comments referenced from the previous proposal - P16/S4254/FUL)
- The scheme provides three spaces to serve flats 3 and 4, to respond to the likely needs of two new households, associated with the two new units. Flats 1 and 2 (existing) would have no dedicated parking, which equates to the same impact of the original development.
- The Highways Officer has re-assessed the current proposal for the provision of two 2-bed flats and has raised no objection, subject to the provision of the parking spaces indicated on plans.

6.4iii While it is recognised that the residential area is often busy, particularly in the evenings and early mornings, and that visitors to the nearby shop add to the pressure for spaces in the immediate area, for the reasons set out above there are insufficient grounds to insist on additional parking, over and above the three proposed spaces. The Highways Officer has confirmed that the level of parking meets policy requirements within a sustainable location and has raised no objections.

6.5 **Additional matters**

6.5i **Private amenity space**

Minimum standards for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in Policy D3 of the Local Plan but allow for shared amenity space. A minimum of 50 square metres of private garden area would be required for each of the proposed two bed dwellings; the two existing units would remain as 2-bed flats.

Following the division of the plot, and taking into account the planning permission for a conservatory (adjoining 4a), the remaining area of 320sqm would be split between the four dwellings. While the ground floor flats would have private enclosed space, and the upper floors would have shared space, this arrangement is not unusual for flats, and provides an average of 80sqm each. The strip of land to the side allows for access to the shared space without having to go through the building, and allows practical access to the bike store. This layout meets the policy requirement relating to amenity space in residential developments.

6.5ii **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability**

The CIL charge applied to new build residential development is £156 per square metre (as per indexing figure January 2017) in Wheatley. 15% of the CIL payment will go directly to Wheatley Parish Council (in the absence of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan) for spending towards local projects. In this case the development would result in the provision of 112sqm of new residential floorspace.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 I recommend that full planning permission is granted. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable for the following reasons:

7.2 The proposal for two flats within the built limits of a sustainable village accords with housing policy and the principle of residential development in this location is

acceptable. The scale, height, location and design of the development relates appropriately to the immediate residential development. The proposal sufficiently safeguards the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants and is at a scale that is appropriate to the plot and neighbouring buildings. The level of parking provided conforms with the parking standards in the Development Plan.

Subject to recommended conditions, the proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and National Planning Practice Guidance (2014), South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012), South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Saved policies, 2011) and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016).

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Work to commence within three years.**
- 2. In accordance with plans.**
- 3. Materials schedule to be submitted prior to commencement.**
- 4. Parking as indicated on plans.**
- 5. Boundary treatment and amenity space to be set out prior to occupation.**

Author: Katherine Canavan
Contact No: 01235 422600
Email: planning@southoxon.gov.uk

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