

APPLICATION NO.	P12/S1912/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	23.8.2012
PARISH	ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Paul Harrison Mr Alan Rooke
APPLICANT	Mr Robert Richardson
SITE	Beechwood House Gallowstree Road Peppard Common, RG9 5HT
PROPOSAL	Replacement dwelling with integral garage and revised levels following granting of consent under P11/E2033.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	469993/181108
OFFICER	Mr Peter Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee because of a conflict between officers' recommendation and the views of Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is a spacious plot of around 4,800 square metres on the southern outskirts of Peppard Common. It is the last residential plot within the built-up limits of the village. The site lies on the western side of Gallowstree Road, which continues in a southerly direction into the open countryside and on into Gallowstree Common.
- 1.3 Much of the rear of the site falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A public footpath runs along the southern side boundary of the site and across the field to the rear. This footpath almost wholly crosses land within the AONB.
- 1.4 At the planning committee on 11 April 2012, members resolved to grant planning permission for the demolition of the existing 1960s detached dwelling on the site and the erection of a replacement dwelling of contemporary design and construction. The existing dwelling has now been removed from the site.
- 1.5 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** at Appendix One. Appendix One also contains a second OS extract that shows a hatched area to denote the boundary of the AONB.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Following the granting of planning permission in April, and the removal of the existing dwelling, the applicant now proposes further alterations to the approved scheme. The first of these is the revision of the levels of the proposed house. As a consequence, the ridge of the proposed dwelling is 80 centimetres higher than the approved scheme.
- 2.2 The second new element of the scheme is an integral double garage. This will project forward of the approved house, continuing the single storey front projection.
- 2.3 In all other respects, the dwelling remains as approved. The design remains contemporary, with a distinctive appearance due to the proposed palette of materials.

Brick, weathering steel and zinc are proposed for the exterior walls of the house, under a single ply membrane roof. Members who attended the site visit for the previous application will have seen samples of these materials.

- 2.4 As before, the new house falls within the part of the site that falls within the AONB.
- 2.5 The plans of the proposed development are **attached** as Appendix Two. Members' attention is drawn to the fact that the "existing" floor plans and elevations represent the approved scheme, to allow easy comparison with the house now proposed. Supporting documentation, including the Design and Access Statement, can be found on the council's website (www.southoxon.gov.uk).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council** – Recommends refusal for the following reasons:

- The additional height and uncompromising nature of the development will spoil the predominantly rural views from adjoining footpath in the Chilterns AONB
- The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the outlook from adjoining properties
- The garage increases the volume and scale to an unacceptable amount

OCC Highways Area Liaison Officer – No objections subject to conditions relating to vision splay details, turning area and car parking and surface water drainage

Neighbour Representations – One letter of objection received from owners of Yew Tree Cottage. Considers increase in ridge height of proposed dwelling will increase visual prominence, to the detriment of the outlook from Yew Tree Cottage.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/E2033](#) - Approved (11/04/2012)

Erection of replacement dwelling following granting of permission P11/E0514 for extensions and alterations to existing dwelling

[P11/E0514](#) - Approved (07/06/2011)

Extensions and alterations to existing dwelling with associated external works

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G4 - Protection of Countryside
- G6 - Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings
- C2 - Harm to the AONB
- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- 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
- D8 - Conservation and efficient use of energy
- D10 - Waste Management
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- H5 - Housing sites in smaller villages
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2008
The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)
Chilterns Building Design Guide

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In determining the previous application, officers concluded the application site falls within the built up limits of Peppard Common. Thus, Policy H5 of the Local Plan is relevant, as it supports the principle of this development subject to the following:
- i) An important open space of public, environmental or ecological value should not be lost, nor an important public view spoilt
 - ii) The design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development must be in keeping with the surroundings
 - iii) The character of the area should not be adversely affected
 - iv) There should be no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections and;
 - v) If the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access

6.2 Other considerations relevant to this proposal are:

- Whether the health of nearby protected trees would be affected by the new house and access
- Whether the proposal would incorporate appropriate sustainability and waste management measures
- Whether there are any issues regarding land contamination

6.3 Officers would highlight that the vast majority of this proposal remains unchanged from the April permission. Therefore, whilst the merits of the whole scheme are discussed below, officers' focus is primarily on the additional impact from the changes proposed here

Siting Issues

6.4 As the application site is, and will remain, used as a private residence there are no concerns about the loss of an important open space.

6.5 Views into the site are possible from the road at the front of the site, and from the footpath that runs along the side and rear of the plot. However, there is no right to a view across private land. Thus, the views across the application site are not an important public view. Wider views of the rural landscape will not be materially affected.

6.6 In regards to this consideration, officers do not consider the proposed increase in height or the new forward garage would cause a significant change. The house is set well back from the road and some way from the footpath. Given the distances, and intervening screening, the proposed increase in height would be largely imperceptible. The proposed garage would still be set well back from the front boundary of the site and has a subservient single storey form.

Design Issues

6.7 The immediately neighbouring properties to the north, Yew Tree Cottage and Old Well Cottage are attractive but individual period buildings. Officers accept this dwelling would clearly be a unique building in the area. But, given the diversity of the street scene, officers consider the individual design approach remains acceptable.

- 6.8 Paragraph 60 of The Framework states, *“Planning...decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms of styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.”* Paragraph 65 is also relevant and states, *“Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings...which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns are mitigated by good design...”*
- 6.9 Officers are mindful this proposal incorporates a large number of sustainability measures, including sedum roofs, photovoltaic panels and a biomass boiler, whilst the unusual materials proposed are also part of an overall strategy to create a highly energy efficient home, something the above guidance makes clear the council is required to support when appropriate.
- 6.10 In assessing the design approach of this proposal, officers are mindful of the advice contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) and the Chilterns Building Design Guide (CBDG). The CBDG sits below the SODG in the hierarchy of planning guidance and generally promotes traditional design. It states modern design such as this should only be built in exceptional circumstances, when the building enhances the character of the landscape and demonstrates the highest principles of sustainability. The CBDG does not outline what it considers an appropriate level of sustainability for such a proposal, whilst officers discuss the impact of the new dwelling on the character of the area in the next section.
- 6.11 The SODG has significant weight in the decision making process and is clear that good design is sustainable design and consequently supports the use of many of the sustainable measures incorporated into this scheme. However, as before, the council can only support this modern approach if the scale of the building is appropriate to the surroundings.
- Scale of development and impact on the character of the area**
- 6.12 At this stage, officers would highlight again the need to primarily focus on the changes proposed in this application, given the recent consent. However, officers will summarise below the main considerations that led to a recommendation of approval for the earlier version of this scheme, as well as considering the impact of the changes now proposed.
- 6.13 Despite the increase in ridge height, the proposed dwelling reaches a height noticeably less than the previous house on the site. Its maximum height is 63 centimetres lower than the 1960s pitched roof building now removed. The previous house was two-storey for its entire depth, whilst only the front range of the proposed dwelling is two-storey. Overall, the two-storey range of the new dwelling remains less bulky than the previous dwelling.
- 6.14 Officers accept the proposed house is a rather sprawling affair. The addition of the garage increases the single storey depth of the building to a maximum of around 32 metres. This is an increase of around 6.3 metres over the approved scheme. However, the footprint of the larger dwelling still covers less than 10% of the site. This is comparable to neighbouring properties.
- 6.15 Thus, officers do not consider this translates into an overdevelopment of the site. Furthermore, the majority of the accommodation remains contained in low-key flat roofed single storey elements of around 3 metres in height. The applicant proposes to sink this rear projection into the ground to reduce its prominence from the surrounding

area.

- 6.16 From observation on site, even in winter months, existing evergreen planting offers excellent screening of the rear of the plot when approaching along the road from the south, or when walking along the footpath immediately to the south of the site. This footpath is on higher ground, so from this public vantage point, passers by will be looking down onto a lower, albeit larger, dwelling.
- 6.17 The rear of the building becomes more prominent in winter months to the west of the site, as the planting is thinner along the rear boundary of the plot. However, from here, the rear elevation of the new house will be seen against a backdrop of dense woodland on the opposite side of Gallowstree Road. This will reduce the prominence of the new building from this footpath, particularly given the low ridge height. Officers consider the 80 centimetre increase in the ridge height does not change this conclusion. At the distances involved, such an increase will be extremely difficult to notice.
- 6.18 An associated benefit with this scheme is the removal of two existing outbuildings to the side and rear of the house. The removal of an unattractive flat roof storage building close to the rear boundary will help to free up views across the site from the footpath to the west.
- 6.19 When approaching the application site from the north, i.e. from the main part of Peppard Common, intervening houses and planting along front boundaries mean there will be very few views of the new house until almost directly opposite.
- 6.20 Officers do consider the forward garage to be a regrettable addition to the site. The SODG generally advises against the use of forward garages. They can compete with the main dwelling in views from the public realm and harm the appearance of the street scene.
- 6.21 The garage proposed here is a large double garage and officers consider it will add some noticeable bulk to the dwelling. This is particularly the case from the southern elevation. From here, the depth of the building is appreciated, and the garage adds to this depth, forming part of a blank wall some 18.8 metres in depth, before the single storey extensions at the rear step in from this southernmost point.
- 6.22 However, officers are mindful that, relative to the whole house, the increase in footprint is minor. The garage has a footprint of around 40 square metres, which represents approximately a 13% increase in the ground floor footprint of the entire dwelling. Given the size of the site, this increase is not considered to be material.
- 6.23 Furthermore, at the closest point, the garage will be set back 15 metres from the front boundary of the site. Officers consider it important a generous depth of frontage is maintained at this site, to ensure the retention of the spacious character of the site.
- 6.24 Thus, on balance, officers conclude the additional harm from the garage, over and above the approved scheme, is insufficient to warrant a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.25 Therefore, whilst officers again acknowledge the striking design will not be universally appreciated; officers conclude the impact of the new house on the character of the area does not warrant a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.26 Officers propose to carry across all conditions attached to the previous permission to this new consent. These conditions include the prior agreement of samples for all external materials, a landscaping scheme and the removal of permitted development

rights for further extensions to the dwelling, and for any other outbuildings in the garden.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.27 Officers are satisfied the proposed changes to the dwelling will not materially change the approved relationship with neighbours.
- 6.28 The immediate neighbour is Yew Tree Cottage, located to the northeast. Yew Tree Cottage is orientated so that its front elevation faces southeast, across the front garden of Beechwood House. It is located on noticeably lower ground and, when standing in the front garden, the new dwelling will be clearly viewable. However, intervening planting within both gardens offers reasonable screening. The new front garage will be seen from within the garden of Yew Tree Cottage, but officers consider its single storey design will ensure its impact on this neighbour will be limited.
- 6.29 The majority of the dwelling will remain set behind Yew Tree Cottage. The two-storey element will remain around 13 metres from the shared boundary. Retained planting at this point will provide good screening. Regardless of this planting, officers are satisfied the new dwelling will have an acceptable relationship with this neighbour. Yew Tree Cottage is located close to its rear boundary, so that the majority of its outlook is across the front garden of both its own site and Beechwood House. The new dwelling will not affect this outlook significantly, whilst it is far enough away to ensure no loss of light to this neighbour, despite the increase in height.
- 6.30 As before, there are no first floor windows facing towards neighbours. There will be some oblique overlooking of Yew Tree Cottage from secondary windows serving a bedroom and the living room on the ground floor. However, such overlooking will be at a reasonable distance and officers do not find this materially harmful. Thus, officers find the impact of this proposal on the amenity of the occupants of Yew Tree Cottage to be acceptable.

Highway Safety

- 6.31 As before, the applicant proposes to realign the access to achieve wider visibility splays. The new garage will provide additional off-street parking and appropriate turning and manoeuvring areas will be provided. Thus, this proposal will have an appropriate impact on highway safety.
- 6.32 The Highways Liaison Officer has requested an additional condition on this consent relating to surface water drainage. Officers note the road passing the front of the site is on a higher level to the site itself. Thus, the risk of surface water running onto the road due to this development appears limited. Accordingly, officers do not agree this condition is necessary or justified.

Trees

- 6.33 The plans provided show the retention of a number of trees, as per the previous application. The applicant has subsequently submitted an arboricultural method statement to the satisfaction of the council's forestry officer. Thus, subject to a condition requiring the updating of this method statement to reflect the changes proposed, this application will continue to have an acceptable impact on the health of the trees in and around the site.

Sustainability

- 6.34 As before, the applicant intends to incorporate a high level of sustainability in the construction of the new dwelling, to achieve Level Four of the Code for Sustainable Homes. This is beyond what the council currently requires and is an important

justification of the modern design approach. Both the SODG and CBDG are supportive of modern design when it incorporates a high level of sustainability. Officers consider the sustainable measures to be incorporated into the construction of the dwelling are a material factor in the recommendation of approval. The increase in ridge height and the new garage will not change the overall approach to construction.

- 6.35 There is limited information regarding provision for bin storage and recycling within the site, but officers' are satisfied this can be easily accommodated given the size of the plot.

Land Contamination

- 6.36 The applicant has already submitted a land contamination questionnaire in respect of the previous permission. This has largely been agreed, but a condition will require this questionnaire to be updated, following the demolition of the existing house and the increase in footprint proposed here.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The principle of a replacement dwelling in this location is acceptable, in accordance with Policy H5. The application proposes further minor additions and alterations to the approved modern, highly sustainable building. The overall increase in height, bulk and footprint from the consented scheme is relatively minor and officers consider the proposed dwelling will not have a materially harmful impact on the character of the area, much of which falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.2 The proposed dwelling would not significantly affect neighbouring amenity, nor highway safety and the health of the remaining trees on the site. The dwelling would incorporate appropriate waste management measures and achieve a level of sustainability well in excess of what this council currently requires.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Planning Permission subject to:

- 1. Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Planning condition listing the approved drawings**
- 3. Levels relative to fixed datum point to be agreed**
- 4. Samples of all materials to be agreed**
- 5. Turning Area & Car Parking as per approved plans**
- 6. Vision splay details to be agreed**
- 7. Sustainable Design Features as per approved details**
- 8. Tree Protection to be agreed**
- 9. Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only) to be agreed**
- 10. Withdrawal of PD (Part 1 Classes A, B and E)**
- 11. Contamination Investigation to be agreed**

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