APPLICATION NO.	P18/S3174/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	25.9.2018
PARISH	WHEATLEY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Toby Newman
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs J. Webb
SITE	85 Littleworth Road Wheatley, OX33 1NW
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing dwelling; erection two detached dwellings with associated parking; new vehicular access (as amended by drwgnos 1127 - 13, 1127 - 14, 1127 - 15, 1127 - 16 and 1127 - 17 received on 28 November 2018 to alter the design of the dwelling and the parking configuration and drwgno 1127 - 1C and revised Design and Access Statement received on 2 January 2019)
AMENDMENT	Amended by drwgnos 1127 - 13, 1127 - 14, 1127 - 15, 1127 - 16 and 1127 - 17 received on 28 November 2018 to alter the design of the dwelling and the parking configuration and drwgno 1127 - 1C and revised Design and Access Statement received on 2 January 2019
OFFICER	Will Darlison

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The application is referred to planning committee because the Officer's recommendation of approval conflicts with that of Wheatley Parish Council.

1.2 85 Littleworth Road is an unlisted detached bungalow with a detached single bay garage located to the side and rear of the dwelling. The bungalow is set back from the road at an elevated position. Located to the front of the property is a large open front garden with a driveway available for parking, which is located along the Western boundary.

1.3 The site lies within the built-up limits of the village of Wheatley and does not fall within any specially designated area.

1.4 A plan identifying the site can be found at **Appendix 1** to this report.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the replacement of the existing detached bungalow and garage with two detached two-storey houses with sunken garage elements that would be accessed via a driveway running from the front of the site.

2.2 The application has been amended over the course of the determination period to respond to concerns with regards to the design and appearance of the proposed dwellings, their massing and the parking/access configuration.

2.3 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application can be found at **Appendix 2** to this report. All the plans and representations can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk under the planning application reference number.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
Full responses can be found on the Council's website

3.1 **Wheatley Parish Council** – Objection to the originally submitted proposal.

- Overdevelopment of the site, replacing the bungalow with two, three storey, four bedroom houses and the impact this will have on neighbouring properties
- Two detached dwellings on this plot is out of keeping with all neighbouring single properties in Littleworth Road
- The flat roof design of the dwelling is out of character with the other properties in an established road
- Ridge lines on the West side still above neighbouring properties

Objection to the amended proposal.

- Overdevelopment of the site, replacing a bungalow with two, two-storey, four bedroom houses and the impact this will have on neighbouring properties
- Two detached dwellings on this plot is out of keeping with the all neighbouring single properties on Littleworth Road
- The Local Highway Authority consultation have recommended a holding objection

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) - No objection to the originally submitted proposal subject to conditions and informatives.

Holding objection to amended proposal:

- The revised layout seeks the provision of garage accommodation, however the egress manoeuvre associated with this parking is considered impractical and therefore unlikely to be used. This would likely result in indiscriminate/obstructive parking occurring within the vicinity of the proposal

Holding objection to the amended proposal withdrawn upon submission of revised parking provision a the front of the site.

Contaminated Land - No objections to the original submitted proposal or the amended proposal.

Drainage - No objection to the originally submitted proposal subject to pre-commencement surface water and foul water conditions. No further comments provided.

Neighbour Representations – Originally submitted proposal:

Neighbour Objection x (2)

- The proposals are out of character with the whole area
- The neighbours would all be overlooked to a greater degree than the previously approved dwelling
- Overly dominant with its relationship with the immediate neighbouring properties to an oppressive extent
- The dwellings would be bulky, imposing and unsightly and P17/S4377/FUL was a better design

- The development is an overdevelopment of the site, exceeding the existing footprint
- The properties should be respectful of the roof ridge lines of neighbours and not be greater than those of properties that are at higher ground levels

Amended proposal:

Neighbour Object x (2)

- The design would be improved by incorporating the standard 2m gap between dwellings
- Accepting less would be setting a precedent for such narrow gaps and encourage similar standards elsewhere
- It would lead to a cramped overbuilt street scene here in Littleworth Road and Barlow Close
- The need for a basement garage given the parking for three cars at the front of the site. This would create in effect a three storey house with the eaves level with 83 Littleworth Road when they should be lower given the drop in ground level

Neighbour No Objection x (1)

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P18/S2189/FUL – Other Outcome (28/08/2018)
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two dwellings with new vehicular access and parking

P17/S4377/FUL - Approved (30/01/2018)
Demolition of existing dwelling and garage; erection replacement dwelling and integral garage (as amended by drwgnos 1118.1B and 1118.6C to increase internal length of integral garage received on 25/01/2018)

P17/S3094/FUL - Approved (19/10/2017)
Demolition of existing dwelling and garage; erection replacement dwelling (as amended by drwgno 1118-1 A to remove detached garage and Contaminated Land Questionnaire received on 19/09/2017).

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 (SOCS) policies:**
CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSS1 – The Overall Strategy
CSQ3 - Design
CSR1 – housing in Villages

5.2 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) policies:**
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
EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
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

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

5.3 **South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG)**
National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The issues to be considered in relation to this proposal are:

- **The principle of the development.**
- **Impact on neighbours.**
- **Design and appearance of the dwelling and the impact on the character of the wider area.**
- **Access, parking and amenity space.**
- **Impact on drainage.**
- **Impact on protected species.**
- **Other issues.**

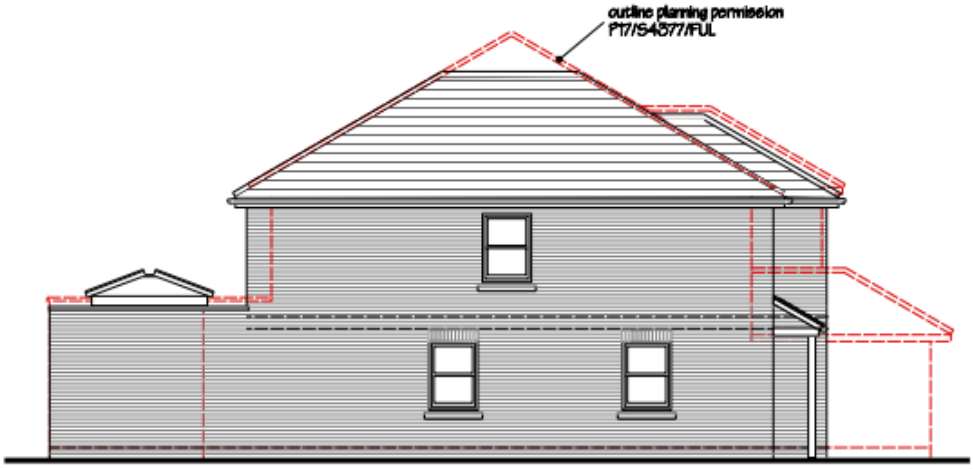
6.2 **The principle of the development.** Policy H4 of the SOLP permits the erection of replacement dwellings within the built-up areas of the 4 main towns of the district and within the built-up limits of the villages provided that;

- An important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt;
- 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;
- there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections; and
- if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.

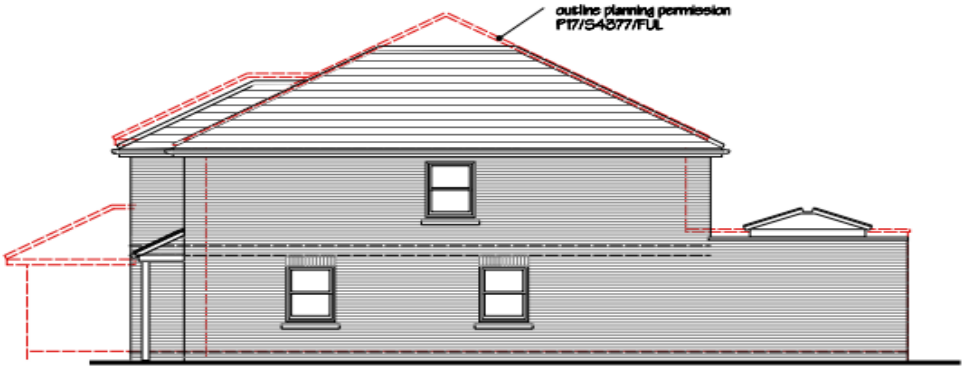
6.3 It is my view that the proposed replacement dwellings would be compliant with all the above listed criteria of policy H4 as shall be detailed through the report, and that on this basis the development would be acceptable in principle**.** However, the last criterion does not apply as the development is not backland.

6.4 **Impact on neighbours.** Policy D4 of the SOLP states that all new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight or as a result of being overbearing.

6.5 The two proposed dwellings in their amended form would be two-storey in height above ground level and sited to be in line with the two immediate neighbouring properties: 87 Littleworth Road to the West and 83 Littleworth Road to the East. The envelope of the proposed built form would, as can be seen below from the Street Elevation and side elevations of both dwellings, not be materially enlarged beyond that of the previously approved detached dwelling and with respect to the overall ridge height, lower than what was approved.



East



West

6.6 Therefore, on the basis of the above the siting and relative positioning of the existing and proposed properties remains a critical factor in terms of impact on the two neighbouring dwellings as it was on the previously permission. For 87 Littleworth Road to the West this configuration would avoid the proposed built form of Plot 2 from presenting a large expanse of side wall either in front of or to the rear of this dwelling along what are more open sections of the shared boundary as the two-storey element would be broadly in line with the neighbouring property. This would provide sufficient mitigation of the proposed two-storey built-form even when the change in levels between the two sites is taken into consideration and I am of the opinion it would not be overbearing or oppressive on this neighbour.

6.7 The West facing elevation would contain a single window at first floor level, which would serve a staircase/landing area of Plot 2. Due to the importance of protecting the ongoing privacy of 87 Littleworth Road it is both reasonable and necessary to attach a condition to secure that this window is obscure glazed and fixed shut as well as the East facing shower room window, which would look towards Plot 1.

6.8 The impact of Plot 1 upon 83 Littleworth Road to the West would be very similar in terms of outlook, again by virtue of the replacement dwelling being in line with the built form of this neighbouring property and an appropriately comparable depth. Therefore, I am satisfied that it would not have an overbearing or oppressive impact on this neighbour particularly when the higher ground levels of 83 Littleworth Road are taken in account. Plot 1 like Plot 2 would only introduce a single upper storey window facing towards this neighbouring property. This would again serve a staircase/landing area and would again be ensured as obscured glazed and fixed shut through the imposition of a condition, which would include the West facing first floor shower room looking out towards Plot 2. Therefore, it is also my view there would be no material harm to the outlook or privacy of this neighbouring property.

6.9 Finally, to be considered, is the impact of the proposed development on 83 and 87 Littleworth Road in terms of light. The proposed dwellings would be located due West and East of these neighbours respectively and as has been previously discussed they would be in line with these neighbouring properties. This would in my view mean that through the course of the day the development would not result in a materially harmful loss of direct sunlight or ambient daylight to the neighbours. The positioning of the proposed dwellings would aid in this because where the proposals would cast shadows they would fall towards and over the built form of the garage and 87 Littleworth Road and the blank two-storey side wall of 83 Littleworth Road.

6.10 With regards to the properties on Barlow Close to the South the proposed development would be in compliance with the SODG guidelines for back to boundary distances and back to back distances. The back to boundary guideline is a minimum of 10 metres and both Plots 1 and 2 have 15 metres demonstrated on the proposed block plan. In terms of back to back distances the SODG guideline is minimum of 25 metres, which can be met based on the available information for the proposed properties that have been granted to the West of 36 Barlow Close under application reference P03/W0834. Under such circumstances as well as the accepted residential character of the area would mean that the properties would all have useable private amenity space.

6.11 **Design and appearance of the dwelling and the impact on the character of the wider area.** The proposed dwellings were originally submitted employing a design that attempted a much more contemporary approach with a stark rectangular built-form being the dominant characteristic. This was in my opinion not of sufficiently high quality design and lacked the necessary innovative features and approach to materials to warrant the dramatic impact such a departure from the local vernacular would have. This was a view echoed when the application was taken to the council led Architects Panel.

6.12 The amended plans have shifted the design into a more traditional style and one that draws a number of cues from the previously approved detached dwelling. The properties would be mirror images of each other and employ a roof scape that would employ hipped roofs over the two-storey section and flat roofs over the single storey rear projection. They would have their massing broken up at the front through utilising a staggered front wall.

6.13 The proposed materials are to match those approved under P17/S4377/FUL with facing brick for the external wall construction under an artificial slate roofs. This would be in my view, as was the case on that application not incongruous to the established character and appearance of the site and the wider residential area.

6.14 Littleworth Road as well as Old Road to the West have a variety of architectural styles, house types and materials. In addition, there also currently exists a disparity in scale between neighbouring properties on this section of Littleworth Road, with the existing single storey bungalow on the application site being located immediately next to a two-storey house: 83 Littleworth Road to the East. Going West there are two further bungalows: 87 and 89 Littleworth Road before the scale and massing again increases to that of a house in the form 91 Littleworth Road. With such a context, the introduction of two detached properties that are discernibly different in terms of their narrower plot width and closer level of proximity to each other would not harm the character of the area but only add to the variety of property and plot types. They would also be seen to continue the line of two-storey houses with a step down in overall roof ridge line height when compared to 83 Littleworth Road.

6.15 Plots 1 and 2 would be detached with a narrow gap of some 1 metre between their side walls. There are no prescriptive dimensions set out within the SODG or development plan policies for side wall to side wall separation distances for new dwellings. Given this policy background and that the proposed development is for no more than two units I am satisfied that such a narrow gap would not become an emphasized pattern of built-form character and that it does not represent a reason for refusal. All applications are assessed on their own merits and subject to their context, the level of separation does not pose a significant risk to the area as a whole given the aforementioned low number of units and that in isolation it would form a minority approach amongst the spectrum of building types. A widespread move to introduce this separation distance between properties would not be supported accordingly.

6.16 There is the matter of the parking spaces that are to be created off the new shared access at the front of the site. As shall be discussed later in this report, both Plot 1 and Plot 2 will have a parking area providing 3 spaces per plot and the parking of cars here will be a change to the established character of the properties on this part of Littleworth Road, where the long front gardens typically lead to parking located closer to the front elevations of the dwellings. It is important to note that the properties along this section of Littleworth Road are not of any particular architectural or historic interest and their setting and views from the road towards them whilst characteristic of the area are subject to alteration without planning permission. This would be in the form of permitted development rights afforded to domestic properties under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of the General Permitted Development Order. Class F allows for the creation of areas of hardstanding in a domestic context subject to certain criteria being met. Therefore, an area for the parking of vehicles could be created at the application site without the need to apply to the District Council for planning permission. This has in my view, a material bearing upon the proposed development. The non-enclosed nature of the parking being proposed is on that basis not considered to be damaging to the character of the area, particularly when the residential context is taken into account and the variety of parking arrangement that can be seen on the wider Littleworth Road.

6.17 **Access, parking and amenity space.** The proposed scheme in its amended form would alter the position of the vehicular access point on the application site. It would no longer be aligned to the Eastern boundary but centrally located and be shared between the two proposed dwellings. A parking area for each property with turning space would be sited at the front of the site and leading South towards the dwellings themselves

would be two driveways sloping down to a sunken garage element located below ground level.

6.18 The holding objection to the proposal was withdrawn by the Highways Liaison Officer subject to a number of conditions and informatives to be attached. These shall ensure that the parking is implemented in accordance with the submitted plans and protects the safety of highways users both during the construction phase and afterwards.

6.19 The two proposed dwellings can demonstrate that they would have 136 square metres of private amenity garden space at the rear, which based on them having four bedrooms each would be in accordance with Policy D3 of the SOLP. It would also be in line with the Section 7 paragraph 7.8 of the SODG where guidance is given that for 3+ bedroom properties there should be at least 100 square metres of amenity space. It is on that basis that, in my opinion the proposed development would not be represent an overdevelopment of the site.

6.20 **Impact on drainage.** The amended proposed development would involve the excavation of the sloped driveway access to the garaging and the below ground garage elements themselves. The representations received from the Drainage Engineers raised no objection to the proposed development on the basis that if planning permission were to be granted conditions be attached requiring the approval of a full surface water drainage scheme and a full foul water drainage scheme.

6.21 Due to the aforementioned excavation that would be required to create the garage level and driveway leading down to them it is important to set out that the excavated material should be properly handled. The storage of such a large amount of material on the site would not be desirable in drainage terms or in the interests of visual amenity. Therefore, a condition is to be attached requiring that prior to the first occupation of the dwellings the excavated materials is removed from the application site.

6.22 **Impact on protected species.** Although the records for the site do not indicate that this area is the habitat of protected species because of the level of demolition taking place as part of the proposed development the comments from the Country Officer which were made on P17/S3094/FUL are equally relevant here.

6.23 Their assessment concluded that there would only be a low risk of impacts on protected species. However, they noted that, as certain species, particularly bats are highly mobile and opportunistic mammals which tuck themselves into narrow cracks and crevices a bat informative should be placed on the permission. This informative is recommended again on this proposed development.

6.24 **Other issues.** The council's CIL charging schedule has been adopted and applies 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 the CIL is liable for the replacement dwellings on the basis of a net increase in floor space in connection with the creation of new residential units.

6.25 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

6.26 The site is located within the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Area and the Plan is currently at the parish pre-submission consultation stage of the process, such that it currently holds limited weight in decision making.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Officers recommend that planning permission is granted because the development constitutes two dwellings that would be of an acceptable size, location and design that would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area or materially harm the wider. The site affords for sufficient amenity space, parking provision and would not result in a materially harmful neighbourly impact to the neighbouring properties. In conjunction with the attached conditions the proposal accords with development plan policies.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:**

1 : Commencement three years - Full Planning Permission
2 : Approved plans
3 : Materials as stated within Design and Access Statement
4 : Obscure glazing
5 : New vehicular access
6 : Close existing access (a)
7 : Vision splay dimensions
8 : Reduce Gravel Spread onto Highway
9 : Turning Area & Car Parking
10 : No Surface Water Drainage to Highway
11 : Surface water drainage works (details required)
12 : Foul drainage works (details required)
13 : No deposit of spoil or materials
14 : Bats Informative – Short
15 : Oxfordshire County Council formal approval informative
16 : Section 151 Highways Act informative
17 : Section 137 Highways Act 1980 informative

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