

APPLICATION NO.	P19/S4261/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	22.11.19
PARISH	BINFIELD HEATH
WARD MEMBERS	Leigh Rawlins & David Bartholomew
APPLICANT	Mr J Cocks
SITE	Bournes Farmhouse, Harpsden Road, Binfield Heath
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a two-storey 4-bedroom detached dwelling with basement and detached carport and a two storey 3-bedroom detached dwelling with basement and integral garage, both using retained access from Harpsden Road (updated bat survey received 19th December 2019 and access width confirmed and carport enlarged as shown on revised site plan received 9th January 2020).
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Officers recommend that planning permission is granted. This report explains how officers have reached this conclusion. The application is referred to Planning Committee due to Binfield Heath Parish Council's objection.

1.2 The application site is identified at **Appendix A**. It comprises a detached two storey dwelling at the northern end of Binfield Heath within the Chilterns AONB. The existing dwelling is constructed in red brick with a slate roof. The site boundaries are denoted by mature and semi-mature trees and close board fencing. In recent years two-storey dwellings have been built on either side of Bournes Farmhouse on land that formed part of its curtilage, Mulberry Cottage to the north-east and Acacia House to the south-west. The Bottle & Glass public house, a Grade II listed building lies further to the north-east. There are other dwellings to the south-west that form a continuous built-up frontage along this part of Harpsden Road. There is a slight fall in land levels across the site and continuing beyond from south-west to north-east. There are no other special designations on this site.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with two detached houses, as detailed on the plans and supporting documents submitted with the application. The bat survey, access and carport dimensions have been updated during the processing of the application.

2.2 Copies of the current plans are provided at **Appendix B** whilst other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Binfield Heath Parish Council** – Objection:

1. Binfield Heath Parish Council objects to this development on two grounds: As we stated on the previous application (assigned in error to the no objection category), we object in principle to the demolition of an attractive Victorian farmhouse whose garden has already recently provided sites for two brand new houses.

The old farmhouse is part of our local architectural heritage, a building of interest, age and particular character. It also stands in the AONB, whose nature should be protected.

2. The planning officer in his original advice stated that: In officers opinion the residential development of the site would fall within the definition of infill development, because it would form the redevelopment of an existing dwelling on a site that is closely surrounded by other buildings on all four sides. This statement is incorrect as the house backs on to open fields and also has no housing directly opposite (just a line of woodland, narrowing to where the road meets Common Lane). If this application were to be approved then the built landscape of this part of the village would show a row of five 21st century houses where there once stood just one Victorian farmhouse plus an open car parking area belonging to the pub. This village is characterised by its open spaces and natural field and garden gaps between buildings and this would constitute too much of an alteration to its natural character and appearance. In our objection we are therefore citing loss of character in the area and over-development of the plot. We are also aware that some of the newest houses in the village have been converted wholly to holiday let use, thereby completely thwarting planning intentions to provide permanent homes for people who need them. If, therefore, this application should be approved we request that a condition be imposed to prevent the new houses being used as tourist accommodation rather than homes for village residents.

3.2 **Conservation Officer** – No objection to loss of farmhouse on heritage grounds

3.3 **Forestry Officer** – No objection subject to conditions

3.4 **Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)** - No objection subject to condition

3.5 **Countryside Officer** - No objection subject to conditions

3.6 **SGN Plant Protection Team** – No strong views

3.7 **Local Residents** – No representations received

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P18/S3379/PEM](#) - Proposed residential development. - Pre-App Response on 29/03/2019

4.2 [P15/S2278/FUL](#) - Erection of a detached two-storey 3-bedroom dwelling and attached single garage to the north-east of the existing dwelling and a detached two-storey 4-bedroom dwelling and detached carport to the south-west of the existing dwelling and formation of vehicular accesses from Harpsden Road. - Planning Permission on 28/08/2015

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

CSEN1 - Landscape protection

CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSH2 – Housing density

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 policies;

- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
- C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- D1 - Principles of good design
- D10 - Waste Management
- D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 - Outdoor amenity area
- D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G5 – Making the best use of land
- 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 Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

On 10th October 2019 the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government issued a Holding Direction on the Council in relation to the emerging Local Plan 2034. The holding direction has been made under the provisions of Section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This means that the emerging plan has 'no effect whilst the direction is in force', this is set out in section 21A(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 – Section 7 – Plots and Buildings
South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Character Area 10
Chilterns Buildings Design Guide – Chapter 3

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

The policies within the Development Plan 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 the distribution of housing;
- result in the loss of open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- cause the loss of a building of heritage value or detract from the setting of the nearby listed building;
- be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the Chilterns AONB;
- safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- demonstrate an acceptable provision of off-street parking spaces for the resultant dwelling or other conditions prejudicial to highway safety; and
- give rise to any other material planning considerations

6.2 Principle of Development

Within Appendix 4 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Binfield Heath is listed as a 'smaller village'. Within such settlements Policy CSR1 of the SOCS allows for infill housing development up to the equivalent of 5-6 dwellings on sites of up to 0.2 ha. 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 and includes redevelopment proposals, which are considered on a case by case basis. The site has an area of about 0.1 hectares and it is located within the built-up confines of the settlement, in an otherwise built-up frontage. It is notable that this frontage includes three other dwellings (Acacia House, Mulberry Cottage and Pipkin Cottage) that have been granted planning permission when assessed against the criterion of Policy CSR1. Although the site area of Bournes Farmhouse was 0.27 hectares prior to the other dwellings being built, the 0.2 hectare limit does not apply to redevelopment proposals, where existing buildings are demolished. Notwithstanding the error in the pre-application advice pointed out by Binfield Heath Parish Council (see para 3.1), for the reasons above, officers consider the redevelopment of the site with two dwellings would accord with the definition of infilling set out under Policy CSR1.

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 not accessible to the public. Although it is visible from the road, it has contained a dwelling and has formed part of a residential plot for many decades and is seen in the context of nearby dwellings. As such, the proposed dwellings on this site would not obstruct any significant public views. The Council's Countryside Officer has confirmed that there would also be no adverse ecological implications arising from this proposal, subject to the imposition of planning conditions. On this basis, the proposal would be in accordance with the above criterion.

6.4 Heritage Impact

The SOCS Policy CSEN3 seeks to preserve or enhance the District's designated heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings. The SOLP 2011 Policy CON5 sets out the Council's statutory duty to protect the setting of listed buildings. The site is not formally designated and the need for a heritage impact assessment was not anticipated. The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that historic Ordnance Survey mapping indicated that the building was present in 1870 which would accord with a general assessment of photographs which suggest a building date c.mid C19th. The plan form, Flemish brickwork, gauged brick lintels reinforce this view. Buildings of this age and date and of similar design and construction are numerous and widespread, not being specific to the local vernacular of the Chilterns. The building is not likely to meet the high bar for listing buildings of this date under Historic England Guidance.

6.5 Provision is made under the NPPF for the identification of building as non-designated heritage assets and for their heritage interest to be given some weight within the planning balance. The replacement of the original sash windows with UPVC has diminished some of its architectural value. The alteration to the building's setting through infilling and the loss of associated farm buildings and outbuildings reduces the legibility of the building as a farmhouse. Having regard to the above, and to the Historic England guides for Local Listing, which act as a good benchmark for the identification of non-designated heritage assets, the Conservation Officer considers that the building is not of sufficient interest that demolition could be reasonably resisted. The building does not lie within a conservation area for which the preservation of character and appearance would be statutorily protected.

- 6.6 Officers also consider that the building does not make a direct contribution to the setting and significance of The Bottle and Glass as a Grade II listed building or the reasons for that building's listing. Officers are of the view that whilst the building may have some charm, it is not of sufficient heritage interest to be a constraint to development that would be required to be weighed in the planning balance.
- 6.7 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 adversely affected. Policies CSQ3 of the SOCS and D1 of the SOLP 2011 expand on this requirement in respect of ensuring good design. Policy CSEN1 of the SOCS seeks to protect landscape character. The proposed dwellings would be positioned at similar distances to the road as Bournes Farmhouse and the ridge heights would be comparable to the dwellings on either side. The scheme has been designed so as to retain the trees around the site boundaries, to the satisfaction of the Council's Tree Officer, which would help to assimilate the development in with its surroundings and would ensure that the dwellings would not have any significant impact upon the wider Chilterns AONB landscape.
- 6.8 The plot sizes of the proposed dwellings would fit in with the surrounding density and grain of development in this part of the village and their scale and appearance would be appropriate. The design of the dwellings would broadly reflect the advice set out in Section 7 of the SODG 2016 concerning the use of traditional form and materials including red brick and flint, clay tiles and natural slate. In officers' opinion they would contribute positively to the variety in appearance of dwellings in the locality. Plot 1 would have a carport positioned in front of the dwelling. However, this would still be sufficiently set back from the street frontage, at a distance of about 9 metres, and would in any case be a modest structure with a hipped roof. There is a similar structure at Acacia House, to the south-west of the site. The retention of the boundary planting means that the carport in this position would not be unduly prominent in the street scene. In the light of the above assessment, the proposal would be in accordance with the above policies and guidance.
- 6.9 Neighbour 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. The proposed dwellings would be set in from the side boundaries and each other by about 3-6 metres. Both Plots 1 & 2 would be broadly in line with the footprint of Acacia House and Mulberry Cottage and so would not result in loss of light or outlook to the main front and rear windows. The proposed first floor side windows of both proposed dwellings could be subject to an obscure glazing condition to prevent overlooking. The gardens serving the proposed dwellings would comfortably comply with the recommended minimum 100 square metre area for dwellings of this size. Based on this assessment, the proposal would accord the above policies.
- 6.10 Access and Parking
Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. The Highway Liaison Officer is satisfied with the access and parking arrangements, subject to planning conditions, as there would be adequate parking space for dwellings of this size the existing access would provide sufficient visibility splays at the site frontage. On this basis, the proposal would comply with the above criterion.

6.11 Other Material Planning Considerations

The proposed three and four-bedroom dwellings, would provide for the house types in greatest need across the District, in general conformity with the requirements of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment April 2014. Binfield Heath Parish Council are concerned that the dwellings would be used as holiday lets rather than being made available for local people to buy or rent. However, as long as the dwellings would be occupied by family groups whom, during their stay, constitute a single household, it is unlikely that a material change of use would have occurred for which planning permission would be required.

6.12 Officers consider that a condition to remove permitted development rights for extensions, outbuildings and hardstandings is necessary to enable the Council to exercise control over any future development, which could otherwise impact upon the retained trees, the character of the area or residential amenity.

6.13 Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposed dwellings are liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). 15% of the CIL payment would go Binfield Heath Parish Council in the absence of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. In this way, the development would contribute towards local infrastructure projects for the benefit of the village community.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development would be acceptable in principle, would not result in harm to the historic environment and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the Chilterns AONB landscape. It would not detract from the living conditions of adjoining residents or be prejudicial to highway safety. Subject to the conditions below, it would be in accordance with Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Approved plans ***
- 3. No change in levels**
- 4. Schedule of materials required prior to foundations**
- 5. Obscure glazing ***
- 6. Withdrawal of Permitted Development Rights (extensions/outbuildings/hardstandings) ***
- 7. Existing vehicular access retained***
- 8. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained ***
- 9. No Garage conversion into accommodation**
- 10. Landscaping Scheme (including hardstandings and boundary treatment) prior to foundations**
- 11. Tree Protection to be implemented as agreed**
- 12. Ecological protection & mitigation (details required prior to commencement)**
- 13. Wildlife Protection (mitigation approved)**
- 14. Highways Informatives**

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