
APPLICATION NO.	P19/S2380/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	6.8.2019
PARISH	PYRTON
WARD MEMBER	Anna Badcock
APPLICANT	Beechcroft
SITE	Steven Orton Antiques, Shirburn Road, Watlington, OX49 5BZ
PROPOSAL	Reserved Matters application following Outline approval P18/S0002/O for up to 37 retirement houses, care home and 4 units of staff accommodation at Shirburn Road, to consider appearance, landscaping, layout and scale
AMENDMENTS	As amended / clarified by plans and information submitted 3 September 2019, 3 April 2020, 1 May 2020, 6 May 2020 and 13 May 2020.
OFFICER	Emma Bowerman

1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the case officer's recommendation conflicts with the views of Pyrton Parish Council and the proposal is a major development.
- 1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) site on the corner of the B4009 and Pyrton Lane. The site area is around 1.6 hectares. It is currently a storage and transfer facility but has recently been used for crushing materials for use in construction.
- 1.3 There are two accesses to the site, from the B4009 and Pyrton Lane. Hedges mark the boundaries to both roads. There is an existing dwelling called 'The Bungalow' between the application site and the B4009. This utilises the same access from the B4009 as the application site.
- 1.4 The land to the north of the site is part of a Grade II Registered Park and Garden associated with Shirburn Castle. There are several Grade II Listed structures within the grounds, including a church, icehouse, rotunda and a statue. Shirburn Castle is a Grade I Listed Building. The Castle and grounds are also part of Shirburn Conservation Area.
- 1.5 To the immediate west of the site is an open field. Further to the west is the Grade II* Listed Pyrton Manor and its grounds. Pyrton Manor, and much of the village of Pyrton, fall within Pyrton Conservation Area. There are several other listed buildings within the village.
- 1.6 The land to the east of the site is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The edge of this designated area is the opposite side of the B4009. To the south of the site is Watlington recreation ground.
- 1.7 The application site is within the parish of Pyrton and Pyrton have a made Neighbourhood Plan. The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan has a site-specific policy for the application site, which is referred to as site PYR1. This policy supports the

principle of the redevelopment of the former MoD site for residential development, subject to several criteria.

- 1.8 The parish of Watlington borders the south of the site. Watlington also have a made Neighbourhood Plan. Amongst other matters, the Watlington Neighbourhood Plan aims to safeguard land for a re-aligned B4009 to the north and west of the town. This “Edge Road” would alleviate traffic pressure in the centre of Watlington and improve air quality.
- 1.9 This is a reserved matters application for approval of details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following outline planning permission P18/S0002/O. Planning permission for P18/S0002/O granted outline planning permission for up to 37 retirement units for people aged 55 and over, provision of a care home and four staff accommodation units. Access details were also approved under this application.
- 1.10 The Outline planning permission also secured some land to be transferred to Oxfordshire County Council. This land could be used to construct a section of the Edge Road, including a roundabout. This land is outside of the application site and does not form part of this application.
- 1.11 Several amended plans were submitted during the application process, with final amendments submitted on 13 May 2020. Interested parties were consulted on the more significant amendments and had an opportunity to comment on them.
- 1.12 The proposed layout plan, street scenes and a selection of plans are **attached** as Appendix B. The application is accompanied by several supporting documents, including a Design and Access Statement. These are available to view on the council’s website at:
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P19/S2380/RM>
- 1.13 For background information, the committee report and minutes, and all information associated with outline planning application P18/S0002/O can be found at the following link:
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P19/S2380/RM>
- 2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS** (please note these represent the most recent comments)
- 2.1 **Pyrton Parish Council** – Object and raised the following concerns:
- Contrary to Neighbourhood Plan
 - Building density, the site feels overcrowded and out of keeping with its location
 - Overdeveloped and urban character
 - Number of dwellings is excessive and should be reduced
 - Contrary to Landscape Capacity Assessment
 - Building numbers was never discussed by SODC’s planning committee and is for consideration now as outline permission is ‘*up to 37 retirement units*’
 - Building mass needs rigorous examination
 - Detrimental impact of light pollution on the “dark skies” of the area
- The comments note that the Parish Council welcome the most recent modifications involving the significant reduction of buildings heights, particularly of the care home.
- 2.2 **Shirburn Parish Council** – No comments received

- 2.3 **Watlington Parish Council** – No objection and commented that the new layout, reduced scale of the care home and the detailed landscaping will allow the development to sit better in the surrounding countryside and it will not be so dominant when viewed from the AONB. Remain concerned that a detailed lighting scheme has not yet been submitted for approval and commented that a biodiversity survey is required.
- 2.4 **Historic England** – Do not wish to offer any comments
- 2.5 **The Garden History Society** – Do not wish to comment on the proposals.
- 2.6 **Chilterns Conservation Board** – Commented that the details break up the layout and provide articulation to the design and recommended the use of clay ties and natural slate. Also made a comment about land that is outside of the application site, which is not relevant to this application.
- 2.7 **Crime Prevention Design Adviser** – No objection but raised various matters in relation to community safety and crime prevention design.
- 2.8 **Oxfordshire County Council** – No objection subject to conditions.
- 2.9 **Urban Design Officer** – The amendments have resolved all outstanding issues.
- 2.10 **Landscape Architect** – The amended scheme is acceptable in landscape terms subject to a condition for a detailed lighting scheme.
- 2.11 **Conservation Officer** – No objection. Commented that natural roofing materials should be used and that light spill, particularly vertical, would be kept to a minimum and localised to the site.
- 2.12 **Countryside Officer**- No objection to the amended plans subject to a condition to secure a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.
- 2.13 **Forestry Officer** – No objection subject to landscaping and tree protection conditions.
- 2.14 **Waste Management Officer** – Provided comments on bin stores.
- 2.15 **Neighbour Representations** – None received
- 3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 3.1 [P18/S0002/O](#) - Approved (23/07/2019)
Outline application for up to 37 Retirement Units for people aged 55 and over, provision of a Care Home and 4 staff accommodation units (all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of access). As clarified by alternative indicative layout and additional information accompanying Agents letter dated 18 June 2018.
- 4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- 4.1 The proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended). This is because the proposal does not exceed 150 homes, the site area is under 5ha and is not within a 'sensitive area'. It is therefore not EIA development.
- 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
Updated in June 2019 and the associated NPPF Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

5.2 Adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2027

- CSEN1 - Landscape protection
- CSEN3 - Historic environment
- CSQ3 - Design
- CSQ4 - Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites
- CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
- CSG1 - Green infrastructure

5.3 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 saved policies

- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
- C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- CON5 - Setting of listed building
- CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area
- 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
- D6 - Community safety
- D10 - Waste Management
- EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- R6 - Public open space in new residential development
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

5.4 Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

The Council is preparing a new Local Plan, which will set out how development will be planned and delivered across South Oxfordshire to 2034. The Emerging Plan is at examination and has only limited weight.

5.5 Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP)

Pyrton have a made Neighbourhood Plan which forms part of the council's Development Plan. The policies in the PNP can therefore be attributed full weight.

The key policies in the PNP are:

- BNE1: Historic Environment
- BNE2: Landscape character
- H1: New Homes
- H2: Type of new homes
- D1: Detailed design criteria
- SA1: Former MoD site (PYR1)

5.6 South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2016

This guide sets out the standard that we expect developments to meet through a series of checklists that relate to key design principles.

5.7 Other legislation and guidance

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Landscape Capacity Assessment for Larger Villages (2015)
- The Chilterns AONB Management Plan
- Position Statement: Development Affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The principle of up to 37 retirement units for people aged 55 and over, a care home and four staff units is already established. The details of the access are also already approved. As such, the only matters to be considered for this reserved matters application relate to the details of the development in terms of:

- Layout
- Scale
- Appearance
- Landscaping

6.2 The site-specific policy for the development of this site contained within Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) also has an element that relates to matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. Policy SA1 of the PNP sets out the criteria to be considered for the redevelopment of the application site for residential development and this includes a requirement that a:

Design and Access Statement as required by SODC's adopted validation checklist, should be prepared and submitted as part of any application. In addition to the statutory expectations for a Design and Access Statement, the statement should:

- i. Draw on relevant precedents and demonstrate how and why they are related to the proposed development, and how these have influenced the proposal in formulating an appropriate scheme;*
- ii. Include sufficient drawings, photomontages, viewpoints and illustrations to allow a realistic appreciation of the proposal;*
- iii. Explain how and why the building types, scale, appearance and materials have been selected and are appropriate for the environment;*
- iv. Demonstrate how the proposed development responds to on-site and surrounding heritage, landscape and environmental opportunities / constraints / designations. In particular, proposals should demonstrate how management of the existing boundary vegetation would maintain the visual containment of the site and lighting management would reduce light pollution from the site.*
- v. Demonstrate a prospective net gain in biodiversity on the site through appropriate ecological surveys.*

6.3 In relation to these requirements, the application is accompanied by a detailed Design and Access Statement and an addendum was submitted with the amended plans. The addendum documents how the scheme has evolved through the design process.

6.4 The Design and Access statement explains how the design process has taken account of the constraints and opportunities of the site. It also indicates how the design, materials and detailing of the proposed buildings are a direct response to a study of local buildings. The application is also accompanied by several visualisations and these provide a realistic impression of the proposed buildings.

6.5 In relation to the other criteria, the council's landscape officer is satisfied that the landscape strategy strikes a good balance between containing the site but not hiding it behind landscaping. The council's countryside officer is satisfied that the amended proposals are consistent with biodiversity policies.

- 6.6 The only element of *i.* to *v.* above which has not been addressed by the submission is in relation to lighting. A Lighting Impact Assessment was submitted during the application process, but this has not been updated to reflect the amended plans.
- 6.7 This, however, is not a matter that needs to be approved through this reserved matters submission as condition 11 of outline planning permission (P18/S0002/O) requires the submission and approval of a lighting scheme. As such, the council can consider and assess this matter through a request to discharge this condition.
- 6.8 I note that the submitted Lighting Impact Assessment did appropriately assess the site as being within Environmental Zone E1. This is because the environment is 'intrinsically dark' and the site adjoins an AONB.
- 6.9 The lighting strategy outlined in this assessment included illuminated bollards, which would work on a solar timeclock from dusk to 23:00 and be sensor activated from 23:00 to dawn. The only other type of external lighting would be wall mounted luminaires, which would be sensor activated from dusk to dawn.
- 6.10 I am satisfied that this lighting strategy would effectively minimise the impact of lighting on this sensitive rural edge and would conserve the special qualities of the surrounding heritage assets. In terms of procedure, the lighting plans need to be updated to reflect the amended plans and this needs to be submitted for approval through a request to discharge condition 11 of the outline planning permission.

Layout

- 6.11 The proposed layout has evolved during the application process. The initial layout is shown below:



Note that only the land within the red line forms part of the application site. The land within the blue line is outside of the application site and does not form part of this application.

- 6.12 This initial layout was not acceptable as the site was dominated by hard surfacing and there was limited space to incorporate sufficient landscaping. The apartments to the north-eastern side of the site did not achieve a suitable separation to the site boundary, which left an area that was too small to provide any meaningful open space. The initially layout also failed to provide a focal point as you enter the site.
- 6.13 The applicant has worked to address the issues raised by the council's urban design officer and landscape officer. I am satisfied that the amended layout, shown below for comparison, is acceptable.



- 6.14 The positive elements that the amended plans have incorporated are that the parking areas have been broken up and the use of different surface materials would provide some variation across the road surface. The amended layout allows space for more landscaping within the site and around the site boundaries, and a usable area of public open space has provided. The layout also now incorporates a strong corner building at the end of the access.
- 6.15 The development would be outward looking, which accords with SODC's Design Guide. The layout includes a mix of parking solutions including shared courtyards and off-street parking. There is space within the site to provide landscaping to soften the development and the amount of open space would be appropriate. In my opinion, the amended plans demonstrate that the site can accommodate the level of development proposed.

Scale

- 6.16 Criteria 2.a of Policy D1 of the PNP requires development to predominantly have a maximum of two-storeys. The initial layout included accommodation in the roof of the care home and as such, could have been classed as two-and-a-half-storeys. The

amended plans have removed the roof accommodation and I am satisfied that all elements of the development are either two or one-and-a-half-storeys.

- 6.17 The Design and Assess Statement submitted with the outline planning application stated that the development would have a maximum height of 10m. The tallest of the proposed buildings on the site would be around 9.3m in height and would fit comfortably within the parameters set at outline stage.
- 6.18 The details that were submitted with the outline planning application depicted a development that had a low-key courtyard feel, which was not reflected in the initial reserved matters submission. The initial plans that were submitted were more substantial in terms of their scale and bulk and would have had an urbanising impact on the site. The applicant reduced the overall scale and bulk of the proposals during the application process, as reflected in the drawings below:

6.19



The red dotted line shows the height and additional bulk of the development as initially submitted.



- 6.20 In my opinion, the reduced scale of the proposal is more appropriate to the character of the site and surroundings. The reduction in the overall massing of the proposed care home has also had the added benefit of removing an unsightly flat roof element from this aspect of the development.

Appearance

- 6.21 Both Pyrton and Watlington contain a variety of architectural styles but are generally very traditional in terms of character. As outlined in the Design and Access Statement, the design, materials and detailing of the proposed buildings are a direct response to a study of the locality of Pyrton and Watlington
- 6.22 Criterion 2.b of policy D1 of the PNP requires developments to incorporate designs that are generally influenced by the Chiltern vernacular architectural style featuring brick, flint and tiles. In their consultation response to this application, the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) have commented that *'The mix of materials appears appropriate and combines predominantly tiles and some slate.'*
- 6.23 The architectural language that has been used in the proposal reflects the character of the wider area and the traditional Chilterns vernacular has informed the design process.

A variety of ridge and eaves levels would create a varied roofscape and in my opinion, the architectural details would create some attractive spaces across the scheme.

- 6.24 The application documents do not provide exact details of the proposed materials and so I have recommended a condition requiring these to be provided before development commences. Given the sensitivity of the site, the materials should be of a high quality. As recommended by the CCB, clay tiles and natural slate should be used to ensure a softer hue and texture, which will soften the appearance when viewed from the AONB and in distant views.

Landscaping

- 6.25 This Reserved Matters application only considers the details of the landscaping scheme within the site and whether this is sufficient to help assimilate the development into its surroundings. The overall landscape impact of this quantum of development was considered under the outline planning application.
- 6.26 The report presented to Planning Committee for the outline application highlighted that the scale and extent of the development would exceed the recommendations in the Landscape Capacity Study and that the resulting increase in built development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 6.27 This harm to the AONB was considered to weigh against the development and was a matter that was examined in the planning balance. Overall, it was considered that the significant benefits of the development would outweigh the harm that would be caused to the landscape.
- 6.28 In terms of the landscaping details that have been submitted for this reserved matters application, the council's landscape officer has commented that the amendments have taken into account her previous concerns about the interrelationship of the built form to the possible future roundabout. She has also confirmed that the domestic scale planting details are acceptable.
- 6.29 The council's landscape officer reiterated the need for a detailed lighting scheme, to minimise the impact of lighting on this sensitive rural edge. As indicated above, this matter must be addressed as a requirement of condition 11 of the outline planning permission.
- 6.30 Based on the details that have been provided in the Lighting Impact Assessment, I am satisfied that a lighting scheme can be secured which would accord with criteria 2.e. of PNP policy D1. This requires proposals to take into account the importance of dark night skies, for lighting to be deflected downwards, to be switched off at midnight at the latest, and to use movement sensitive triggers.

Other matters

- 6.31 In relation to criteria 2.d of PNP policy D1, which requires the observance of lifetime homes standards, the proposed retirement homes are generously proportioned for two bed homes to allow ease of movement.
- 6.32 The application documents explain that access for the disabled will be accommodated in the design of the dwellings sufficient to comply with 'Access to and Use of Buildings', Part M of the Building Regulations. All residential units will have level access for

wheelchair disabled persons to the ground floor and accessible ground floor WC's as required by the Building Regulations. Lifts will be provided to all first-floor apartments.

- 6.33 And in relation to criteria 2.c (the last remaining criteria under part 2 of PNP policy D1), the submitted Design and Access Statement includes a section on sustainability. This outlines the energy efficiency measures that would be utilised in the development and states that, where possible, materials utilised in the construction of the development will be locally sourced.
- 6.34 In relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), as specified at outline stage, the majority of this development has a nil CIL rate. The four staff units would be CIL liable at a rate of £150 per sq.m (index linked from 2016 and currently £182.18 per sq.m).
- 6.35 The CIL money collected from the development can be pooled with contributions from other development sites to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support growth, including schools, transport, community, leisure and health facilities. Under the CIL regulations, Pyrton Parish Council will receive 25% of the CIL monies (as oppose to 15% if they did not have a Neighbourhood Plan).

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The principle of the development has already been established through the grant of outline planning permission. The access arrangements have also been approved under the outline consent. The only matters to be considered under this application relate to the details of the development in terms of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.
- 7.2 When the outline planning application was considered by committee members it was made clear that this is a very sensitive site, on the edge of the AONB and next to several important heritage assets. Given the sensitivities of the site, committee members stressed the need for the details of this development to be high quality and the scale, mass and bulk appropriate to its setting.
- 7.3 In my opinion the proposals would ensure high standards and quality of design, having regard to the site, site constraints and the surrounding area. Part 1 of policy D1 of the PNP requires that development proposals ensure high standards and quality of design, having regard to the site, site constraints and surrounding area, including, where relevant, the Conservation Area. I consider that the proposal accords with this policy and the other relevant Development Plan policies in relation to design, character heritage and landscape impact.
- 7.4 I recommend that reserved matters approval is granted as the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the development are acceptable and the proposal complies with the relevant Development Plan policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **That reserved matters approval for P19/S2380/RM be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 2. Schedule of materials to be submitted for approval**
- 3. Landscape to be implemented prior to first occupation**
- 4. Biodiversity Enhancement Plan**
- 5. Details of estate road and footpaths**
- 6. Provision and retention of parking**

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