
APPLICATION NO.	P13/S2132/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	17.7.2013
PARISH	ASTON ROWANT
WARD MEMBER	Mrs Dorothy Brown
APPLICANT	Soha Housing Ltd
SITE	Bakers Piece House Bakers Piece Kingston Blount
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing 15 flats and erection of 6 flats (4 x 2 bed & 2 x 1 bed) and 4 semi detached houses (3 x 3 bed & 1 x 2 bed) with associated bin/bicycle store & garden sheds.
AMENDMENTS	None
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between the officers' recommendation and the views of Aston Rowant Parish Council.

1.2 The application site is identified at **Appendix 1**. At the time of the site visit, the site comprised an L-shaped block of boarded up SOHA sheltered housing flats of two storey scale with a red brick and concrete tile finish. It had a T-shaped parking and turning area in front of the flats with open space on either side of the parking area and between the flats and the road. There was a strip of relatively narrow amenity space to the rear. The north-west elevation had first floor windows to habitable rooms, which directly faced onto the rear garden of No.18, an adjacent semi-detached two storey house with a close boarded fence on the boundary. There is some mature evergreen planting along the south-east side boundary with the rear gardens of Icknield Close. There is a group of semi-mature trees located in the amenity area at the front of the site. The site levels rise slightly towards the south-eastern boundary. The remainder of the road contains mid-20th century two storey semi-detached dwellings to the north and west of the site. It also provides the sole vehicular access to the village hall and playing fields. The north-eastern site boundary is with open countryside separating Kingston Blount from Crowell. There are no special designations on this site. The existing flats may have been demolished by the time this application is considered.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site, replacing the block of flats with a residential development of ten units involving six flats and four semi-detached two-storey houses. The proposed flats would be accommodated in a two storey block at the north-western end of the site. They would be 13.1 metres wide and 19 metres deep with a central ridge at 8.7 metres in height, but with the majority of the roof area at 7.9 metres high. The flats would project beyond the front of No.18 by 2.5 metres and beyond the rear by 8.2 metres. The building would be set back about 6.2 metres from the road. The materials would comprise red/orange facing bricks with buff feature bricks, the south-west gable would have horizontal timber cladding. The roof would consist of concrete tiles and the window frames would be white painted softwood and guttering would be black UPVC. There would be no first floor windows in the north-west elevation of the projecting rear section of the flats. The main area of outdoor amenity space and the

cycle and bin store for the flats, a small hipped roof structure, would be located on the north-eastern side of the flats.

- 2.2 The parking for the flats would be located mostly in a row alongside the south-eastern elevation, including two disabled spaces and a visitor space, with two other spaces provided at the back of the site and two more provided in front of the houses. The four dwellings would be aligned in two pairs, with the front elevations facing onto the road, but set well back at a distance of 20 metres at their closest point. Each dwelling would have a private garden area at the rear with bin stores indicated on the plan. Plots 1&2 would have a combined width of 10.5 metres and a maximum two-storey depth of 9.8 metres. Plots 3&4 would have the same depth as Plots 1&2, but the width would be 11.5 metres. The rooflines of both pairs of semis would be staggered with a ridge height stepping down from 8.5 metres to 8.3 metres. The external materials to be used in their construction would be similar to those for the flats. There would be dedicated parking spaces for each dwelling located either at the side or in front, including three further visitor spaces. The proposal would re-use the existing access point, leading to a block paved driveway. A significant portion of the amenity area at the front of the site would be retained, including the majority of the existing trees.
- 2.3 A copy of the current plans is attached at **Appendix 2** whilst other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the Council's website: www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **OCC Single Response** – Highways Liaison Officer has no objections to access and parking arrangements subject to conditions and Education and Property Officers require financial contributions towards education, library, waste, museum, day care and adult learning facilities in the locality.

Crime Prevention Design Adviser - No objection subject to condition

Drainage Engineer (South Oxfordshire - MONSON) - No objection subject to conditions

Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) - No objection subject to conditions

Countryside Officer (SODC) – Previous comments apply – no objection

Aston Rowant Parish Council – The application should be refused for the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment of the site, higher density not in accordance with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy CSR1
- Design out of keeping with locality, flats and dwellings would not face the street, site dominated by car parking
- Consider that Kingston Blount is classed as a small settlement where there are no, or very limited, services and facilities and the lack of public transport provision means that residents would have to travel by private car
- Flats may overlook No.18 and cause overshadowing and reduce daylight to neighbours generally

- Application should be judged on increase in number of bedrooms not dwellings, accommodating up to 39 people, residents likely to be families and the local school is oversubscribed, forcing any residents with children to drive to other schools

Neighbours – Six representations of objection and one representation of support, summarised as follows:

- Overdevelopment of site in an unsustainable manner
- Inadequate parking leading to on street parking on Bakers Piece and increased traffic on Pleck Lane leading to a risk to children
- Loss of light and overshadowing from block of flats
- Building materials out of keeping with surroundings
- Roof height out of keeping with existing dwellings
- No local need for affordable housing, SOHA have not liaised with local residents or the parish council
- Supporter disagrees with parish council's estimates of number of residents, suggests that existing would have ranged from 16-26, proposed could range from 21-39.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P12/S2796/FUL](#) - Withdrawn (16/07/2013)

Demolition of existing 15 Flats and erection of 6 flats (4 x 2bed & 2 x 1bed) and 4 semi detached houses (3 x 3bed & 1 x 2bed) and 1 x 3bed detached house with associated parking, bin/bicycle store & garden sheds (amended plans received 26th April 2013). – This application was withdrawn following officers concerns about the visual impact of the proposal, including loss of trees and the impact upon neighbouring dwellings.

[P70/M0403](#) - Approved (17/09/1970)

15 old persons flats and wardens accommodation and 22 semi-detached houses and access. – This application is the original planning permission for the flats. Although described as old persons flats, there was no planning condition or legal agreement imposed to ensure that they remained in occupation as sheltered housing.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

CSEN1 - Landscape protection

CSH2 - Density

CSH3 - Affordable housing

CSH4 - Meeting housing needs

CSI1 – Infrastructure provision

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

C9 - Landscape features

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

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
- EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
- EP4 - Protection of water resources
- EP6 - Surface water protection
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- 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

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 – Sections 3, 4, 5

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The policies within the SOCS and SOLP 2011 of relevance to this application are considered to be in general conformity with the provisions of the NPPF and therefore this application can be determined against these relevant policies.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are whether the development would:

- be acceptable in principle in this location;
- result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- 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;
- provide an acceptable mix of housing types and would meet an identified local need;
- make adequate contributions towards local infrastructure;
- provide adequate sustainability and waste management measures; and
- give rise to any other material planning considerations

Principle of Development

6.2 The site is located within the small village of Kingston Blount. In December 2012, the Council adopted its Core Strategy (SOCS). Thus, the SOCS Policy relevant to this proposal is CSR1, which outlines a new approach for assessing proposals for infill residential development in the District. The SOCS classifies Kingston Blount as a “Small” village. Under Policy CSR1, residential development on infill sites of up to 0.2 hectares in size is acceptable in principle in “Small” villages. The policy indicates that this is the equivalent of 5-6 houses. Although only 4 houses are proposed, there would also be 6 flats, leading to a total of 10 dwellings. Also, the site area is 0.26 hectares, which would be larger than the infill limit. However, Policy CSR1 also states that “redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable, but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.” As such, officers are satisfied that the principle of this development is acceptable under the SOCS as a

redevelopment of an existing site containing 15 dwellings. Consequently the proposal falls to be assessed primarily against the criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 for new dwellings which are addressed below.

Loss of Open Space

- 6.3 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 visible from the road, it is seen in the context of adjacent dwellings and their gardens when viewed from Bakers Piece or from across the adjacent field to the north and east. The redevelopment of this site would not obstruct any significant public views into the open countryside, when compared with the previous flats on the site. The Council's Countryside Officer has confirmed that there would also be no adverse ecological implications arising from this proposal. On this basis, the proposal would be in accordance with the above criterion.

Visual Impact

- 6.4 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 affected. Policies CSQ3 of the SOCS and D1 of the SOLP 2011 amplify this requirement. The density of the proposal would be 38.5 dwellings per hectare. In comparison, the density of the 6 dwellings opposite the site is 34 dwellings per hectare, therefore the proposed density would be broadly in accordance with the grain of development in the immediate surroundings. The layout of the dwellings would generally reflect the L-shaped layout of the previous arrangement, albeit split into 3 separate structures rather than one continuous building line. The block of flats would have a greater ridge height than the previous flats by between 0.7 metre and 1.5 metres, but the highest ridge section would be set back from the frontage so as to not appear overly dominant. The adjoining semi-detached houses appear to have a ridge height of around 8 metres, so the additional height of the central roof section would be less noticeable in this context. Although the flats would project forward of No.18, this would be in keeping with the staggered layout that exists between the semis to the north. To compensate for the additional width of the flats compared with the previous building, the roof would contain areas of flat roofing, which are usually discouraged in Section 5 of the SODG 2008. However, these would be hidden behind a pitched roof and would not be appreciated from street level, so there would not be sufficient justification to withhold planning permission on those grounds.
- 6.5 The proposed semi-detached dwellings would be 0.3 to 0.5 metre higher than the existing dwellings on the street. This would not be a particularly noticeable difference, as the proposed semis would be set further back from the street than the existing dwellings and behind the amenity area with the retained trees, which would offset any additional visual impact. Although Aston Rowant Parish Council have raised concern about a blank elevation fronting the street scene, the proposed flats would present an active frontage to the road with windows on both floors and one of the two entrance points. Whilst the design of the flats or the houses would not exactly mirror the appearance of the other dwellings in the street, these were built in the early-mid 1970s and are very much of their era, thus it is not essential that the appearance of the proposed buildings should take their lead from them. In general, there is a mixture of historic and modern dwelling types in Kingston Blount and the proposed dwellings would add to that variety. The precise finishing materials could be agreed through a planning condition.

- 6.6 Although the area devoted to parking would be significantly increased in size as a result of this proposal, the majority of parking spaces would be located to the side of the flats and housing. The proposal would comply with the spirit of Section 3.3.1 of the SODG 2008, because where spaces are located in front of the houses, they would nonetheless be set back from the road by a minimum of 5 metres, with the amenity area located in between. This would adequately soften the visual impact of the parking area. Unlike the previous application, this proposal retains the group of trees on the frontage amenity area. Although most of these trees are young, they have considerable future growth potential. As such, the Council's Forestry Officer supports the application subject to tree protection and landscaping conditions, to strengthen planting in external areas. In the light of the above assessment, the proposal would comply with the relevant policies and guidance.

Neighbour Impact

- 6.7 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. Policy D4 requires 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. The footprint of the proposed flats would be very similar to the previous flats in terms of the relationship with the rear of No.18. In terms of overshadowing and loss of daylight, the impact would therefore be similar. However, in relation to privacy, the only first floor windows on the north-west side elevation would be on the front section and would not enable views into the rear garden. The other rooms in the first floor side elevation would be served by rooflights, with no scope for overlooking or windows on the rear elevation, where the line of sight into the neighbour's garden would be oblique. This would be an improvement over the previous situation where direct overlooking was possible. The first floor side window of No.18 is obscure glazed, with the main window serving that bedroom on the front, so there would be no loss of privacy to this room either. The increased forward projection in front of No.18 would not contravene a 45-degree line of sight from the neighbouring front windows.
- 6.8 The side elevation of Plot 4 would be located about 3.5 metres from the rear boundary with No.12 Icknield Close. The rear of this adjoining dwelling would be about 20 metres from the boundary and there is a row of high conifers on the neighbour's side of the boundary. The impact on this adjoining dwelling would also be acceptable in terms of light, outlook and privacy. The first floor side window to Plot 4 serving a bathroom could be obscure glazed through a planning condition. In general, the level of separation between the parking spaces and the boundaries with adjoining dwellings would be sufficient to prevent any noise nuisance. Although the private garden sizes for two of the three-bedroom dwellings would be slightly below the 100 square metres recommended minimum standard as set out in Section 3 of the SODG 2008, the occupiers would also have access to the significant communal amenity space at the front of the site, so under those circumstances the deficiency would be acceptable. The occupiers of the flats would have a private communal amenity space area of around 190 square metres available to them. Again, in combination with the additional amenity space at the front of the flats, this would be an acceptable level of provision for future occupiers. On the basis of this assessment, the proposal would accord with the above policies and guidance.

Access and Parking

- 6.9 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. Although the parish council and some local residents consider that the parking provision would be substandard, leading to on-street parking and would result in excessive traffic generation on surrounding roads, the Highway

Liaison Officer is satisfied with the proposed access and parking arrangements, as long as several planning conditions are imposed. The number of parking spaces would be adequate for the type of dwellings proposed, including several visitor spaces and turning space would be provided within the site. On this basis, the proposal would comply with the above criterion.

Housing Mix and Tenure

- 6.10 Policy CSH4 of the SOCS seeks an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes. The latest Housing Needs Assessment identified a shortfall of smaller units, District-wide and therefore advocates a 50:50 split between larger and smaller units. In officers' view, the redevelopment of the site with seven smaller dwellings (the flats and the 2-bedroom house) and three larger dwellings (the 3-bedroom houses) would represent an appropriate mix of dwellings in compliance with the above policy. Policy CSH3 seeks to achieve 40% of affordable housing on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings. In this particular instance, although there would be an increase in the number of bedrooms, the development would reduce the overall number of units by 5 and consequently there is no policy requirement to provide affordable housing. In addition, there was no planning restriction on the tenure of the previous sheltered housing flats, so although the application forms indicate that the units would all be social rented, this is not a matter which is directly relevant to the determination of this application.

Local Infrastructure Contributions

- 6.11 Policy CSI1 of the SOCS requires developments to provide any on or off-site infrastructure and other services and facilities. Oxfordshire County Council has requested a financial contribution towards improvements to local infrastructure based on the demands that the occupiers of the development would place on services and facilities, because the proposal would provide family accommodation in comparison with the previous sheltered housing. A legal agreement is in the process of being drawn up with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the impact of the development on local infrastructure would be satisfactorily mitigated in accordance with the above policy, covering aspects such as education, library, waste, museum, day care and adult learning facilities. Any resolution to grant planning permission is to be delegated to the Head of Planning, subject to the completion of the agreement.

Sustainability and Waste Management Measures

- 6.12 Policy CSQ2 of the SOCS and Section 4 of the SODG 2008 require single dwellings to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. This could be achieved through the imposition of a planning condition requiring details to be provided prior to occupation. With regard to waste management, the plans indicate that there would be adequate scope on site for waste bin storage, which would allow for both boxes and wheeled bins to be presented for collection at the highway junction with the driveway as is the case for nearby dwellings. Therefore the requirements of the above policies would be satisfied.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.13 Matters relating to crime prevention, construction management and surface water and foul drainage could be dealt with through planning conditions.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable in principle and would not materially harm the character and appearance of the area, including important trees or the living conditions of nearby residents,

would not result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety, would provide an acceptable housing mix and contributions towards local infrastructure and would comply with sustainability objectives.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is recommended that the grant of planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning, subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to secure financial contributions towards local infrastructure and subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Levels (details required)**
- 4. Schedule of materials required (all)**
- 5. Obscure glazing**
- 6. Withdrawal of P.D. (extensions, roof extensions, outbuildings, hardstandings)**
- 7. Code Level 4**
- 8. Secured By Design**
- 9. Vision splay protection**
- 10. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained**
- 11. Construction Traffic Management**
- 12. No Surface Water Drainage to Highway**
- 13. Landscaping (access/hard standings/fencing/walls)**
- 14. Tree Protection (Detailed)**
- 15. Foul drainage works (details required)**

Author: Paul Lucas
Contact No: 01491 823434
Email: Planning.east@southoxon.gov.uk