

Agenda Item 8
South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 25 June 2014

APPLICATION NO.	P14/S0354/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	6.2.2014
PARISH	CULHAM
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr John Cotton
APPLICANT	Mr Derek Pink
SITE	Land adjacent to Kerrera High Street Culham, OX14 4NB
PROPOSAL	Erection of four bedroom detached house with integrated garage.
AMENDMENTS	As amended by drawing nos 155-P1a, P2a and P3a accompanying Agent's email dated 31 March 2014
GRID REFERENCE	450828/195076
OFFICER	Ms S Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application has been referred to the Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council.

1.2 The site is an old orchard and is not part of any residential curtilage. The site fronts onto High Street and an existing gated access is positioned centrally on the site. There are two oak trees on the High Street frontage that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The site lies in the Oxford Green Belt

1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for a detached, two storey, four bedroom dwelling with attached garage. The dwelling would be constructed in brick under a plain tile roof. Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full copies of the plans and consultation responses are available for inspection on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Culham Parish Council Refuse. Over-development - this large house is out of scale with other properties on the High Street and is over large in the plot.
- The style of house does not fit in with the street scene and is out of character with the area.
- Scale and bulk resulting in loss of light - the proposed house blocks light to the neighbouring property. The Council agrees with the neighbours that putting the garage on the other side of the house would alleviate this problem slightly.

3.2 Thames Water. No objection in terms of sewerage infrastructure capacity.

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- 3.3 Forestry Officer The amended plans show a number of improvements to the layout which will improve the relationship with the two protected Oak. Subject to a detailed tree protection condition and confirmation that all service runs in and out of the site can be located out of the Oaks root protection areas, no further objections.
- 3.4 OCC (Highways) No objection subject to conditions
- 3.5 Neighbour Objectors (1) Strong objection. The new building is only 1m from the boundary and due to its size and height will block out light to the kitchen, front door/entrance hall, lounge and the bathroom. The new building is higher than our own building; it would be preferable to have the lower garage side of the property closest to our side.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None relevant

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CSEN2 - Green Belt protection

CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction

CSQ3 - Design

CSR1 - Housing in villages

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

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

D7 - Access for all

GB4 - Openness of Green Belt maintained

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

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development in the Green Belt is acceptable
- H4 Criteria
- Provision of gardens
- Tree issues
- Sustainable design issues

6.2 **Principle.** The Green Belt designation of the site is of significance. The National

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Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open – the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. It is important to note that whilst the Green Belt contains areas of attractive landscape, the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land in the Green Belt or its continued protection. It is the openness of land that is important.

- 6.2.i To protect openness there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.
- 6.2.ii New buildings in the Green Belt are not appropriate other than the list of development identified at paragraph 89 of the NPPF. This list of appropriate new buildings includes limited infilling in villages.
- 6.2.iii The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) adopts a more flexible approach to the provision of housing in the smaller and other villages in the district by allowing infill development on appropriate sites (SOCS Policy CSR1). Infill development is defined as the filling in of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. Culham is one of the smaller villages in the district where infill development may be acceptable on appropriate sites. CSR1 and CSEN2 also make reference to respecting Green Belt designations.
- 6.2.iv The NPPF says that where villages are included within the Green Belt, it has to be because they too contribute to the openness (para 86). A reasonable interpretation is that there are features in the character of the village (open spaces) that make that contribution in particular.
- 6.2.v CSR1 considers that if a site is an infill site, then it will be part of a built up area/ frontage and whilst there would be harm to the openness but it would be limited; unless it was an important open space within the village, then that is serious harm and will not be allowed. These are the balanced judgements CSEN2 is seeking. In this case it is your officer's opinion that the harm to openness will be limited and principle of development is acceptable subject to the criteria of Policy H4.

H4 criteria issues.

- 6.3 i. That an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost;

The site is open and undeveloped but the open gap is not of such importance in the context of the surrounding area to rule out development in my view. The environmental and ecology issues are considered further in paragraph 6.4.

- 6.3i ii. Design, height and bulk in keeping with the surroundings;

The design of the new dwelling has taken cues from the traditional semi detached and terrace houses opposite the site and would fit in with the character of the surrounding area in my view. Whilst the height of the building has been reduced since the pre-application stage it is still 1.6 metres higher to the ridge than Kerrara, the adjacent dwelling to the west; It is however approx 50 cm lower to the ridge than 11 and 12 Tolgate Road to the east. The proposed new dwelling has a roof pitch of 47 degrees and nos 11 and 12 Tolgate Road have a roof pitch in the region of 45 degrees. The eaves height is similar across the three buildings. Kerrera dates from the late 1960's and has an uncharacteristically low roof pitch under 35 degrees. In my view it is Kerrera that stands out as being out of keeping with the steeper roof pitches

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of the more traditional dwellings in the area and the height proposed for the new dwelling is in keeping with the general character of the area.

6.3ii iii. That the character of the area is not adversely affected;

The Parish Council consider that the new dwelling is an overdevelopment of the site and that the house is over large for the plot by filling much of the width of the site. There is an approximate 1 metre gap to the western boundary and approximately a 1.5m gap to the eastern boundary. In addition the front of the new dwelling is broken up with two projecting gables and the garage is recessed with a lower roof above. Given the articulation on the front elevation, I do not consider that the building will appear too large for the site and will not appear to be out of keeping with the character of the area.

6.3iii iv. Amenity, environmental or highway objections; and

6.3iv **Highway issues.** There is an existing access point in the centre of the site onto High Street. The application proposes to change the position of the access to the western side of the site. The Highway Engineer has no objection to the relocation of the access subject to standard conditions in respect of parking.

6.3v **Parking provision.** Parking for one car would be provided within the garage. An area of hardstanding to the frontage would provide for a turning area and parking for two + cars and meets the Council's standard.

6.3vi **Neighbour impact.** The neighbours at Kerrera to the west have a strong objection to the proposal due to the height of the new dwelling, its proximity to the boundary and their own property and the impact it will have on light entering the existing windows on their west elevation. The affected windows serve the kitchen, front door/entrance hall, lounge and the bathroom; the lounge window is high level and is a secondary window to that room. The primary patio window to the lounge faces north and the neighbours consider that it is relatively dark. Only one of the affected windows serves a habitable room and in that case it is not the primary source of light. In your officer's view the relationship between the two buildings would be a fairly normal side to side relationship and the impact on Kerrera would not be so significant as to warrant a refusal on the grounds of neighbour impact.

6.3vii v. Backland development issues

Not applicable

6.4 **Provision of gardens.** Minimum standards for garden sizes are recommended in Policy D3 of SOLP and section 3.2.8 of the Design Guide. 100 square metres is required for three and four bedroom units and above. In this case the garden provision is well in excess of this at some 400 square metres.

6.5 **Tree issues.** Two oaks trees on the High Street frontage are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Oaks form a significant landscape feature with very high amenity value. The Forestry Officer had initial concerns about the access, drive and parking area being within the root protection area of the trees but these concerns have been addressed with the submission of the amended plans.

6.6 **Sustainable design issues.** Policy CSQ2 of the Core Strategy requires new dwellings to achieve at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the application stipulates that this requirement will be met.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Your officers recommend that planning permission should be granted because the site is an appropriate infill site within Culham and the new dwelling will have limited harm on the openness of the Green Belt. The new dwelling will not materially detract from neighbour amenity and the scheme has been amended to account for protected trees on the site. The proposal therefore accords with the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditons

1 : Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission

2 : Approved plans

3 : Sample materials required (all)

4 : Code Level 4

5 : Tree Protection (Detailed)

6 : Provide parking

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