

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P13/S3776/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	9.1.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	SONNING COMMON
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Mr Alan Rooke Mr Paul Harrison
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Elegant Homes (Reading) Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Land to the rear of 19B-23 Wood Lane Sonning Common, RG4 9SJ
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Construction of 3 x 2-bedroom, 1 x 3-bedroom and 2 x 4-bedroom dwellings incorporating parking and turning areas (as amended by drawings accompanying agent's emails dated 19 February and 4 April 2014)
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	As described above
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	470792/180243
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mr T Wyatt

---

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to Committee as the Officer's recommendations conflict with the views of the Parish Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is an area of vacant land totalling around 2,500 square metres at the rear of three detached buildings facing onto Wood Lane. The land is now largely fenced off from the amenity areas to the immediate rear of the three buildings. Planning permission has already been granted on appeal for residential development on the site. The site is generally level and has been cleared in preparation for development.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for two pairs of semi-detached dwellings and two link detached dwellings resulting in a housing mix as set out in the description of development above. Access to the site would be off Wood Lane between Nos. 23a and 23. During the course of the application amended plans have been submitted to reduce the potential overlooking impact on existing properties to the south east of the site from the rear of the dwellings proposed on Plots 3 and 4 in particular.

2.2 A copy of the plans accompanying the application is **attached** as Appendix B. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council's website, [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

**3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Sonning Common Parish Council – Objects due to the detrimental impact on the village. The proposed development is greater in height, mass, bulk and scale than what has been approved on appeal. It would increase the scale of building on the site and adversely impact on the amenity and privacy of existing neighbours. The proposal represents an overdevelopment and there would be a lack of sufficient on-site parking provision.

3.2 Drainage Engineer (MONSON) - No objections subject to foul and surface water drainage

- 3.3 Neighbours – Objections received from 7 properties:
- Overdevelopment of the site compared to the appeal scheme
  - Housing mix not in accordance with local need
  - Highway safety concerns in relation to the access
  - Dwellings too large for the area
  - Potential further development behind Wood Lane
  - Opressive impact on properties in Grove Road including overlooking
  - Increased congestion in the centre of the village

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P12/S1429/FUL](#) - Refused (27/09/2012) - Approved on appeal (16/05/2013)  
Erection of 3 x two-storey 2-bedroom dwellings and 3 x two-storey 3-bedroom dwellings and 3-bay garage/carport building, incorporating parking and turning areas. A copy of the appeal decision is **attached** at Appendix C.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) policies
- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
  - CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
  - CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing
  - CSH2 - Housing density
  - CSH3 - Affordable housing
  - CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
  - CSI1 - Infrastructure provision
  - CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
  - CSQ3 - Design
  - CSR1 - Housing in villages
  - CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- 5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) policies;
- 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
  - D6 - Community safety
  - EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
  - G2 - Protect district from adverse development
  - G5 - Best use of land/buildings in built up areas
  - 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 considerations in relation to this application are:
1. The principle of the development

**Agenda Item 12**  
**South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 25 June 2014**

2. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
3. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
4. Highway considerations
5. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 Since the Inspector's decision to allow the appeal relating to application P12/S1429/FUL there has been no material change in planning policy. The principle of housing development on the site is acceptable having regard to Policy CSR1 of the SOCS, which allows for infill housing on sites within the larger villages of the district, which includes Sonning Common.
- 6.3 As the proposal is for a gain of six dwellings, the requirements of Policy CSH3 of the SOCS would usually be relevant. This Policy seeks to ensure that 40% affordable housing will be sought on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings. The previous scheme was for six dwellings and affordable housing provision was not required due to being considered under the previous affordable housing policy of the SOLP, which carried a higher threshold before affordable housing provision was required.
- 6.4 Although affordable housing provision would usually be required for a development of this size, given the extant permission for six dwellings on the site, and the fact that the appeal was determined after the adoption of the SOCS, it is not considered reasonable to request affordable housing in relation to this scheme.
- 6.5 In relation to housing mix, the proposal would provide a 50/50 mix of two bedroom dwellings and dwellings of three bedrooms and above. This is in accordance with Policy CSH4 of the SOCS.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area

- 6.6 Amongst other matters, Policy H4 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that new housing development is in keeping with the design, height, scale and materials of its surroundings and that the character of the area is not adversely affected. Given the extant planning permission for the site, the main consideration is in relation to the differences between the approved and current schemes.
- 6.7 The key difference in terms of the layout of the developments is best illustrated by reference to the proposed layout plans and approved layout plan **attached** at Appendix C. It can be seen that effectively Plots 3 and 4 have been re-sited such that the dwellings face north west towards Wood Lane and that this has allowed for the continuation of a roadway between Plot 2 and Plots 3/4.
- 6.8 The proposed dwellings range in height between 6.9 and 7.5 metres whilst the approved scheme shows that the dwellings would have had consistent height of approximately 6.7 metres. Despite the provision of either integral or attached garaging, with the exception of the garage proposed for Plot 2, the width of the dwellings is very similar to that of the approved scheme.
- 6.9 It is accepted that the development is now more intensive towards the rear of the site where it adjoins the boundary with 26 and 26a Grove Road, and that the height of the dwellings has increased. However, the amount of the development is not materially greater and Officers do not consider that the current proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site. The design of the dwellings between the two schemes is

**Agenda Item 12**  
**South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 25 June 2014**

similar with first floor accommodation largely contained within the roof space, and the use of dormer windows and two storey gables. A drawing showing the elevations of the approved development is attached at Appendix C.

6.10 In allowing the appeal, the Inspector states:

*The main section of the appeal site sites behind an office building, a takeaway and a pharmacy. Given its 'backland' position, it is a discreet site, not readily visible from the public domain. It is largely overgrown and its undeveloped nature does not make an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the local area.*

6.11 He goes on to state:

*I consider that the group of dwellings proposed would be attractively design and their detailing, scale and proportions would respond well to the variety of other dwellings within the immediate vicinity.*

6.12 Having regard to the above considerations and the similar scale and design of the development now proposed it is not considered that the development would cause any material harm to the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area.

6.13 The Inspector did raise some concern that the garage and carport proposed within the previous scheme would add unnecessary additional built form, and indeed the Inspector imposed a condition requiring the omission of this building and its replacement with car parking and landscaping. The current proposal does not propose any building to the front of the dwellings as was the case with the garage building previously proposed and as such the open aspect of the front elevations of the proposed dwellings would be retained. The Inspector's concerns regarding the garage building should be meant in relation to the siting and size of the particular building and should not be taken to mean that garaging on the site is unacceptable. The provision of the garaging now proposed is integral to the dwellings and overall the amount of built form on the site does not vary significantly from the approved scheme. The detached garage to the rear of Plot 2 is a modest building and discreetly located.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

6.14 The revised layout of this current proposal does have implications for neighbouring properties, most notably 26 and 26a Grove Road. No. 26 is a chalet bungalow with dormers on its rear elevation facing across the application site. The rear of this property is approximately 4 metres from the south east boundary of the site. Under the previous scheme the outlook from this property would have been over the rear garden area of Plot 5. However, under the current scheme the outlook would now be towards the rear elevations of Plots 3 and 4.

6.15 The distance between the rear elevations of No. 26 and those of Plots 3 and 4 is approximately 17 metres. Although this is a relatively small distance, the proposed dwellings would lie to the north west of No. 26 and would not give rise to a loss of light or be harmfully overbearing. The amended plans have altered the rear elevations of Plots 3 and 4 such that the first floor windows facing the rear of No. 26 are either high level rooflights or will be obscurely glazed bathroom windows. In light of this there would be no mutual overlooking between the dwellings.

6.16 The first floor windows in the rear elevations of Plot 5 and 6 would still serve bedrooms. However, the angle of view between these windows and No. 26, as well as the increased separation, would prevent any significant overlooking. The windows would

**Agenda Item 12**  
**South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 25 June 2014**

look towards the rear elevation of No. 26a at a distance of approximately 18 metres, however, given that there are no first floor windows in the rear of No. 26a directly facing those of Plots 5 and 6, and that the main private garden area of No. 26a is to the south west of this property, Officers do not consider that overlooking from the first floor windows would cause significant harm to the privacy of the occupiers of No. 26a.

- 6.17 The side elevation of Plot 1 is approximately 1 metre closer to the boundary with 21 Wood Lane. However, given the relatively low height of the dwelling proposed for Plot 1 and its roof design with eaves lower than the approved scheme, the impact on the rear of No. 21 should not be materially different between the two schemes. The windows at first floor level in the rear elevations of Plots 1 and 2 relate to bathrooms and would not overlook the neighbouring garden area to the north east.

Highway Considerations

- 6.18 The highway access arrangements into the site from Wood Lane are the same as previously approved, and are therefore considered acceptable. There is sufficient parking within the layout of the development to cater for the development in accordance with the council's parking standards.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.19 There is no evidence that the proposal would have a harmful impact on local wildlife and the few remaining trees on the boundaries of the site can be adequately protected during development operations. There is scope within the layout of the site for new tree planting to help complement and soften the built form within the site.
- 6.20 Sonning Common is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, however, this is unlikely to be made for at least a year, and in any case the proposal complies with the council's relevant development policies and there is no reason to delay the decision making process.
- 6.21 Having regard to Policy CSQ2 of the SOCS, the proposed development should meet Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy as, subject to conditions, the development would respect the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area and would not cause any significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. In addition the proposal would not be prejudicial to highway safety and convenience.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement – 3 years**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials to be as submitted unless otherwise agreed**
- 4. Finished floor and ground levels to be as agreed**
- 5. Tree protection details to be as agreed**
- 6. Landscaping to be carried out in accordance with approved plan**
- 7. Construction management plan to be implemented in accordance with agreed details**
- 8. Parking and turning areas to be provided in accordance with approved plan**

## **Agenda Item 12**

**South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 25 June 2014**

- 9. Withdrawal of Class A permitted development (extensions and alterations)**
- 10. Obscure glazing and high level rooflights to first floor windows in south elevation of Plots 4 and 5.**

**Author:** Mr T Wyatt  
**Contact no:** 01491 823154  
**Email:** [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)