

APPLICATION NO.	P14/S1822/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	11.6.2014
PARISH	SHIPLAKE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Robert Simister Mr Malcolm Leonard
APPLICANT	Mr Adam Kean
SITE	Plot of Land South of Tower House, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3JN
PROPOSAL	Creation of access with gate off Reading road, Shiplake into plot south of Tower House, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3JN.
AMENDMENTS	As amended by revised block plan received 8 September 2014.
GRID REFERENCE	476965/179384
OFFICER	Emma Bowerman

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the Officer's recommendation differs from the views of Shiplake Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application was deferred from the previous committee meeting on 17 September to allow members to visit the site to consider the highway safety implications of the development. Members visited the site on 13 October 2014.
- 1.3 The application site is a 0.52 ha area of land on the western edge of Shiplake. The land is overgrown with vegetation and there are some mature trees around the edge of the site. Residential properties border the north and east of the site, Reading Road forms the western boundary and there is open countryside to the south. There are level differences within the site, which slopes down from Reading Road. The site does not fall within an area of special designation.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the creation of an access. This would include a sloping driveway and timber gates on brick piers.
- 2.2 Amended plans were received during the application process to move the driveway further from the trees on the southern boundary. This was as a result of concerns raised by the council's Forestry Officer.
- 2.3 A copy of the proposed plans is **attached** as Appendix B. The application is accompanied by a design and access statement, traffic survey and engineering details for the access, which can be viewed online at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Shiplake Parish Council - Considers the application should be refused for the following reasons:
- The location is on a dangerous stretch of the A4155 close to sharp bends and the brow of a hill, while traffic generally speeds in excess of 30mph and accidents / incidents frequently occur.
 - Any additional access in this location, with heavy maintenance vehicles with

- trailers etc entering and exiting slowly, would create an additional hazard on an already dangerous stretch of road
- Precedent for further accesses

- 3.2 Highways Liaison Officer – No objection subject to a condition
- 3.3 Forestry Officer – No objection to amended plan
- 3.4 Neighbour Representations - 17 letters of objection. This issues of concern raised relate predominantly to highway safety and comments include
 - This is a narrow and dangerous stretch of road
 - Proposal would increase accidents
 - Drivers regularly exceed 30mph speed limit
 - Sight lines are poor
 - The steep gradient of the access would impact on safe access from site
 - Urbanisation in the countryside

Comments were also raised in relation to the potential for further development on the land.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P13/S2652/FUL – Withdrawn prior to determination (24/09/2013)
Creation of access with gate set back off Reading Road into plot South of Tower House.

This application was withdrawn following an objection raised by the County Highways Officer as insufficient information was submitted regarding the details of the access.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
- 5.2 **NPPF Planning Practice Guidance**
- 5.3 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2027**
 - CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- 5.4 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 saved policies**
 - C9 - Loss of landscape features
 - G2 - Protect district from adverse development
 - G4 - Protection of Countryside
 - T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered are:
 - 1. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
 - 2. The impact on highway safety
 - 3. The impact on trees

Character and appearance:

- 6.2 Policies G2 and G4 of the SOLP seek to protect the countryside for its own sake and to protect the district from adverse developments. The proposed hard standing and access gates would have some visual impact on a plot of land which is rural in character. However, the site is not in an isolated rural area, but is on the edge of the village, where accesses are common features.

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- 6.3 In addition, the proposal would involve only a small section of the road frontage (some 10m of a plot which is around 75m). The proposed gate would be a timber bar gate, suitable to the rural character of the site. In my opinion, the development would not result in any material planning harm to the character and appearance of the site or surrounding area, in accordance with the above policies.

Highway safety:

- 6.4 Policy T1 of the SOLP requires development to provide a safe and convenient access onto the highway network. With respect to highway safety matters the advice from Central Government set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is as follows:

Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

The term severe is locally interpreted as situations, which have a high impact, likely to result in loss of life, or a higher possibility of occurrence with a lower impact.

- 6.5 The access would be located on a stretch of the Reading Road (A4155) that has a 30mph speed limit. It is appreciated that drivers often exceed this limit and the traffic survey submitted with the application indicates average speeds of 38mph. The Parish Council and local residents have expressed considerable concern regarding the safety of a new access onto Reading Road.
- 6.6 The proposed gates would be set back some 8m from the edge of the carriageway and this would allow vehicles to pull off the road before the gates are opened. The proposed access would achieve vision splays of 2.4m x 120m and the County Highways Officer has confirmed that this takes into account the topography of the road. The proposed access would be used to maintain the land and as such, the frequency of use of the access is likely to be low. The County Highways Officer has considered the information submitted and has no objection to the proposed access.
- 6.7 It is acknowledged that an additional access onto the Reading Road would have some impact but taking in to account all of the above, the impact would not be severe as per the test in the NPPF. It is your officer's opinion that a reason for refusal on highway grounds could not be sustained at appeal. Officers consider that an access in this location is acceptable in highways terms and complies with the above policy.

Trees:

- 6.8 Policy C9 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that development does not result in the loss of any landscape features. The amended plan has moved the proposed access away from the trees along the southern boundary of the site and the council's forestry officer is satisfied that the proposed ground works would not harm the roots of these trees. As such, the proposal would comply with policy C9.

Other matters:

- 6.9 The application documents state that the entrance is required to allow vehicles into the land for its maintenance. If it is proposed to use the land for any use other than agriculture or forestry, planning permission would be required. I note that, under the council's current policies, the site would not be considered to be a suitable infill plot and new housing on this land would be likely to be resisted. Planning applications for housing on this land in the 1990's were refused as they were considered to be against the council's housing policies and would extend the built-up limits of the village.

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7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Whilst I appreciate that there is much local opposition to this proposal, there are no valid planning reasons to justify a refusal of planning permission. The submitted details demonstrate that appropriate sight lines could be achieved and the County Highways Officer has raised no objection to the application, which is considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF. As such, the application is recommended for approval.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 : Commencement 3 years - full planning permission**
- 2 : Development to be as shown on approved plans**
- 3 : New access to be in accordance with highway authority's specifications**

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