

## **SITE VISIT**

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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/S1195/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	12.5.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	GORING
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Mrs Pearl Slatter
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Croft Development
<b>SITE</b>	Manor Croft Little Croft Road Goring-on-Thames, RG8 9ER
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of the existing house to build three new dwellings. As clarified by the bat/ecology report dated April 2014 and updated arboricultural method statement and tree survey accompanying Agent's email dated 23 May 2014.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	As amended by drawing nos 8463 -PL-00B, 04B, 05B, 07B and 08B reducing the size of units on plot C and B accompanying Agent's email dated 1 July 2014. As clarified by drawing no 8463-PL-13 showing comparative heights with adjacent buildings
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	460115/180335
<b>OFFICER</b>	Sharon Crawford

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application was deferred at the Planning Committee meeting on 17 September to allow for members to visit the site. The site visit was conducted on 27 October 2014. The application was originally referred to the Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 The site occupies a prominent corner plot on Croft Road and Little Croft Road and is some 0.4h in size. Manor Croft, the existing dwelling on the site, is a large detached, two storey dwelling of a mock Tudor design fronting onto Croft Road. There are a number of trees on the site that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The character of the area in terms of design and scale of buildings is varied but most properties are detached dwellings sitting on very spacious or relatively spacious plots. The site lies in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.3 The site is identified on the map **attached** at Appendix 1.

### **2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of three detached dwellings; two 4 bed dwellings and one 5 bed dwelling. The dwellings would be constructed in brick with some flint panelling on the external walls; roofs would be covered in plain clay tiles. Parking and garaging for each dwelling would be provided. Two accesses are proposed onto Little Croft Road with one access onto Croft Road.
- 2.2 Amended plans were submitted in respect of the units on plots B and C reducing their size, and type, increasing the garden area and the gap in between plot B and C for a more spacious setting. The amendments are detailed below;

**On Plot B - Manor Croft**

- Reducing the house size by 39m<sup>2</sup> about 8.5%
- Enlarging the garden by 42m<sup>2</sup> about 10%
- moving the garage from Croft Road to Little Croft Road over the spot of the existing garage,
- moving the front door facing Croft Road
- reducing from 5 bedroom house to 4 bedroom house

**On Plot C -Manor Cottage**

- Reducing the house size by 48m<sup>2</sup> about 11%
- Enlarging the garden area by 36m<sup>2</sup> about 10%
- Reducing from 5 bedroom house to a 4 bedroom house

The gap between the houses on plot B and C is 9.4 between the two storey elements of the buildings or 5.78m when taking account of the single storey garage on Manor Cottage. The gap between plot C and the neighbouring dwelling Croft Lodge is approx 6.7m.

- 2.3 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](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

**3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Goring Parish Council                      Refuse. The design, height and scale are out of keeping (contrary to policy H4.ii), there were potential overlooking issues and the proposal was un-neighbourly. Questions were also raised in relation to the trees.
- Countryside Officer              This application is accompanied by an ecological survey report. The report found no evidence indicating that the site is used by protected species. The site is dominated by well managed gardens and lawns which would offer few opportunities for protected species. The survey did not find any evidence of bats using the existing house but did suggest that the building had some potential. No objection subject to an informative.
- Forestry Officer                      The majority of the mature trees within this site are protected by a tree preservation order. The proposed development shows the retention of all the protected trees as well as others. The retained trees are a significant landscape feature for the area and will help to soften the visual impact of the proposal. The amended layout offers some improvements from an arboricultural perspective and the amended tree protection information is acceptable.
- OCC (Highways)                      The scale of the proposed development from a highways standpoint is a net addition of two dwellings of comparable size to that on the site. At present, access is afforded from Little Croft Road to the single dwelling on the site. The proposals indicate an additional access to Little Croft Road and an access to Croft Road. These additions to the site are not significant in highways terms. No objection subject to conditions.

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- Neighbour Objectors (6 ) This is not infill but garden grabbing. Overdevelopment, the proposal to erect 3 massive dwellings on moderate sized plots would change the character of the area; only two dwelling should be allowed  
Manor Cottage is far too big for its proposed site and should not be allowed, it is situated too close to its boundaries, has a drive coming out on to a junction with poor eye sight lines due to hedges which should not be removed.  
The flat areas on the first floor but these should not be allowed as they could be used as balconies thus causing loss of privacy to neighbours.  
The proposal does not reflect the settlement pattern of the neighbourhood, specifically in regard to  
- overall density  
- plot size and pattern  
- building type and style  
The new houses would overlook our garden.  
Two new accesses will add to traffic movements and create safety risks.  
The new houses will block my view  
Concern about damage to shared boundary hedge
- Neighbour comments (1) My issues and concerns regarding this proposed development were addressed between the pre-planning application and planning application stages and I have no further comments.

**4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

**4.1 [P08/W1307](#) – Withdrawn (04/02/2009)**

Erection of a detached house and detached garage.

[P77/S0019](#) - Approved (14/06/1977)

EXTENSION TO FORM GARAGE, UTILITY, GAMES AND CHANING ROOMS. NEW ENTRANCE GATE AND BRICK WALLS

[P76/S0233](#) – Withdrawn (30/04/1976)

Erection of one detached house with integral double garage. Access.

[P73/H1007](#) - Refused (24/01/1974) - Approved on appeal (29/10/1974)

ERECTION OF DETACHED HOUSE AND DOUBLE GARAGE. ACCESS TO LITTLE CROFT ROAD

[P72/H0550](#) - Refused (21/07/1972)

Erection of one detached dwelling house. Access.

[P61/H0266](#) - Approved (25/07/1961)

Erection of a garage with access

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

**5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies**

- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CSEN1 - Landscape protection
- 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
- 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
- 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

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 is acceptable
- H4 Criteria
- Provision of gardens
- Affordable housing
- Mix of units
- Tree issues
- Sustainable design issues

6.2 **Principle.** Policy CSR1 of SOCS allows for new housing within the towns and infill development in the larger and smaller villages subject to the criteria of policy H4 of the SOLP. Goring is one of the district's larger villages where infill development on appropriate sites and development on allocated sites will be allowed. Policy CSR1 does not limit the size of infill sites within the larger villages but redevelopment proposals will need to comply with the provisions of Policy H4 of the adopted SOLP. The site is 0.4 hectares in size and lies within the built up limits of Goring; the principle of redevelopment is acceptable in your officer's view subject to the criteria of saved Policy H4 of SOLP.

6.2i Neighbours object to the development on the grounds that the proposal is overdevelopment of the site and involves the loss of a mature, landscaped garden (garden grabbing). Whilst residential gardens are no longer classified as previously developed land, where there is a presumption in favour of allowing redevelopment, the proposed scheme is in accordance with the principles of the NPPF and Policies CSS1 and CSR1 which encourage new development within settlements on appropriate sites. More detailed character arguments about how the development fits into the character of the area etc are considered under the criteria of H4.

**H4 criteria issues.**

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

6.3 It is acknowledged that the site is sensitive because Goring is washed over by the

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, the properties in the area are mostly detached houses on attractive spacious plots with mature landscaping. However, in my view the site is not an important open space of public value per se that would rule out redevelopment with an appropriate scheme. With regard to ecological value, the ecology survey did not find any evidence of bats using the existing house but did suggest that the building had some potential. There is no objection to the redevelopment subject to an informative on the decision notice should bats be found during the construction process.

**ii. Design, height and bulk in keeping with the surroundings;**

- 6.4 The character of the area is varied in terms of the size and design of surrounding properties. The properties in the area are mostly detached houses on attractive spacious plots with mature landscaping. Holmlea Road properties are a uniform size and design but other properties are very varied in design, form and age. Materials in the vicinity include red brick with plain clay tile roofs, render with tile hanging, render and slate effect and brown brick with concrete roof tiles. The proposed houses would be constructed in a traditional style using red brick with flint infill panels to front elevations under plain tile roofs. The design and materials proposed would not be at odds with the varied character of the area.

- 6.4i Comparative heights for the proposed dwellings and surrounding properties are shown below.

Plot A – Manor Lodge	=	8.5 m to main ridge
Plot B – Manor Croft	=	8.9 m to main ridge
Plot C – Manor Cottage	=	8.3 m to ridge
Existing dwelling	=	7.5 to ridge
Croft Lodge	=	7.5m to ridge
Sainfoin	=	7.2 to highest ridge

- 6.4ii The new dwellings would be taller than surrounding properties with the highest ridge on the corner plot. However, there is already a variety of ridge heights in the vicinity with a mix of full two storey, chalet style buildings and bungalows. In the context of the surrounding area, the height of the proposed buildings is not out of keeping with the varied heights of other properties in the area and given the spacing of buildings the additional height would not be harmful to the character or the area in your officer's view.

**6.5 iii. That the character of the area is not adversely affected;**

The site lies in an edge of village location in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The application seeks permission for three large detached houses on 0.4 hectares of land. The Parish Council and neighbours are concerned that the proposed houses are too big and the scheme is an overdevelopment of the site that would detract from the character of the area.

- 6.5i The **density** of development in this part of Goring is low reflecting the edge of village setting. In Little Croft Road, density is very low at just under 6 dwellings per hectare (dph) (9 dwellings on 1.6 hectares) with the density in the Holmlea Road area to the north east being 13 dph (40 houses on 3 hectares). The proposal provides for 3 dwellings on 0.4 hectares which would give a density of 7.5 dph. In your officer's view the density proposed would still be very low and would not be at odds with the density of development in the vicinity.

6.5ii In terms of **plot coverage**, the following figures apply

Homelea Road houses( average)	=	11% plot coverage
Sainfoin	=	17% plot coverage
Croft Lodge	=	12% plot coverage
Plot A – Manor lodge	=	18% plot coverage
Plot B – Manor Croft	=	19 % plot coverage
Plot C – Manor Cottage	=	25% plot coverage

6.5iii Whilst the plot coverage for the proposed houses is higher than surrounding houses they are still relatively low. The layout provides for adequate spacing between buildings, low density, above average garden areas and in the circumstances can not be regarded as an over development of the site in your officers view. In addition the design of the properties is in line with design guide advice and whilst the properties are higher than surrounding buildings the site provides an adequate landscape setting to accommodate the development.

6.6 iv. **Amenity, environmental or highway objections;**

6.6i **Highway and parking issues.** The proposal provides for a net addition of two dwellings of comparable size to that on the site. At present, access is afforded from Little Croft Road to the single dwelling on the site. The proposals indicate an additional access to Little Croft Road and an access to Croft Road. These additions to the site are not significant in highways terms. Neighbours have expressed concern about an increase in traffic and potential safety issues. Visibility from all the access points meets appropriate standards and the increase in traffic is not significant and can be accommodated on the roads. As such there is no highway objection to the proposal.

6.6ii With regard to parking, Plots 1 and 2 include integral double garages and plot 3 includes a single garage. In addition parking and turning facilities are provided on each frontage. Each plot would have in excess of the minimum standard of two parking spaces and as such, the scheme is acceptable in this respect in my view.

6.6iii **Neighbour impact.** The main neighbours affected by the development are: **Croft Lodge**; this is a two storey property to the south of the site and there is a substantial beech hedge along the shared boundary to some 3 metres in height. There are two existing first floor windows in the side elevation of Croft Lodge serving the main bathroom and an ensuite bathroom. Manor Cottage on Plot C would be on the same building line as Croft Lodge with a distance of 6 metres between the two buildings; the hedge is proposed to be retained. The neighbour is concerned that construction works will damage the jointly owned hedge and restrict light. There are also concerns regarding overlooking to a swimming pool as a consequence of the inclusion of balconies on the properties. In the amended plans it is clear that no balconies are proposed; bedroom 3 is shown with French doors with a Juliette balcony but no more overlooking than a normal bedroom window would be possible. Bedroom 2 is shown with a normal window with no access onto the flat roofed area containing the lantern roof to the kitchen. The relationship with Croft Cottage is acceptable in your officer's view given the distance between the buildings, the orientation and the retention of the hedge.

6.6iv **Sainfoin.** This property lies to the west of the site and there substantial boundary hedging and trees on the boundary. There would a gap of 9 metres between Sainfoin and Manor Lodge on Plot A and the properties would be on a similar building line. The neighbours at Sainfoin have no objection to the proposed development as any concerns have been addressed prior to the application being submitted.

The relationship with Sainfoin is acceptable in your officer's view given the distance between the buildings, the orientation and the retention of the hedge.

6.6v **V) Backland development issues.** The site is not in a backland location

6.7 **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 bed units and above. In this case the proposal is for 2 no four bedroom houses and 1 no five bedroom dwelling and the garden sizes proposed are as follows;

Plot A – Manor Lodge	=	600 square metres
Plot B – Manor Croft	=	approx 360 square metres
Plot C – Manor Cottage	=	in excess of 460 square metres

The proposed garden sizes are well in excess of the minimum garden standards reflecting the more spacious parkland setting of dwellings in the vicinity and are acceptable in your officer's view.

6.8 **Provision for affordable housing.** Policy CSH3 of SOCS seeks to achieve a 40% provision of affordable housing on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings. In this case there is a net gain of two dwellings and the scheme is below the threshold. As such there is no requirement to provide affordable housing in this instance.

6.9 **Mix of units.** Policy CSH4 of SOCS requires an acceptable housing mix to ensure a steady provision of small two bedroom properties on all new residential development in line with the recommendations set out in the Housing Needs Survey. In this case, the application seeks planning permission for three large detached houses of 4 and 5 bedrooms and no mix of units is proposed.

6.9i The applicant maintains that this part of Goring is characterised by substantial and large detached family dwellings and the inclusion of two bedroom houses on this plot will be completely out of character with the area. They further add that even two bedroom houses in on part of this site will command a high value which will take them out of reach of an affordable price range.

6.9ii Your officer's have considered carefully whether a refusal of planning permission could be justified on the lack of small units given the character of the surrounding area of large detached family houses. In your officer's view, a small starter home on the site would be out of keeping with the character of the area and it is likely to mean that the overall number of units across the whole site would be increased in a way that was out of keeping with the character of the area. In this case, whilst the scheme is not in accordance with policy CSH4, the lack of a smaller unit is acceptable because of character issues.

6.10 **Tree issues.** A Tree Preservation Order was served on the site in January 2014 following on from the removal of a number of mature trees on the site. The proposed development shows the retention of all the protected trees as well as others. The retained trees are a significant landscape feature for the area and will help to soften the visual impact of the proposal. The Forestry Officer has no objection to the principle of development but suggested some minor revisions to the layout to reduce the impact on certain trees which have now been taken on board. The amended layout offers some improvements from an arboricultural perspective and the amended tree protection information is acceptable.

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- 6.11 **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. The Design and Access statement confirms that a code 4 will be achieved and this can be secured by condition. The scheme is acceptable in this respect in your officer's view.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Your officers recommend that planning permission is granted because the principle of development within Goring is acceptable. Whilst the plot coverage for the proposed houses is slightly higher than surrounding houses they are all still relatively low. The layout provides for adequate spacing between buildings, low density, above average garden and parking areas and in the circumstances can not be regarded as an over development of the site. In addition the design of the properties is in line with design guide advice and whilst the properties are higher than surrounding buildings the site provides an adequate landscape setting to accommodate the development. The development accords with the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions.**

- 1 : Commencement 3 years - Full planning permission.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Sample materials required (all).**
- 4 : Code Level 4.**
- 5 : New vehicular access.**
- 6 : Parking and manoeuvring areas retained.**
- 7 : No surface water drainage to highway.**
- 8 : Landscaping scheme (trees and shrubs only).**
- 9 : Tree protection in accordance with submitted details.**
- 10 : Surface water drainage works (details required).**
- 11 : Foul drainage works (details required).**

**Author:** Sharon Crawford  
**Contact No:** 01491 823739  
**Email:** [planning@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southandvale.gov.uk)