

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/S1503/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	14.5.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	SONNING COMMON
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Mr Alan Rooke Mr Paul Harrison
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Gattis Developments Limited
<b>SITE</b>	Corner of Wood Lane and Green Lane Sonning Common
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of two storey building, with undercroft carport, to accommodate an A2 unit at ground floor level with self-contained two-bedroom flat above. (As amended by plans received 9 July 2014 showing revised parking space layout for proposed unit, and by amended plans received 30 September 2014 showing an A2 use and revised ground floor layout and elevation).
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	As above
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	470668/180202
<b>OFFICER</b>	Victoria Butterworth

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee because the officer's recommendation conflicted with the view of Sonning Common Parish Council to the initial proposal for the erection of a home office / dwelling unit with attached carport.
- 1.2 The application was previously presented to the Committee on 17 September 2014. Members resolved to defer the application for a committee site visit. The proposal has since been amended. The views of Sonning Common Parish Council and the Local Highway Authority on the revised scheme have yet to be received and will be reported at the Committee meeting.
- 1.3 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is located in the local centre of the village of Sonning Common. The site is a corner plot and contains two 1960s-style, two-storey, flat roofed blocks; one fronting Wood Lane and one fronting Green Lane. These buildings accommodate local shops and services at ground floor level and residential accommodation at first floor level. There is a parking court to the rear of the buildings.
- 1.4 At the north-east of the site, fronting Wood Lane and Green Lane, there is an area between the two buildings which is currently partly planted with trees and shrubs, partly paved and also contains a bin store area that serves the existing buildings. A traditional red phone box, which is planted with flowers, is also located on the pavement within the site.
- 1.5 Sonning Common is designated as a larger village where the principle of new housing development is acceptable. The site does not fall within any areas of special designation.
- 1.6 Planning permission was granted by application P04/E0753 in January 2005 for a very similar scheme for the erection of a two-storey building to provide additional retail and residential accommodation on the site, increasing the number of flats from five to six.

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**2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Following the Committee meeting on 17 September the scheme has been revised. The scheme initially proposed the erection of a two-bedroom live-work unit on the existing planted and paved area on the north-east corner of the site between two existing buildings. It is now proposed that the two storey building would accommodate an A2 use at ground floor level and a self-contained two-bedroom flat at first floor level. Use Class A2 covers financial and professional services including banks, building societies, and estate agents. The A2 use and residential unit would operate independently. The proposed location and external form of the building would be identical but there are some changes to the windows and doors.
- 2.2 The proposed building would have a footprint of 14 metres by 6 metres and an eaves height of 5.5 metres. It would have a pitched roof with a ridge height of 7.5 metres, which would be hipped at both ends. The walls of the building would be finished with facing brickwork and tile hanging and the roof would be finished with concrete tiles.
- 2.3 The A2 use is proposed on the ground floor and the residential element is proposed at first floor level. The A2 and residential elements would operate as separate units with separate front door accesses from Wood Lane. A parking space and bin and cycle storage for the flat are proposed in an under-croft below the first floor of the building. Vehicles would access the site via Green Lane and via the existing vehicular access that serves the parking court to the rear of the site.
- 2.4 Alterations to the section of pavement on Wood Lane are also proposed in order to widen the existing parking bays that serve the shops and services within the site.
- 2.5 A copy of the revised 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 – Objection to the original scheme. Comments on the amended plans to be reported verbally by officers at the Committee meeting.
- 3.2
- Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – No objection to the original scheme. Comments on the amended plans to be reported verbally by officers at the Committee meeting.
- 3.3 County Archaeological Services - No strong views.
- 3.4 Neighbour comments to the scheme initially proposed: objections were received from eleven neighbours –
- poor design; out of character and will encourage crime
  - over-development of a small piece of land
  - no need for additional office premises / existing empty space within village
  - not a location identified for housing in village plan / in appropriate location for housing
  - lack of amenity space for proposed residential unit
  - loss of commercial bin store
  - residential unit proposed to Fish & Chip Shop output flue
  - loss of trees and open / green space created by local community will detract from visual amenity of the area
  - will detract from the visual appearance of the existing centre

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- will detract from the vitality / retail use of the existing centre
- proposed planting will not mitigate loss of existing green space
- extra traffic generated will exacerbate existing problems opposite existing access to health centre and dentist / highway safety
- exacerbate existing parking problems
- obstruct driver vision plays from Green Lane, which is already compromised by parked vehicles.
- will add to existing construction traffic in causing obstruction on Wood Lane

**4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P04/E0753](#) - Approved (26/01/2005) Erection of two storey extension to retail/residential property increasing number of flats from five to six.

[P01/S0805/R](#) - Approved (30/10/2001) Change of use from dental surgery to office use (B1). (Renewal of planning permission P97/S0221).

[P68/H0580](#) - Approved (04/11/1968) 5 SHOPS WITH FLATS OVER. ACCESSES.

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**  
**National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance**

5.2 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2027**

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy  
CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
CSQ3 - Design  
CST1 - Town centres and shopping

5.3 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 saved policies**

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt  
E7 - Working from home  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles  
D1 - Principles of good design  
D3 - Outdoor amenity area  
D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers  
D5 - Compatible mix of uses  
D10 - Waste Management  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

5.4 **South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2008**

Sections 3, 4 and 5

**6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

1. The principle of the proposed development
2. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area
3. The impact on neighbouring properties
4. Highway considerations
5. Other material considerations

Principle of development

- 6.2 In January 2005, planning consent was granted for application P04/E0753; a very similar development to the current application. The previously approved plans are **attached** as Appendix C. Since 2005, new planning policies have been adopted. The development plan now comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP), South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 (SOCS) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whilst these new documents are in place, there has not been a material change in the relevant planning policies.
- 6.3 The application site is located in the built up area of Sonning Common, which is classed as a larger village under Policy CSR1 of the SOCS. Policy CSR1 allows for infill housing development within larger villages. SOCS Policy CST1 seeks to support and strengthen local centres, such as Sonning Common, by permitting development which diversifies the centre with uses that are complementary to retail, while not undermining the centre's retail role. This can include where appropriate mixed-use developments and upper floor residential and office uses.
- 6.4 The previously approved planning application was very similar in scale, form and design to the building proposed as part of the current application. It proposed a retail unit at ground floor level whereas the current application proposes an A2 unit (financial and professional services). SOCS Policy CST1 encourages residential and office uses at upper floor levels rather than at the ground floor. However, the proposal is considered broadly in accordance with the criteria of this policy which also encourages uses that would complement the existing uses and could encourage more visits to the area and improve the vitality and viability of the local centre in accordance with this policy. Officers consider that the proposed A2 use complies with policy CST1.
- 6.5 Consent has also been granted in the past for the change of use of one of the other units on the site from a shop to an office use. Whilst it would not be desirable for all of the ground floor units to be in office or A2 use, it is considered acceptable in this instance because a good balance of uses will remain.
- 6.6 Weight must be given to the fact that permitted development rights have changed since 2005 through amendments made to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The changes reflect the Government's agenda of making it easier to bring redundant or underused buildings back to life, revitalising high streets and providing much-needed homes. The changes aim to support high streets and local centres whose traditional use is changing, and in some cases declining, by providing homes that are close to services and transport links, and increasing footfall for existing services.
- 6.7 The new permitted development rights allow for greater flexibility of business uses. Use class A1 (Shops) can be changed to a mixed use including shops and up to two flats. They can also be changed to a mixed use for the purposes of A2 (Financial and professional services) and up to two flats. Buildings falling within Use Class A1 (Shops) can also change to A2 (Financial and professional services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) or B1 (Business) for a temporary period of up to two years.
- 6.8 The proposed development would not result in the loss of a retail unit but would provide an additional unit. Officers therefore consider that the principle of the development is acceptable and that the proposed A2 unit would not have a detrimental impact on the shopping area or on local services. The provision of an additional A2 unit, rather than a retail unit, at ground floor level would not be sufficient reason to warrant refusing this planning application.

Impact on character and appearance of the site and surrounding area

- 6.9 The proposed building would be of a differing design to the existing adjacent buildings within the site. However, other buildings along the street vary greatly in design and it is considered that, in terms of its design and scale, the proposed development would not be out of keeping with the general character of the site or the surrounding area and would in fact be an enhancement of the built form.
- 6.10 The site of the proposed building consists of a pavement, flower bed with two trees, bin store and a planted phone box. The flower bed and two flowering trees would be removed. It is proposed that the phone box will be relocated elsewhere on the pavement.
- 6.11 The existing landscape feature enhances the character and appearance of the area and its loss is undesirable. The loss of the feature, which is maintained by a voluntary group of local residents, is strongly opposed by many local people who responded to the planning application consultation.
- 6.12 The applicant has proposed some replacement planting and the approval of an appropriate landscaping scheme can be controlled by planning condition. Officers consider that whilst the character of the site would be changed it would not be harmed because replacement landscaping could mitigate for the loss of the landscape feature.

Impact on neighbours

- 6.13 The proposed development would not result in privacy of overlooking issues, and would not affect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Highway considerations

- 6.14 The parking space proposed would serve the residential unit. The existing parking space for unit 2A would also be relocated. Alterations are proposed to the existing parking bays to the front of the units on Wood Lane. The proposed parking layout can be secured and retained by planning condition.
- 6.15 The Highway Liaison Officer had no objection to the previous plans for the live-work unit which proposed one car parking space for the proposed unit and alterations to the parking bays on Wood Lane. The Highway Liaison Officer has not yet responded to the consultation on the revised scheme but their comments will be reported at the Committee meeting.

Other material considerations

- 6.16 SOLP Policy D3 states that a garden or outdoor amenity area should be provided for all new dwellings. The proposed two-bedroom flat would not have any outdoor amenity space but the residents would have space for bins and cycle storage in a similar manner to the other flats in the area. The lack of garden for the small unit is not considered to be sufficient reason to warrant refusing this planning application.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This proposal is generally in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy because, subject to conditions, the development would not cause harm to the character of the area and would not harm the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal represents an appropriate infill development within a settlement where the principle of additional residential development, and uses

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that would complement the existing uses, is acceptable. The proposed building would be of an acceptable design and would be of a scale suitable to the size of the plot. The development would not detract from the character and appearance of the site and would not be unneighbourly. In addition, the proposal would not be prejudicial to highway safety and convenience. The application is therefore 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 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Materials as on plan.**
- 4 : Parking and manoeuvring areas to be as shown on plan, constructed to the specification of the Local Highway Authority and retained.**
- 5 : Landscaping scheme (trees and shrubs only) to be submitted for approval.**
- 6 : Details of fish and chip shop extractor unit and flue to be submitted to satisfaction of Environmental Health.**

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