

APPLICATION NO.	P14/S2743/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	26.8.2014
PARISH	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
WARD MEMBERS	Joan Bland Elizabeth Hodgkin
APPLICANT	Hamilton Properties Ltd
SITE	26 Lambridge Wood Road Henley-on-Thames, RG9 3BS
PROPOSAL	Demolition of one house and erection of two detached houses with new vehicular and pedestrian access.(as amplified by tree constraints plan accompanying agent's email dated 15th September 2014 and as amended by plans accompanying agent's email dated 30th October 2014, reducing extension footprint and ridge height; and as amplified by landscaping plan received 7th November 2014)
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	474754/183758
OFFICER	Simon Kitson

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is referred to Committee, following a call-in by a local ward member.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) comprises an existing detached property located within a late 1950s area of housing towards the north-west of Henley town centre. The dwelling is set within a plot approximately 0.19ha in area and is accessed via a private driveway which also serves a number of other properties to the north of the site. Many of the dwellings within the locality are of bespoke appearance and have been extended well beyond their original form.

1.3 The site does not fall within a designated area.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 As detailed in the application submission, this proposal is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of two detached houses, together with revised access arrangements and landscaping. As amended, the key details on the plans are as follows:-

Plot 1:

- Site area (excluding boundary treatments): 870 sq.m
- Dwelling footprint: 204 sq.m
- 5 bedrooms
- Main ridge height: 8.5m

Plot 2:

- Site area (excluding boundary treatments and highway verge) 852 sq.m
- Dwelling footprint: 197 sq.m
- 5 bedrooms

Agenda Item 8
South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 10th December 2014

- Main ridge height: 8.5m
- 2.2 Each dwelling would have undercroft parking accessed via a sloping driveway. It is proposed to close the existing site access to the east of the site and form two new vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the south of the site.
- 2.3 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.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Henley-on-Thames Town Council:

- 12/9: No strong views
- 26/11: Holding response: the Town Council states that it was unaware of the neighbour objections prior to submitting the formal consultation response. It has also been stated that the 'no strong views' expressed previously was based upon the incorrect site area within the application form, irrespective of the accuracy of the submitted plans. Further comments to be verbally updated before the committee.

Henley Society Planning – Objection

- Overdevelopment of site
- Out of character with surrounding area
- Neighbour impact

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – No objections, subject to condition

Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) - No objections.

Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No objections. There is only a small possibility of bats being present.

Neighbour objections to proposal and amendments (30 properties)

- The site area on the submitted application form is incorrect
- The site area on the plans is incorrect
- The plot is only large enough to accommodate a single dwelling
- The proposed dwellings would represent an overdevelopment of the site.
- The plot sizes would not be in keeping with the other properties in the locality
- The proposed building design would not be in keeping with the local vernacular
- The proposal would affect views from neighbouring properties
- The proposal would have an overbearing impact and result in loss of privacy
- Council policies are not being consistently applied
- Detrimental highways impact in terms of parking provision, adequate turning areas, visibility
- Potential removal of existing hedge would have detrimental impact upon quality of local landscape
- Loss of trees would impact upon visual amenity of area
- The proposed amendment has not addressed the neighbours' concerns

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None relevant to current proposal

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) policies;

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSEN1 - Landscape protection
CSH2 - Housing density
CSQ3 - Design
CSHEN1 - Strategy for Henley

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) policies;

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
C9 - Loss of landscape features
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
D4 - Privacy
D1 - Principles of good design
D2 - Vehicle and bicycle parking
D3 - Plot coverage and parking areas
D10 - Waste management
G2 - Protect district from adverse development

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are:

1. The principle of the development
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 issues

Principle of development

6.2 There is no objection to the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling on the basis of its historic, visual or architectural interest. However, the erection of two dwellings as a replacement is more contentious, due to the fact that there have historically been questions over whether Lambridge Wood Road is within the confines of Henley. Furthermore, previous proposals for infill development within the general area have been considered unacceptable in principle. If it were accepted that the property is outside the built up confines of Henley, the demolition and replacement of an existing dwelling would need to be assessed against Policy H12 of the SOLP. This policy does not allow for a net gain of one dwelling. However, the planning inspector for the 1998 appeal hearing for the erection of four dwellings at no.12 Lambridge Wood Road (ref: P98/S0177) considered it appropriate to assess the proposal under both restrictive Policy H6, which covered housing in inappropriate locations; and saved Policy H4, which covers new housing within towns and larger villages.

6.3 There has been a significant change to national planning guidance as a result of the NPPF, which emphasises a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Other material changes include Policy CSR1 of the SOCS and the council's Settlement

Assessment Background Paper, which outlines the key indicators used to assess sustainability within settlements across the district.

- 6.4 It is acknowledged that the Lambridge Wood Road development has a distinctly different character to the more dense housing at the northern approach to Henley, and that green space to the south of Fairmile currently separates the two areas of housing. However, Lambridge Wood Road is excluded from the surrounding conservation area and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and it is noted that the application site is approximately 1700m from the town centre boundary, with two bus stops at a distance of approximately 1100m from the site. Although the bus stops are located more than the 400m distance suggested by the SODG and the walking distance is more than the 800m recommended by the Manual for Streets, there is no upper limit within the development plan and the distances are not dissimilar to elsewhere within the confines of Henley. Given that the site is in relatively close proximity to employment, shopping, leisure and other facilities, officers consider that the site is in a sustainable location and the principle of infill housing is acceptable.

Scale and design

- 6.5 The proposal would provide adequate amenity space in excess of the 100 sq.m recommended within Section 3.2 of the SODG and the proposed housing density would equate to approximately 10 dwellings per hectare, well below the requirement of SOCS Policy CSH2, which specifies a minimum of 25 dwellings per hectare for new housing developments. However, it is recognised that these standards are flexible and SOLP Policy H4 requires the design, height, scale and materials of any housing proposal to be considered against the surroundings and character of the area in which it would be located.
- 6.6 It is evident from the weight of neighbour objections that the application is not viewed favourably by the community within Lambridge Wood Road and officers do not fully appreciate that the proposal would create two plots which would be smaller than any other sites within the locality. The amount of amenity space provided in proportion to the footprint of the dwellings is also without precedent within the road, although it is not out of keeping with other properties nearer to the Town Centre. As many neighbours have pointed out, the southern approach to the site is characterised by generally large detached dwellings within larger plots. However, many of the smaller-scale sites are located within a residential cul-de-sac close to the application property and there is considerable variation in plot sizes across the wider Lambridge Wood Road area, with a range of distinctive bespoke styles, types of housing, layouts and orientations. The proposed dwellings would contribute to the housing mix within the area.
- 6.7 Whilst the points regarding the precedent for further development are noted, this is not in itself a reason for refusal as each application would need to be assessed on its own merits. This application site is in a unique position, in a distinctive corner plot, and officers consider that the net gain of one house in this individual location would not conflict with the general grain of development.

Character and appearance

- 6.8 Notwithstanding the above, officers have had concerns from the outset over the visual bulk and amount of development within the south-east corner of the site, which is in a relatively prominent location and has a current level of openness. Following discussions with the agent, revised plans were received which reduced the ridge heights of the dwellings by 0.5m and reduced the width of the south-east facing gable. A hipped roof was also added to help soften the visual impact. This scheme should also be viewed in conjunction with the subsequent landscaping plan which retains the high hedge around the site perimeter and details the additional planting which would be undertaken as a

condition of consent.

- 6.9 Following receipt of the revised plans, Officers do not consider that there is a sufficient level of harm to warrant a refusal of planning permission. The two proposed dwellings arguably respond to the topography of the site and have taken some design cues from the neighbouring properties, such as no. 29 Lambridge Wood Road which has a similar architectural form and prominent glazed gable feature. However, there are enough differences to ensure that the pair of dwellings would not be at odds with the variety in architectural form which currently exists. Furthermore, by closing off the existing access and undertaking a suitably high level of planting, which is a characteristic of the immediate area, it is considered that the impact of this proposal upon the character of the street scene has been satisfactorily addressed.

Highway Considerations

- 6.10 It is accepted that the site is within walking distance from the town centre and benefits from cycle and public transport links. However, due to the distances involved, motorised transport is likely to be used to access the majority of basic facilities and it would be essential for the site layout to incorporate adequate turning areas and parking provision for at least two cars at each property. Officers consider that the site is large enough to comfortably accommodate two or more parking spaces and adequate turning areas per dwelling, in accordance with Policy T1, T2 and the council's adopted parking standards set out within Appendix 5 of the SOLP
- 6.11 As both suggested site layouts would incorporate a new vehicular access onto Lambridge Wood Road, the Highway Authority were consulted on the proposal. The Highways officer noted that traffic movements within the road are limited and the speed is restricted to 30 mph. No objection is raised to the proposal; subject to conditions requiring the avoidance of surface water drainage onto the highway, the stopping-up of the existing access, and a construction management plan. It is considered appropriate to add conditions requiring the retention of the garage accommodation and the non-obstruction of the parking and turning areas within the site.

Landscape features

- 6.7 There are no protected trees within the vicinity and the site does not fall within a conservation area. Whilst the removal of existing trees within the site would be regrettable, they are not considered to be of sufficient arboricultural value to represent a significant constraint to development. The council's forestry officer does not object to the proposed landscaping scheme.

Neighbouring amenity

- 6.8 It is noted that many neighbour comments raise objection to the loss of views across the existing garden enclosure. Officers would stress that the right to a view is not a material planning consideration, many of the affected properties are in an elevated position above the application site and there is significant intervening distance between the proposed dwellings and their neighbours. Officers are satisfied that there is an adequate degree of separation between dwellings 1 and 2 and the location of the dwellings in relation to the neighbouring properties would not result in a material loss of light, outlook or privacy; having regard to the scale of the proposal, the setback from the site frontage and the reduced ridge height at the north-west of the site.

Other issues

- 6.9 It is noted that a considerable number of objections have been received on the basis of the accuracy of the submitted plans. For the avoidance of doubt, the agent has acknowledged that the site area is not 0.3ha as stated within the application form. However, the submitted site plan and landscaping plan are based on a site survey and

Agenda Item 8
South Oxfordshire District Council – Planning Committee – 10th December 2014

the area is consistent across all plans. Officers are satisfied that there is insufficient evidence to question the accuracy of the submitted plans.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy. The proposal would not cause material harm to the overall character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal is also considered acceptable in terms of the impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and it would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

- 1 : Commencement three years - full planning permission.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Levels (details required).**
- 4 : Samples of materials to be agreed.**
- 5 : Withdrawal of P.D. (Part 1 Class A) - no extensions etc.**
- 6 : Withdrawal of P.D. (Part 1 Class E) - no buildings etc.**
- 7 : No surface water drainage to highway.**
- 8 : Parking and manoeuvring areas retained.**
- 9 : Landscaping scheme (trees and shrubs only).**
- 10 : Code Level 4.**
- 11 : Close existing access.**
- 12 : Construction management plan.**
- 13 : Retain integral garage accommodation.**

Author: Simon Kitson
Contact no: 01491 823740
Email: planning@southandvale.gov.uk