

APPLICATION NO.	P14/S3480/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	31.10.2014
PARISH	GORING HEATH
WARD MEMBER	Pearl Slatter
APPLICANT	Vision Development
SITE	Woodlands Bridle Road, Whitchurch Hill, RG8 7PR
PROPOSAL	Proposed erection of a single detached dwelling with associated parking and amenity (Amendment to the design of the scheme as shown by drawings accompanying email from Agent dated 17-12-2014)
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	464134/179286
OFFICER	Marc Pullen

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the officer's recommendation conflicts with the view of Goring Heath Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is an open parcel of land which originally belonged to the garden of Woodlands, which is a detached bungalow accessed via Bridle Road. The site is positioned between Bridle Road and Hocketts Close and the site tapers where Hocketts Close curves closer to Bridle Road. A high close boarded fence marks the boundary to Hocketts Close and there is a grass verge between the fence line and the edge of the road. Hocketts Close is characterised by large detached 1970's dwellings, positioned primarily on the east side of the road. To the west side of the site are some high trees forming part of an area of woodland. The site falls within the built up confines of Whitchurch Hill and falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a single detached dwelling house with associated amenity space and parking. The property would be accessed from Hocketts Close and would face southward.
- 2.2 The proposed dwelling has been amended in design and scale during the application process with the relevant re-consultation being carried out. The amended scheme has reduced the bulk and presence of the property by introducing a single storey element which extends from the side/rear of the property, it has omitted the pitched roof which has resulted in an overall height reduction of approximately one metre. The footprint of the property has been increased overall however the footprint of the two storey part has been reduced.
- 2.3 The site is currently subject to two previous planning permissions for single dwelling residential development; P12/S0578 and P14/S0202/FUL with the former being allowed at appeal.
- 2.4 A copy of all the current 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 Goring Heath Parish Council on amended scheme – Object

- The property is too large for the plot and too tall which would be overly dominating along the street scene
- First floor windows would be in direct line of sight from passing vehicles and overlook the garden of Woodlands
- The property would be at risk of falling trees nearby
- An overbearing impact on the nearby bridleway
- Urbanising impact on the edge of the settlement
- Not a sustainable development

Neighbour Representations on original scheme - Object (4)

- The height and scale of the proposal would affect light and visibility
- Bedrooms directly overlooking neighbouring properties and habitable rooms
- Out of character with the surrounding residential area and does not respect local vernacular design
- Would harm the outlook of neighbouring properties
- Increase of traffic along Hocketts Close
- Considerably larger than the property previously permitted
- Overdevelopment of the land
- The size of the property would overwhelm the street scene and appear dominant
- Windows would overlook the road
- Increase in the urbanisation of the local rural landscape

Neighbour Representations on the amended scheme – Object (2)

- Harm to privacy and outlook
- Design still does not reflect local vernacular design and would not enhance or conserve the local area

Architects Panel on original scheme - Object (1)

- Property is too large for the plot and too close to the road
- Use of materials does not adhere to nearby design/height/appearance

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P14/S2684/FUL](#) – Withdrawn prior to determination (20/10/2014)

Erection of a Code 5 house with associated parking and amenity.

[P14/S0202/FUL](#) - Approved (02/04/2014)

Erection of 2 bedroom house and new vehicular access.

[P12/S0578](#) - Refused (11/12/2012) - Approved on appeal (04/11/2013)

Erection of 2 bedroom detached house, new vehicular access and & garage (Amended Description 22 October 2012).

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework & National Planning Practice Guidance

5.2 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 policies;

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSEN1 - Landscape protection

CSR1 - Housing in villages

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction

CSQ3 - Design

5.3 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

- D1 - Principles of good design
- D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 - Outdoor amenity area
- D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- D10 - Waste Management
- 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

5.4 South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008
Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main planning issues to be considered during the determination of this application are:

- The principle of development
- The policy requirements of Policy H4
- Impact on the amenities of neighbours
- Other issues

Principle of development

6.2 The site lies within the village of Whitchurch Hill and in this location the principle of residential development on the site is largely governed by Policy CSR1 of the SOCS, which allows for new housing on suitable infill sites within the smaller villages such as Whitchurch Hill. The definition of infill as stated within the SOCS is the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

6.3 The site is currently used as an area of private amenity garden which lies to the south-west of Woodlands. The planning history on the site would dictate that the principle of residential development on this site has been deemed appropriate. The development on this site is therefore considered acceptable subject to adhering to other relevant policy requirements, including Policy H4 of the SOLP. The most recently approved plans are **attached** as Appendix C.

Policy requirements of Policy H4

6.4 Policy H4 of the SOLP permits proposals for new housing subject to a number of criteria, which are addressed separately below.

- (i) *an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt*

6.5 The site currently lies alongside an area of woodland which acts as a natural boundary which encloses the residential area. Views into the site are contained to Hocketts Close but these views are currently obscured by a row of close boarded fencing which runs alongside the entire south-western boundary to the highway. The nearby woodland area is not considered to be a constraint to development on this site subject to conditions to ensure the implementation of a soft landscaping scheme and the protection of all existing trees shown to be retained.

- 6.6 Officers do not consider that the site contributes to an important open space within the public realm. It is not considered that the land is of any environmental or ecological value that might prevent the use of the site for residential development.
- (ii) the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings*
- 6.7 Close to the entry to Hocketts Close the properties vary more in character and appearance, which includes the Woodlands bungalow itself. In the other direction, the road is much closer to the woodland with housing confined to the south-east of the road. The proposed dwelling is part two-storey and part single-storey which would be constructed using red facing brickwork and would be finished in wooden cladding, with a flat/sloping roofline.
- 6.8 Whilst the local character is largely characterised by the 1970s mock-Georgian design, officers consider that having regard to the variety of property styles along the north side of Hocketts Close, this site provides an opportunity for an alternative design. The Chilterns Building Design Guide provides guidance on ‘one-off’ designs for new dwellings. The document states that these types of proposals should enhance the landscape and immediate setting rather than detract from local character. Officers consider that the use of materials would be appropriate within the Chilterns AONB and that the design of the proposal would largely be in keeping with the brick built housing nearby. Although the roof would be a sloping flat roof, officers consider that the height and positioning of the proposal would not appear dominant along the street scene when held in comparison to the nearby 1970s housing development.
- 6.9 These ‘one-off’ designs should demonstrate the highest principles of sustainability in terms of design, use of materials and renewable energy provision. Officers consider that the proposal, which is seeking to establish Code 5 Level in sustainability, would achieve a higher level of sustainability than the Council’s Development Plan Policies ordinarily seek to achieve.
- 6.10 To ensure that the dwelling is designed appropriately to the area in accordance with the design policy guidance a condition is recommended to ensure that the proposal is not developed to an inappropriate height which would detrimentally harm the character of the site or the area. Further to this it is recommended that a condition is attached to agree samples of all proposed external materials.
- (iii) the character of the area is not adversely affected*
- 6.11 The principle to use the site for residential development has already been established and therefore it is considered a single dwelling here would be acceptable and would not materially harm the character of the area.
- 6.12 The landscape features along the boundary of the site currently act as a shelter to the site and any development on this site would be hidden in views from the open countryside to the west and north-west of the site. The character of the woodlands is not considered to be materially harmed as a result of this proposal. The amenity space proposed is over twice the recommended amount as outlined with the SODG and is larger than the amenity space of neighbouring properties. This is not considered as a constraint to the development and would be appropriate to the size and positioning of the plot. The proposed development would enable sufficient spacing between nearby properties and will retain the spacious character of the area.

(iv) *there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections*

- 6.13 There are no environmental objections to this scheme subject to the protection of the woodlands and those trees sought to be retained. The applicant has been made aware of the risk of nearby falling trees, raised by a number of neighbours. The proposed access onto the site remains the same as that previously approved and therefore remains acceptable subject to the conditions originally recommended by the Highways Liaison Officer.

Impact on the amenity of neighbours

- 6.14 Policy D4 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that proposals for new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for occupiers and should cause any unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.
- 6.15 The proposed dwelling would sit on a site which straddles the bend in Hocketts Close and would front southward away from the highway with windows along the side and rear elevation which would face toward nearby properties. Officers consider that sufficient distance would separate the proposed dwelling with nearby Elsinor, no.2 and no.3 Hocketts Close as to safeguard the amenities of their occupiers.
- 6.16 The property would be closest to neighbouring Woodlands which lies approximately 14 metres away to the north-east. The closest windows to Woodlands would serve a proposed first floor stairwell and landing area which are not habitable rooms and therefore would not give rise to any material harm to the privacy of the occupants at Woodlands. The property is considered to be positioned far enough away as to limit any potential of significant overshadowing or overbearing impacts on Woodlands and the other neighbouring properties.

Other material considerations

- 6.17 Policy CSQ2 requires that proposals for dwellings shall attain a four star rating in respect of the code for sustainable homes. To ensure that the new dwelling meets the high standards expected within the policy a condition is proposed to ensure that the building meets at least a Code Level 4.
- 6.18 The proposal involves minimal loss to landscape features on site, including hedging and trees, which are not formally protected. Therefore there are no objections on environmental grounds.
- 6.19 The proposed site layout allows for sufficient room for waste storage and shows the provision of adequate car parking and manoeuvring space with the cycle storage. Therefore the application is in accordance with the provisions of Policies D10, T1 and T2 of the SOLP.
- 6.20 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. The Planning Service worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner by updating the applicant/agent of issues that arose during the application process, suggesting a solution to objections and providing an opportunity to submit amended plans.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Planning permission should be granted because the principle of residential development is acceptable on this site. The detail of the proposal accords with the

criteria set out in policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Subject to the attached conditions the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, the amenities of those occupants living in neighbouring properties and the local highway network. The proposal accords with Development Plan policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : Commencement three years - Full Planning Permission.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Sample materials required (all).**
- 4 : Levels (details required).**
- 5 : Landscaping details and sustainable drainage details to be agreed.**
- 6 : Soft landscaping details to be agreed.**
- 7 : Tree protection measures to be agreed.**
- 8 : Parking and turning areas to be provided.**
- 9 : Access and Vision Splays to be provided.**
- 10 : Code Level 4.**

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