

APPLICATION NO.	P15/S2153/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	29.6.2015
PARISH	THAME
WARD MEMBERS	Jeannette Matelot David Dodds Nigel Champken-Woods
APPLICANT	Nationcrest
SITE	10 Croft Road, Thame
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 1 x two-storey 4-bed dwelling and a pair of two-storey 3-bed semi-detached dwellings and formation of new access points (rear wings removed from semi-detached dwellings and repositioned further forward as shown on amended plans received 21st August 2015).
AMENDMENTS	See above
OFFICER	Paul Lucas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between the Officers' recommendation and the views of Thame Town Council.

1.2 The application site, as identified on the plan attached at **Appendix 1**, is a residential plot comprising a detached dwelling located in a residential area within the built-up confines of Thame. The existing dwelling consists of red brick and tiled roof, with half-hips on the side elevations and dormer windows on the front and rear elevations. It is set further back in its plot than many of the other dwellings on that side of the street. It has a linked garage that runs close to the north-eastern side boundary with No.12A. Vehicular access to the front of the dwelling is from a single access point leading to the garage. The remainder of the front boundary is denoted by a wall and hedging. There is a Copper Beech tree that is located towards the north-eastern corner of the site, which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The appearance of dwellings in the locality is varied, with a mixture of pairs of semis and detached houses. The dwellings immediately to the south-west (No's 4, 6 & 8) were built in the 1960's and are very much of that era. The dwellings to the north-east (No's 12a, 12b, 14a & 14b) were built in the 2000's and have a more traditional form to reflect the Victorian/Edwardian pair of semis at No's 16 & 18. The dwellings backing onto the site on Queen's Road are largely from the Victorian/Edwardian era. There are no other special designations on this site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of three dwellings in its place. The proposed dwellings would seek to reflect the appearance of the dwellings to the north-east, with the pair of semis (Plots 1 & 2) located closest to the boundary with No.12a. The detached dwelling (Plot 3) would have a lower ridge height that would step down roughly half way between the higher roofline of No.12a and the lower roofline of No.8. The dwellings would all have two storey bay windows on the frontage. Plots 1 & 2 would have dormer windows on the rear elevations and would have clay roof tiles. Plot 3 would have a shallower roof pitch with a slate finish.

2.2 The pair of semis would take vehicular access from the existing drop kerb, which would require widening. A new drop kerb would be formed to serve the detached dwelling. All three dwellings would have a parking area on the frontage and Plot 3 would also have an integral garage. The original application was amended to correct the northern site boundary and to reduce the depth of Plots 1 & 2 and position them further forward to reduce the potential conflict with the protected tree.

2.3 A copy of the current plans is provided at **Appendix 2** whilst 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 **Thame Town Council** – The application should be refused for the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Size and span of the dwellings
- Insufficient provision of amenity space
- Lack of meaningful scope for soft landscaping
- Proximity of developments to each other and site boundaries

Health & Housing – Contaminated Land – No objection upon receipt of contaminated land statement questionnaire

Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) – Original objection overcome by amended plans, subject to tree protection and landscaping conditions

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – No objection subject to several conditions

Neighbours – Five representations of objection/concern, summarised as follows:

- Cramped layout – site is more suitable for two dwellings rather than three
- 3-storey dwellings are excessively obtrusive – roofline should match that of No's 6 & 8
- Dwellings too wide not allowing enough spacing between them and neighbours – this should be increased
- Increase in roof height compared with existing dwelling would result in loss of direct late afternoon and evening sunlight, aspect and views from rear windows and small gardens of No's 29, 31 & 33 Queen's Street
- Overlooking and loss of privacy to No.33 from 2nd floor dormer windows
- Dwellings should be positioned further forward to prevent harm to dwellings at the rear
- Loss of privacy to conservatory and garden of 12A from overlooking rear dormer window of Plot 1
- Overlooking and loss of privacy to front windows of 12A from bay window to Plot 1
- Conflict with TPO tree – should be in the rear garden of the larger proposed house and the tree line should be retained along the rear boundary
- Insufficient off-street parking and additional drop kerb would exacerbate on-street parking issues
- Inadequate private garden space
- Side window to Plot 1 should be obscure glazed and fixed shut
- Slate roof to Plot 3 is inappropriate where all other houses have tiled roofs
- Design is overly fussy and should be simpler

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None directly relevant on this site. On the adjacent land to the north:

[P06/E1026](#) - Approved (01/12/2006)

Erection of 6 no. semi-detached dwellings with associated parking and conservatories.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSH2 - Housing density

CS11 – Infrastructure provision

CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction

CSQ3 - Design

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

CSTHA1 - The Strategy for Thame

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

C9 - Loss of landscape features

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

G5 - Best use of land/buildings in built up areas

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 – Sections 3 & 5

5.3 Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) March 2013 policies;

H5 – Integrate windfall sites

H6 - Design new development to be of high quality

H7 - Provide new facilities

H9 – Provide a mix of housing types

GA6 - New development to provide parking on site for occupants and visitors

CLW4 - Contributions towards healthcare facilities

ESDQ10 – Produce a Sports Facilities Strategy

ESDQ11 – Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage into new development

ESDQ12 – Applications for new development to provide a drainage strategy

ESDQ13 – New dwellings: code for sustainable homes

ESDQ14 – Produce a Green Living Plan

ESDQ15 – Development must demonstrate in a Design & Access Statement how development reinforces Thame's character

ESDQ16 – Development must relate well to its site and its surroundings

ESDQ17 – Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole

ESDQ18 – New development must contribute to local character by creating a sense of place appropriate to its location

ESDQ19 – The Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings must provide

- sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood
- ESDQ26 – Design new buildings to represent the three dimensional qualities of traditional buildings
- ESDQ27 – Design in the ‘forgotten’ elements from the start of the design process
- ESDQ28 – Provide good quality private outdoor space
- ESDQ29 – Design car parking so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development
- D1 – Provide appropriate new facilities

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

The policies within the SOCS and the SOLP 2011 of relevance to this application are considered to be in general conformity with the provisions of the NPPF and therefore this application can be determined against these relevant policies.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The proposed development would be located within the built-up area of the town of Thame, which is a settlement where residential development is considered to be acceptable in principle on infill and redevelopment sites under criterion (ix) of the SOCS Policy CSTHA1 and Policy H5 of the TNP. Consequently the proposal falls to be assessed primarily against the impact-based criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011. The planning issues that are relevant to the planning application are whether the development would:

- Result in the loss of an open space or view of public, environmental or ecological value;
- Respect the character and appearance of the site and the street scene including the protected tree;
- Safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- Demonstrate safe and convenient access and off-street parking provision for the development; and
- Give rise to any other material planning considerations

Loss of Open Space

6.2 Criterion (i) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt. The site has historically been private land associated with 10 Croft Road. Although visible in the street scene from the north and south along Croft Road and from the west in Croft Close, the site is seen in the context of established dwellings. There is no evidence that the site has any particular ecological value. This criterion would therefore be satisfied.

Visual Impact

6.3 Criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 explain that the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development should be in keeping with its surroundings and the character of the area should not be adversely affected. Objections have been received from Thame Town Council and local residents stating that the proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the site due to its excessive footprint and span and lack of spacing between the dwellings and the adjoining dwellings. However, officers consider that the plot widths ranging from 7.5 to 12.7 metres would be comparable with the established plots along the street. The gap between the proposed dwellings of 2 metres, and the 2.5 metre and 2.65 metre wall to wall distance between the

development and No's 8 and 12A, respectively would be bigger than the spaces between No's 2 & 4, 6 & 8 and 12B & 14A. There are also concerns raised about the height of the proposed dwellings. Although the ridge heights of Plots 1 & 2 at 9.4 metres would be high, they would nonetheless be the same as 12A & 12B to the north. Plot 3 would have a lower ridge height of 8.7 metres to bring it closer to the lower ridge height of No.8 at 7.75 metres. Consequently, officers' view is that the dwellings are of an acceptable height.

- 6.4 The dwellings would be set back between 8.5 and 11 metres from the road frontage. Officers consider that this would provide sufficient space for frontage parking with planting along the boundaries to soften the appearance of the frontage that could be secured through a landscaping pre-commencement condition.
- 6.5 The amended plans removed the rear wings of Plots 1 & 2 and brought their footprint further forward to provide greater separation between the rear of the dwellings and the protected Copper Beech tree. This revised layout has addressed the forestry officer's original objection, subject to a detailed tree protection pre-commencement condition. Concerns about elevational detailing and the use of slate as a roofing material are insufficient to warrant refusal of planning permission, given that the street does not lie within an area with a special designation. In the light of the above assessment, the proposed development would accord with the above criteria and the corresponding policies in the TNP.

Residential Amenity Impact

- 6.6 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that there are no overriding amenity objections. Policy D4 of the SOLP 2011 requires that all new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Plot 1 would be positioned forward of the front building line of No.12A. The adjoining occupiers have raised concerns about overlooking of their front windows from the proposed front bay window of Plot 1, however, such views would be very oblique and unlikely to result in any significant loss of privacy. The front elevation of Plot 1 would lie outside a notional 45-degree line drawn from the centre of No.12A's front window, which is an indicator that the levels of daylight and outlook to the neighbour's front rooms would remain acceptable. Whilst there would be some overshadowing of the frontage of No.12A during the winter months, this would primarily affect a parking area rather than a private sitting out area. These adjoining occupiers are also concerned about loss of privacy from the second floor dormer window of Plot 1 affording views into their rear conservatory roof and rear garden. However, the angle of view towards the conservatory would be greater than 45-degrees, preventing any significant overlooking and loss of privacy from occurring. The relationship of the dormer window to the adjoining garden would be similar to existing second floor dormers on No's 12A, 12B, 14A & 14B. The removal of the existing garage structure from the boundary with No.12A would help to create a more open aspect at the rear of No.12A. The first floor side-facing bathroom window to Plot 1 could be subject to an obscure-glazing condition, as could all the other proposed first floor bathroom windows. The building line of Plot 3 would be broadly level with No.8 and would not contain any second floor dormers, so the relationship between these two dwellings would also be acceptable.
- 6.7 The occupiers of three dwellings at the rear of the site (No's 29, 31 & 33 Queen's Road) have objected to the proposal on the basis that the increased height of the proposed dwellings compared with the existing dwelling would result in loss of direct late afternoon sunlight and open aspect to their rear windows and gardens. There would be a distance of about 15 metres from the rear of the dwellings to the rear boundaries of these dwellings and a distance of approximately 30 metres to the closest rear

elevations of these dwellings. Given this amount of separation, officers consider that there would not be a significant loss of light or outlook to the rear of these dwellings. Whilst the loss of late afternoon and evening sunlight would be unfortunate, the gardens would continue to receive direct sunlight for most of the afternoon and so the loss of this sunlight would not be sufficient to warrant refusal of planning permission. The level of separation to the dwellings on Queen's Road would also be in excess of the 25 metre recommended minimum window to window distance as set out in Section 3 of the SODG 2008, such that any overlooking from the proposed dormer windows would not result in a significant loss of privacy. Any views would also be filtered somewhat in the summer months when the gardens would be most likely to be in use by the protected tree being in leaf.

- 6.8 Thame Town Council are concerned about the size of the gardens, however, Plot 3's garden is in excess of the recommended minimum area of 100 square metres and Plot 1 & 2's gardens fall short of this by less than 10 square metres. Due to the site's sustainable location with good access to public open space, such a shortfall is considered acceptable in this instance. It is also notable that the rear gardens of No's 12A, 12B, 14A & 14B are all smaller than Plots 1 & 2. On the basis of this assessment, the proposed development would comply with the above policies and TNP Policy ESDQ28.

Access and Parking

- 6.9 Criterion (iv) of Policy H4 of the SOLP 2011 also requires that there are no overriding highway objections. The current plans show that there is sufficient space on the front hardstandings for two vehicles for each dwelling and an extra parking space in a garage for Plot 3, which would meet the minimum parking standards for dwellings of this size. Although there are some concerns raised about lack of off-street parking and specifically Thame Town Council has commented that the size of the garage would be inadequate, the Highway Liaison Officer has raised no objections to the proposed parking and access layout, subject to the imposition of several highway-related conditions. On this basis the proposed development would be in accordance with the above criterion and TNP Policy ESDQ29.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.10 A condition removing permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings is considered necessary to allow the Council to exercise control over any future additions to the dwellings that might otherwise result in visual harm or loss of amenity to adjoining residential properties.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance and it is considered that, subject to the attached conditions, the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of nearby residents or result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

- 1. Commencement within three years.**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with the approved plans.**
- 3. Details of levels to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
- 4. Schedule of materials to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
- 5. Obscure glazing and fixed shut first floor side windows.**

6. **Withdrawal of permitted development rights for extensions, roof extensions and outbuildings.**
7. **New vehicular access to be provided as on the approved plan.**
8. **Existing vehicular access to be improved as on the approved plan.**
9. **Vision splays to be provided as required by the Highway Authority.**
10. **Car parking to be retained as shown on the approved plans.**
11. **No surface water drainage on to the public highway.**
12. **Construction traffic management plan to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
13. **No garage conversion into accommodation.**
14. **Hard and soft landscaping to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**
15. **Tree protection details to be agreed prior to commencement of development.**

Author: Paul Lucas
Contact No: 01235 540546
Email: planning@southoxon.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank