

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P15/S3607/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28.10.2015
<b>PARISH</b>	THAME
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Jeannette Matelot David Dodds Nigel Champken-Woods
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Ms G Crane
<b>SITE</b>	Windrush Bridge Terrace THAME Oxon, OX9 3LU
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of existing dwelling at Windrush and erection of pair of semi-detached dwellings and one detached dwelling (as amended to reduce the size of the dwellings and provide new vehicular access off Cotmore Gardens)
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	471690/205161
<b>OFFICER</b>	Tom Wyatt

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee as the Officer's recommendations conflict with the views of the Town Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is located within the built up area of Thame but not within a designated area. The site is currently occupied by a vacant single storey dwelling and is located between existing residential development to the east and west. The Phoenix Trail lies to the south of the site.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of three dwellings comprising a pair of semi-detached two bed dwellings and a detached 4 bed dwelling (although the floor plans indicate an office in place of a fourth bedroom). Following the submission of amended plans access would be via an existing access into Phoenix Court from Cotmore Gardens. Six parking spaces would be provided adjacent to the south facing rear gardens. The dwellings would front onto Cotmore Field, a private road, to the north.

2.2 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](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Thame Town Council – Objects due to overdevelopment, highway safety, impact on neighbouring occupiers and lack of sufficient amenity areas.

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) - No objections subject to conditions including that vehicular access is only taken via Phoenix Court.

Thame Conservation Area Advisory Committee – The proposal represents overdevelopment

Countryside Access - No objections. The adjacent footpath should not be obstructed.

Neighbours – 14 letters of objection received, which raise the following concerns:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Increased traffic generation
- Impact on highway safety
- Access from Phoenix Court is often congested and not safe
- Track to the rear of the site not suitable for additional vehicles
- Noise disturbance from more traffic
- Overbearing to neighbouring properties
- Congestion/obstruction during development
- Loss of privacy
- There should be a maximum of two dwellings
- Position of porch unneighbourly to Ridgeway
- Lack of space for bin collection

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

##### 4.1 [P15/S1261/FUL](#) - Refused (10/07/2015)

Demolition of Windrush and erection of 4 terraced dwellings, two 3 bed and two 2 bed (as amended by drawing 6b to show turning area).

The plans and decision notice in respect of this application are **attached** as Appendix C.

##### [P14/S4057/FUL](#) – Withdrawn (16/03/2015)

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two new detached dwellings.

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

##### 5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) policies;

- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CSH2 - Housing density
- CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
- CSM1 - Transport
- CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
- CSQ3 - Design
- CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- CSTHA1 - The Strategy for Thame

##### 5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) policies;

- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- 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
- D6 - Community safety
- 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

5.3 Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) policies;

- GA6 – Car parking
- H5 – Integrate windfall sites
- H6 – Design new development to be of high quality
- H7 – Provide new facilities
- H9 – Housing mix
- ESDQ14 – Produce a Green Living Plan
- ESDQ16 – Development must relate well to its site and its surroundings
- ESDQ18 – Sense of place
- ESDQ19 – Details of proposal
- ESDQ26 – Traditional design
- ESDQ27 – Inclusive design
- ESDQ28 – Private outdoor space
- ESDQ29 – Car parking design
- D1 – Provide appropriate new facilities

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main planning issues in relation to this application are:

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

The Principle of the Development

6.2 The site is entirely in residential use and lies within the built up area of Thame and as such the principle of new housing development is acceptable having regard to Policies CSTHA1 of the SOCS and H7 of the TNP. There is no requirement for financial contributions or affordable housing having regard to the amount of development proposed.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area

6.3 The site is located within a long established residential area. There is a considerable mix in terms of the age and design of housing within the immediate locality whilst there is greater consistency to the built form in the wider surroundings such as within Cotmore Gardens to the north. To the west of the site there is a terrace of four more historic properties (Bridge Terrace) whilst further to the west there is a recent development of 12 apartments, which are amongst the largest and most prominent residential buildings in the area.

6.4 Policy H4 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that the design, height, scale and materials of the development are in keeping with the surroundings and that the character of the area is not adversely affected. This requirement is also reflected within Policies CSQ3 of the SOCS, D1 and G2 of the SOLP and H7 and ESDQ16 of the TNP as well as within national planning guidance.

- 6.5 The first refusal reason in respect of the previous application for 4 dwellings states:

*The proposed development, due to its height, scale, siting, design and massing, would result in a cramped relationship with the adjacent built form and would result in an overdevelopment of the site that would fail to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such the proposal would fail to accord with Policy CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, Policies G2, D1, and H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, Policies H5, and ESDQ16 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and National Planning Policy Framework.*

- 6.6 The dwellings previously proposed comprised a terrace of four dwellings ranging from 8.7 to 9.5 metres in height. This was deemed excessive in relation to the height of the neighbouring properties, particularly in combination with the excessive height of the flats at Phoenix Court. The dwellings currently proposed have a maximum height of 7.8 metres, and this compares to the adjacent dwelling, Ridgway with a height of approximately 7.3 metres and Bridge Terrace with a height of approximately 9 metres. In comparison to the previous scheme the overall bulk and massing of the development has also been reduced through splitting the development into two buildings with a gap between them and also slightly increasing the gap between the buildings and the shared boundaries with Ridgeway and Bridge Terrace. The design of the dwellings have also been amended to help reduce the solid massing of the development through variation to eaves and ridge heights and roof profile.

- 6.7 In light of the above changes Officers consider that this revised scheme is more sympathetic to the height, scale and massing of the adjacent built form, and would not represent a cramped form of development on the plot having regard to the character and appearance of the surrounding built form. Compared to the previous scheme the dwellings have also been re-positioned slightly further back from the site's frontage allowing for a greater gap to the private road to the front. Also the two buildings proposed have a greater differentiation between their building lines to reflect the staggered building line between Ridgeway and Bridge Terrace to a greater degree. In this regard Officers consider that the siting of the development is appropriate. The dwellings would be of traditional design and construction and would respect the general and varied form of housing in the surrounding area.

- 6.8 Overall Officers consider that the current scheme has addressed the above reason for refusal.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.9 The proposed development would be sited between 4 Bridge Terrace to the west and Ridgeway to the east. The second reason for the refusal of the previous application states:

*The proposed development, due to its height, siting, bulk and massing, particularly in relation to its forward position and proximity in relation to the neighbouring property to the east, Ridgeway, would have an oppressive and overbearing impact on the neighbouring property to the detriment of its occupiers. As such the proposal would fail to accord with Policies G2, D4 and H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Policy ESDQ16 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.*

- 6.10 The reduction in the height, bulk and massing of the development has reduced the impact on the adjoining occupiers to a more acceptable level. Unit 1 would be located approximately 1.5 metres from the boundary with 4 Bridge Terrace and this is slightly

further away than the previous scheme, and the development is also sited slightly further back from the frontage. Nevertheless, the development would still cause some loss of light and outlook to the side facing ground floor windows of 4 Bridge Terrace. However, these windows relate to an entrance hall and a kitchen served by other windows and the outlook and light from the main habitable rooms of the neighbouring property would largely remain unaffected. The first floor window in the west elevation of Unit 1 would be obscure glazed and therefore there would be no significant loss of privacy to the occupiers of 4 Bridge Terrace.

- 6.11 Concerns in respect of the impact on neighbouring amenity with regard to the previous scheme centred on Ridgeway. Under this scheme the closest unit to Ridgeway would have been sited approximately 5 metres to the front of Ridgeway and would have been of substantially greater height and bulk than this neighbouring property. The proposed dwelling was approximately 1.5 metres to the boundary and approximately 3.3 metres from the side elevation of Ridgeway. Having regard to these factors Officers considered that the previous development would have had an oppressive impact on the front of Ridgeway to the detriment of the outlook of the neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.12 The current proposal has moved Unit 3 back from the frontage such that the projection to the front of Ridgeway is reduced to approximately 3.5 metres. The gap to the boundary remains similar but the height of the part of the dwelling closest to Ridgeway has been reduced to below the height of Ridgeway. There are no windows in the facing side elevation of Ridgeway and having regard to the improvements to the relationship between the development and Ridgeway Officers consider that the second refusal reason has been addressed.
- 6.13 The front elevations of the proposed dwellings face towards the rear garden of 2 Cotmore Gardens to the north. The development would overlook the rear garden of this property, however, having regard to the distances involved (approximately 14 metres) Officers do not consider that this overlooking would cause significant harm to the privacy of the occupiers of this property. Other nearby properties would not be materially affected by the development.

#### Highway Considerations

- 6.14 The third refusal reason relating to the previous application states:

*The access lane to the site is a single car width with limited passing places, and furthermore forward visibility is substandard. The access lane junction with Cotmore Gardens is within close proximity to the junction of the B4445 Chinnor Road with Cotmore Gardens. The proposal will result in the intensification of a substandard access and junction to the detriment of highway safety. In addition the proposed parking and turning space fails to meet Oxfordshire County Council standards. As such the proposal fails to accord with Policies CSM1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, Policies D2, H4, T1 and T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, Policy GA6 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and National Planning Policy Framework.*

- 6.15 The current proposal originally included the continuing use of the existing access to the rear (south) of the site, which already serves Bridge Terrace, Ridgeway and Phoenix Court as well as the existing dwelling on site. This access is a single track road with limited opportunities for passing. In consultation the Highway Liaison Officer objected to the proposal on the same basis as set out in the refusal reason above. Consequently the applicant has sought an alternative means of access to the proposed parking spaces. He has reached agreement with the owner of Phoenix Court for access to be provided from Cotmore Gardens and through Phoenix Court to the rear of

the site. This alternative access avoids the intensification of the use of the substandard access as previously proposed. The Highway Liaison Officer has confirmed in further consultation that he has no objections to the proposal on the basis of the revised access. As such the development has addressed the above third reason for refusal.

- 6.16 The proposal provides six parking spaces with integrated turning space, which is sufficient for the requirements of this development, and should not exacerbate any deficiencies in current off-street parking provision.

Other Materials Considerations

- 6.17 The fourth refusal reason relating to the previous application states:

*The proposed development, due to the small size of the proposed private gardens in relation to the dwellings would fail to provide sufficient amenity space for the future occupiers of the development. As such the proposal would fail to accord with Policy D3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Policy ESDQ28 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and guidance contained within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.*

- 6.18 Guidance contained at Section 3.2.8 of the SODG advocates at least 50m<sup>2</sup> for 2 bedroom dwellings and at least 100m<sup>2</sup> for 3 bedroom dwellings. This section of the SODG also states that back gardens on narrower plots should be a minimum of 10 metres deep. The previous scheme fell well short of these standards, however, the reduction in one unit has now facilitated larger garden areas and this amended scheme now meets these standards in terms of area. Although the garden areas would remain small there are a variety of plot sizes in the surrounding area and the garden areas would not be disproportionately small having regard to the pattern of development in the surrounding residential area. Officers also consider that this amended scheme has addressed the final reason for refusal of the earlier scheme.
- 6.19 Having regard to Policy H9 of the TNP there is no particular requirement for a housing mix, however, the mix proposed is in general accordance with the requirements of Policy CSH4 of the SOCS. Having regard to the number of units proposed there is no justification to request financial contributions towards local infrastructure and services.
- 6.20 There is no evidence that protected species would be adversely affected by the development and no vegetation of significance would be lost as a result of the development.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as it is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, and would not harm neighbouring amenity or be prejudicial to highway safety.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement of development within 3 years**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
- 4. Finished floor and ground levels to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
- 5. Soft and hard landscaping details to be agreed prior to commencement of development**

6. **First floor side facing windows to be glazed with obscure glass**
7. **Withdrawal of permitted development rights for extensions, roof extensions and outbuildings**
8. **Access through Phoenix Court only**
9. **Parking and turning prior to occupation. Parking areas to be SUDS compliant.**
10. **Construction traffic management plan to be agreed**
11. **Working hours to be limited to weekdays and Saturday mornings.**

**Author:** Tom Wyatt  
**Tel No:** 01235 540546  
**Email:** [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank