
APPLICATION NO.	P16/S0198/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	21.1.2016
PARISH	WALLINGFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Imran Lokhon Elaine Hornsby
APPLICANT	SOHA Housing
SITE	St Albans Court, Wallingford, OX10 0DS
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing buildings comprising 28 flats and the redevelopment of the site to provide 17 x two bedroom and 6 x one bedroom sheltered flats with communal lounge, office, car parking and landscaping. Alterations to provide vehicular and pedestrian accesses.
AMENDMENTS	As clarified by Archaeological Mitigation Strategy accompanying Agent's email dated 25 February 2016.
GRID REFERENCE	460597/189319
OFFICER	Sharon Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation to grant planning permission conflicts with the views of the Wallingford Town Council. The Town Council object to the application; a summary of their comments is set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report.
- 1.2 The site lies in a prominent location fronting onto Goldsmith's Lane and Church Lane in the Wallingford Conservation area; it backs onto the regal centre car park. Numbers 4, 10 and 14 Church Lane are Grade II listed buildings along the Church Lane frontage (These face onto Block A).
- 1.3 The existing buildings on the site comprise one two storey block (fronting Church Lane) and one three storey block set back off Goldsmith's Lane and 8 flat roofed, lock up garages. The existing flats are unoccupied and dilapidated; they originally provided 28 flats. There are no planning restrictions on the age of occupants or tenure mix of the existing flats. The existing garaging on the site frontage does not serve the existing development, being let separately.
- 1.4 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 This application follows on from pre-application advice in 2013 and 2015 (ref P13/S1644/PEJ and P15/S1986/PEJ).

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings (total of 28 units) and the replacement with a new sheltered housing scheme for those over 55 years of age in the form of 23 flats (17 x 2 bedrooms and 6 x 1 bedroom). The flats would be provided in two buildings. One fronting Church Lane (Block A) which would contain 8 flats in a two storey building in a similar position to the existing. The other building would be part three storeys to the rear of the site and part two storeys near the road frontage (Block B) and would contain 15 flats. The ground

floor of the three storey block would also include a communal lounge and an office.

Covered cycle and bin store, a collection point for bins and parking provision for 6 vehicles is provided within the site.

2.2 The application submission includes the following documents;

- Planning statement
- Design and access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Archaeological evaluation and desk top assessment
- Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy
- Ecology Survey report
- Historic mapping evidence
- Investigation for ground contamination
- plans

2.3 Reduced copies of the plans and documents accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full copies of the plans and consultation responses are available for inspection on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

Full responses can be found on the Council's website

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|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 3.1 | Wallingford
Town Council | Amenity considerations
Overlooking neighbours properties - overdevelopment
Character of the area – conservation area – scale and materials
Bulk resulting in loss of light
Design
Parking – lack of parking for residents causing strain on surrounding roads and car parks.
Access – tight turning point and egress onto a narrow road. Lorries have to go via St Leonards Square. |
| 3.2 | OCC (Highways) | Transport: No objection subject to conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible town centre location• No traffic impact as similar scale to existing development• Access, parking and manoeuvring is acceptable in principle |
| 3.3 | OCC
(Archaeology) | No objection conditions recommended |
| 3.4 | OCC Local
member view | Cllr Lynda Atkins Division: Wallingford
Comments: The parking provision for this development is completely inadequate. While there is both on street parking and a pay and display car park in the vicinity, both are beyond their useable capacity. On street parking space is entirely used by existing residents in the area, while the car park is full every Friday (market day) and Saturday with cars regularly patrolling the town looking for any space anywhere to park. It is entirely disingenuous to suggest that residents over the age of 55 won't have cars, and in two bedroomed flats there are likely to be 2 cars so the 23 flats will generate at least 23 cars and probably rather more. As a 54 ¾ year old with a car with parents in their 80s with both a blue badge and a car, it seems to me that the developers are wilfully ignoring the |

reality of modern life! There will also be insufficient space for disabled parking: residents over the age of 55 are statistically more likely to have blue badges, but will have nowhere to park if the paltry 6 spaces are already occupied by other residents with blue badges, carers or delivery vehicles.

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|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 3.5 | Conservation Officer | Summary. Overall I consider the architectural improvements and public benefits of the scheme to outweigh the impact that the increased massing will have on this part of the Conservation Area. As such, I have no objection to this proposal. It would be worth conditioning the approval of sample materials to ensure that colour and texture are appropriate for the Conservation Area. The window details supplied are appropriate. The boundary wall should be retained. You should be satisfied that the landscaping and the bin stores can be delivered and well managed throughout the lifetime of the site. |
| 3.6 | Countryside Officer | I have assessed the proposals and I am satisfied that there are unlikely to be any significant ecological impacts if planning permission is granted. |
| 3.7 | Monson (Drainage) | Flood Risk Assessment is acceptable. Conditions for foul and surface water drainage (SUDs- based) |
| 3.8 | Neighbours Objecting (11) | <p>The proposed parking provision for this development is likely to be completely inadequate, exacerbating the current problem for those seeking to park in the town centre.</p> <p>The development as currently proposed would damage the character of Church Lane, which is a very old thoroughfare, by its height and overbearing nature. At the presentation given by SOHA and the architects at Centre 70, the only explanation given for increasing the height of the building was to make it more in keeping with roof heights in Wallingford generally. If this is a consideration, then a key reference point should be the height of the existing adjoining properties. Those opposite the development, which are older properties, are generally lower than the existing development and will therefore be further overshadowed by a higher property. This will also reduce the light coming into my home and those of my neighbours</p> <p>The currently proposed design for Block A does not preserve and in no way enhances the Conservation Area. It is overbearing both in terms of roof height and design and is oppressive in such a narrow lane. The collection of features and materials, in assorted colours, selected from all types of local buildings are used in a wholly inappropriate manner. Polychrome brickwork is used in various buildings throughout the town with varying degrees of success. Modern grey brick is by no means the same thing as the soft grey/blue glazed bricks of the C18 and earlier C19. It is flat in colour and used in large areas as proposed gives a grim appearance, particularly on a north-facing facade. The large vertical strips of white render too are inappropriate, particularly on the recessed central bay. The dormers, as designed, do nothing for the design and have no precedent in the town centre.</p> <p>The proposed design is far too busy for this low key area of Wallingford, is too high and uses inappropriate materials and</p> |

features. It would be detrimental to the streetscape as well as to the setting of four listed buildings.

The proposed relocation of the entrance/exit to the site will have an unacceptably tight right hand turn into the busy and very narrow Goldsmiths Lane with implications for sight lines and large vehicles which would have to manoeuvre, causing traffic congestion and potential damage to properties opposite. The problem would not be solved by large vehicles turning left as they would then have to negotiate the narrow exit into St Leonard's Square.

3.9 Petition against 32 signatories

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P63/B0005](#) - Approved (10/04/1963)

10 2 PERSONS' BEDROOM FLATS, 3 SINGLE PERSONS 1 BEDROOM FLATS, 2 BED-SITTING ROOM FLATS, 12 BED-SITTING FLATLETS & 1 WARDEN'S FLAT IN 2 BLOCKS ALL FOR OLD PERSONS

[P62/B0041](#) - Approved (27/08/1962)

23 OLD PEOPLE'S FLATS, 1 WARDENS FLAT, AMENITY BLOCK AND 8 LOCK-UP GARAGES

[P60/B0106](#) - Approved (12/07/1961)

PROPOSAL SINGLE BEDROOM FLATS

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction

CSQ3 - Design

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

CSWAL1 - The Strategy for Wallingford

CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSH4 - Meeting housing needs

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

CON5 - Setting of listed building

CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment

EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting

EP6 - Sustainable drainage

EP8 - Contaminated land

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

CON11 - Protection of archaeological remains

CON12 - Archaeological field evaluation

CON6 - Demolition in conservation area

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

Draft Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

Wallingford Town Council are working towards the adoption of a neighbourhood plan and are at stage 1 in the process - (Area designation) claim submitted to DCLG. The neighbourhood plan has limited weight at this stage.

5.4 Other Relevant Legislation

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- H4 criteria
- Impact on setting of surrounding listed buildings
- Tree issues
- Impact on the conservation area
- Affordable housing
- Housing mix
- CIL
- OCC Contributions

6.2 **Principle.** The National Planning Policy Framework advises that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is echoed within policy CS1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. The site lies in the centre of Wallingford, one of the towns in the district. It is a sustainable location and Policy CSWAL1 of SOCS sets out the overall strategy for the town. One of the aims of CSWAL1 is to achieve housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites within the town. The scheme involves the redevelopment of a brownfield site which would accord with the overall strategy for Wallingford and is acceptable in principle.

6.3.1 If a proposed housing development is acceptable in principle then the detail of the proposal must be assessed against the criteria of saved Policy H4 of the SOLP.

6.3.2 H4 criteria issues.

- i **That an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost;**

Public value. The site is very prominent and there are public views of it from 3 sides. However, there are existing buildings on the site that date from the 1960's; they are not attractive and are in a poor state of repair. There is a large area of hardstanding

on the Goldsmith's Lane frontage and a small grassed area on which stands a cedar tree that is a poor specimen. The site does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area and redevelopment of the site would be a benefit. The site does not constitute an important public open space.

Ecology. The countryside officer has assessed the proposed demolition of the barn and redevelopment. He has advised that there is unlikely to be any significant ecological result of the development.

Environmental elements are assessed further below.

ii Design, height and bulk in keeping with the surroundings;

- 6.4.1 The two main buildings currently on the site are two storey and three storey. There are also three storey elements in the Hunts Mill development to the west of the site. The proposed scheme will marginally increase the massing of Block A which fronts onto Church Lane and increase the footprint and massing of Block B which sits in the southern part of the site. The height of the proposed blocks is not significantly different to the existing buildings although the bulk of block B will increase towards Goldsmith's Lane.
- 6.4.2 Pre-application discussions with regard to the massing and design of the buildings has been undertaken on two previous occasions. The resulting scheme has largely responded to suggestions and concerns regarding the increase in proportions of Block B and the design details of both buildings. The scheme now submitted responds to local character with regard to the proposed materials and offers suitable proportions of openings to solid masonry. The pitch of both buildings is improved on the existing which does result in the increase in ridge heights of both buildings, however this is more traditional and a better response to the historic setting.
- 6.4.3 Neighbours have expressed detailed concerns in relation to design bulk and materials (see paragraph 3.8 above). However, given the character and materials of the existing buildings, I consider the architectural improvements and public benefits of the scheme outweigh the impact that the increased massing will have on this part of the Conservation Area. Conditions in respect of sample materials and window details are considered necessary to ensure that colour and texture are appropriate for the Conservation Area.

6.5.1 iii That the character of the area is not adversely affected;

This is an extremely sensitive site within Wallingford with a number of listed buildings and buildings of local note surrounding. The comments set out in the above paragraph are equally relevant here. Neighbours have concerns that Block A would damage the character of Church Lane, which is a very old thoroughfare, by its height and overbearing nature and that the proposed design is far too busy for this low key area of Wallingford.

- 6.5.2 In your officer's view, key vistas from the north looking towards Block A through the walkway from the Waitrose car park and from the junctions of Goldsmith's Lane and Church Lane and at Goldsmith's Terrace are largely retained as existing and the improved architectural detailing of the new blocks will not harm these views. It is important that the boundary wall is retained in order to preserve that character of enclosure in this area. Although there is not a strong green character on this site, the wider area does benefit from the greenery and variation to frontage that the semi-mature tree and hedges provide. The existing vegetation on the site is of poor quality but new soft landscaping will be important to help to assimilate the development and landscaping condition to ensure an appropriate scheme is provided is considered

necessary.

6.5.3 In respect of Block B, the existing 3 storey block is set back into the site and the new block will project further forward to Goldsmith's Lane. However, the projecting element will only be two stories in height and it will still be set behind the building line established by 14, 15 and 16 Goldsmith's Lane. The current scheme has gone a long way to addressing previous concerns at the pre-application stage, reducing the height and bulk of the projecting wing to a more appropriate domestic scale with other buildings on the Goldsmith's Lane frontage. The flat roofed bays have also been much reduced. The roof pitches on Block B are now more consistent throughout and the concern about visual confusion has been addressed. The footprint of the building has also been reduced somewhat and this has helped to provide more of a setting for the building. From the Regal carpark the bulk of the building will be broadly similar to the existing although the proposed building is higher to accommodate a more traditional roof pitch.

6.5.4 In considering the detailed neighbour objections to the design and bulk of the new buildings your officers acknowledge that there will be significant change to the character of this site. However, the design provides for a modern interpretation of traditional forms that will be an improvement over the existing buildings. There is no alteration proposed to the existing definition of the plot boundary and the scale of the new buildings is acceptable in relation to the existing structures. Overall, this change constitutes less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets and as such this harm is outweighed by public benefit as per the test of paragraph 134 of the NPPF and the guidance set out in the accompanying NPPG. Given the existing character of the site the proposal will enhance the character of the area in your officer's view.

6.6 **iv Amenity, environmental or highway/ parking objections;**

Amenity/ Provision of gardens. Minimum standards for garden areas for new residential development are recommended in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and in Policy D3 of the Local Plan. There are no specific size recommendations for garden areas for care facilities/ sheltered housing schemes.

6.6.2 For flats such areas can be provided communally and if the accommodation is specifically for the elderly then the normal requirements of 50 and 35 square metres for two and one bedroom units respectively can be reduced. In this case the total requirement for amenity space would be 1060 square metres and the provision of amenity space is in the region of 700 square metres. However, in this case I think that an under provision of amenity space is acceptable for the following reasons:

- the number of units on the site is to be reduced and the size of amenity areas will not be significantly different to what is on site at present;
- the units are for older people who do not necessarily want a large garden; and
- the site is in walking distance of the Kinecroft, the Riverside Park and all other town centre amenities.

6.7 **Highway issues.** The vehicular access to and from the site would be repositioned on the Goldsmith's Lane frontage further to the north adjacent to 16 Goldsmiths Lane. Only pedestrian access would be provided to and from the Church Lane frontage as is the case now. 6 car parking spaces would be provided within the site. The revised position of the access, lack of parking and the narrow road network in the area are a contentious element of the scheme for neighbours (see paragraphs

3.4 and 3.11 above).

- 6.7.1 **Traffic generation.** The submitted transport assessment provides a fair appraisal of the likely trip generation of the development and the derived impact upon the local highway network. Given the previous use of the site the net impact of the development would be negligible; indeed it is expected to result in a slight reduction of vehicular movements due to the reduction in the number of units.
- 6.7.2 **Access.** The proposed vehicular access is acceptable in principle, offering appropriate visibility and geometry for vehicles to manoeuvre safely to and from the highway. A detailed plan is required which should include drop kerbs and tactile surfacing to aid pedestrian movements along Goldsmiths Lane – this can be achieved through the addition of a condition. Alterations to yellow lining will be required and if necessary an amendment of the relevant traffic order.
- 6.7.3 **Parking.** The proposed level of car parking is appropriate for the proposed use in this highly sustainable location in the town centre. Public car parks adjacent the site would provide for any excess demand and locally on-street parking controls would prevent indiscriminate parking on the highway.
- 6.7.4 **Manoeuvring.** The proposed manoeuvring area would allow for simple turning of a car within the curtilage and away from the public highway. The site benefits from an accessible town centre location with a range of shops services and public transport links available. Appropriate provision would be made for cycle storage.
- 6.7.5 **Summary of highway comments.** The Highway Engineer has no objection to the scheme subject to a number of conditions in relation to the access details, provision of turning and parking areas and drainage.
- 6.8 **Neighbour impact**

The site has neighbouring residential properties on three sides.

14, 15 and 16 Goldsmith's Lane. These building lie to the west of Block A and to the north of Block B. Given the existing relationship with the old Block A any additional impact will be minimal. 18 presents a blank side wall to the proposed access and Block B and the impact on these properties of the new two story projection should not be oppressive or unneighbourly given the oblique relationship.

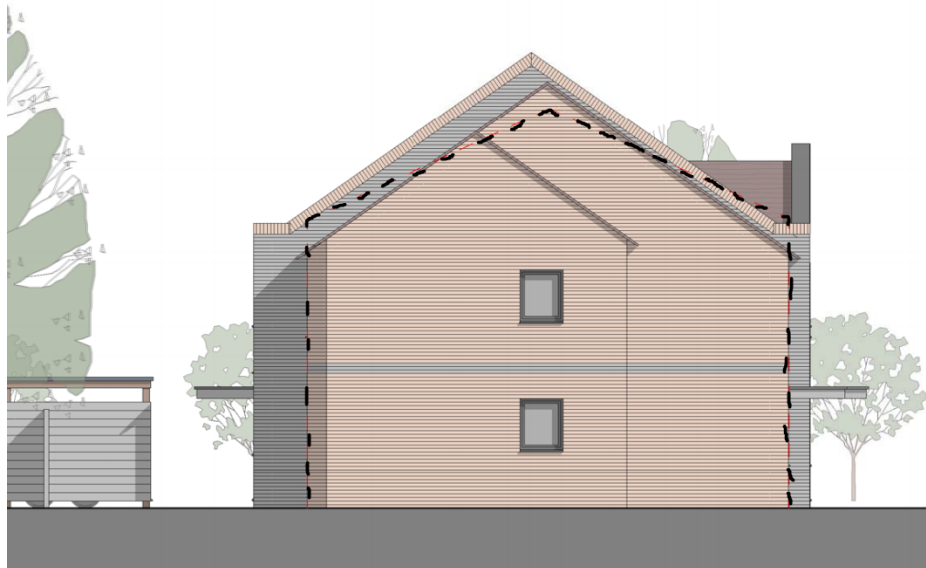


10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 Church Lane. These houses lie to the north of Block A and there is potential for sunlight to be blocked to the front of these dwellings due to the increase in height at the ridge and for Block A to be oppressive due to the increase in the bulk of the roof. The height of the existing building is illustrated below with the pecked black line with the increase in ridge height apparent on part of Block A. Across part of Block A the ridge height will be no higher than the existing building.



Officers acknowledge that this increase in height will have some impact on the properties opposite but this will not be so material as to warrant a significant reduction in residential amenity. The impact in respect of any overlooking will be neutral given the current relationship with windows on the existing buildings.

15 Church Lane. Number 15 lies to the east of Block A with approx. 13 between the two existing side walls – this distance will not change.



The new Block A would be approx. 0.6m higher at the ridge but the same height at eaves level. Two small windows are proposed in the side elevation facing 15 serving bathroom windows; these will be obscure glazed. Given the existing relationship any additional impact will be marginal.

6.9 **v Backland development issues**

Not applicable

6.9.1 **Setting of listed buildings.** Numbers 4, 10 and 14 Church Lane are Grade II listed buildings along the Church Lane frontage (These face onto Block A). All the listed buildings are designated heritage assets. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

6.9.2 The proposed Block A is of a similar footprint and materials to the existing building. The eaves height of the Block A is similar to the existing building; the ridge height will

be approximately 1m higher to accommodate a steeper, more traditional roof pitch. Whilst the height is greater the form and design of the building will be improved giving a modern interpretation of traditional forms. I consider this change to the setting to constitute less than substantial harm (Paragraph 134 of the NPPF) as the development will on the whole improve the setting of the listed buildings.

- 6.10 **Tree issues.** The Council's Forestry Officer has commented previously on the pre-application schemes and has no objection to the loss of the cedar tree on the Goldsmith's Lane frontage subject to a satisfactory landscaping scheme being implemented as part of the redevelopment of the site.
- 6.11 **Impact on conservation area.** The site lies in the Wallingford conservation area. The conservation area is a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 the impact on the character of the conservation area is considered acceptable.
- 6.12 **Affordable Housing.** Policy CSH3 of the SOCS requires that of housing developments of 3 or more units, a 40% provision of affordable housing should be made. In this case there is a net reduction in the number of units on the site. In addition there is no planning restriction on the tenure of the existing accommodation. In this case, it is my view that the council cannot require the provision of affordable housing through a S106 agreement. However, the scheme seeks to provide sheltered accommodation for the elderly and the applicant (SOHA) is a registered social landlord. In the circumstances the accommodation will provide accommodation for a vulnerable section of the population in housing need and the aims of the policy will be met in any event.
- 6.13 **Housing mix.** Policy CSH4 of the SOCS seeks an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes and on schemes of over 10 dwellings 10% should be designed to meet current lifetime home standards. This scheme would be made up of 1 and two bedroom units and will provide sheltered accommodation for the elderly, which does not strictly meet the requirements of policy CSH4. However, as this accommodation will meet a particular local need for sheltered housing for the elderly and is not for market housing, the mix of units is acceptable in my view.
- 6.14 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).** The council's CIL charging schedule has recently been adopted and will apply to relevant proposals from 1 April 2016. CIL is a planning charge that local authorities can implement to help deliver infrastructure and to support the development of their area, and is primarily calculated on the increase in footprint created as a result of the development.

This application is not CIL Liable. CIL is not payable on retirement housing– see table below from the Council's Charging Schedule

Table 1 – Proposed CIL rates (per square metre)

Development	Zone 1 District	Zone 2 Didcot and Berinsfield
Residential development	£150	£85
Residential development – strategic sites: Didcot North-East and Ladygrove East site; Wallingford site B	Nil	Nil
Residential – retirement housing including extra care incorporating independent living (C3) ¹	Nil	
Care home and residential institutions ² (C2)	Nil	
Residential rural exception sites	Nil	
Offices (incl. research and development)	£0	
Supermarkets, superstores and retail warehouses ³	£70	
Other retail development	Nil	
Hotels	Nil	
Other uses	Nil	

- 6.15 **Oxfordshire County Council Infrastructure contributions.** The County Council notes that the 28 flats to be demolished were originally constructed “for old persons” and that they have been occupied mostly by people in that age category. The proposed development will lead to a net reduction in the number of units and occupation is to be restricted to those over the age of 55 years. Given the reduction in number of units and no change in the age of the occupiers, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have an impact on County Council infrastructure and services. Therefore, no contributions are sought from this development.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Wallingford is a sustainable location where infill development and redevelopment of existing sites is permitted in principle.

The new buildings would replace existing buildings that are not attractive and do not contribute positively to the character of the area. Block A is of a similar form and materials to the existing building; Block B is larger and both are slightly higher to allow for a more traditional roof pitch. The increase in footprint can be accommodated on the site in a way that conserves the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and enhances the character of the conservation area.

The design and materials reflects local vernacular and building materials and does not detract from the wider character of the area, the setting of the conservation area or the setting of listed buildings. The site affords for an acceptable amount of amenity space and does not result in a materially harmful unneighbourly impact to adjacent properties. An under provision of normal parking standards is acceptable given the previous use on the site and the highly sustainable location. Conditions are proposed relating to highway matters, drainage, materials and landscaping.

The development accords with the relevant development plan policies and the provisions of the NPPF.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Commencement three years - full planning permission.
2. Approved plans.
3. Materials specification required.
4. Landscaping (access/hard standings/fencing/walls).
5. Sustainable drainage system details.

6. Archaeology.
7. Foul drainage works (details required).
8. Access details.
9. Parking and manoeuvring areas.
10. Construction traffic management.
11. Occupation restricted to 55 years of age or over.
12. Obscure glaze bathroom windos in side elevations of Block A.
13. 10% of the units to meet Lifetime Home standards.

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