

APPLICATION NO.	P21/S5308/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	7.1.2022
PARISH	SONNING COMMON
WARD MEMBERS	Leigh Rawlins & David Bartholomew
APPLICANT	Blue Jay Developments Ltd
SITE	32 Kennylands Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9JT
PROPOSAL	Demolition of the existing bungalow & the construction of 1 pair of semi-detached houses with associated landscaping & parking. (As amended by plans 2022-03-24 to reduce height of dwellings by 0.5m; reduce depth of dwellings by two metres; moving dwellings further back from the road by 0.5m; loss of one bedroom in each dwelling) (Amended by plans 2022-07-11 to demonstrate three parking spaces for each dwelling) (As amended by plans 2022-08-08 to more accurately represent neighbouring no.30). (As amplified by additional bat information received 20 September 2022).
OFFICER	Marc Pullen

1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 This report sets out the justification for the officer’s recommendation to grant planning permission having regard to the development plan and any other material planning considerations. This application is referred to planning committee as Sonning Common Parish Council object to the proposed development.
- 1.2 This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of two semi-detached four-bedroom dwellings. The new dwellings would be served by a new shared vehicular access with three parking spaces each.
- 1.3 This application has been amended during consideration to reduce the height of the dwellings, reduce their depth and re-site the dwellings further back from the road. The dwellings have been reduced from five-bedroom to four-bedroom dwellings and one additional parking space has been provided per dwelling; a total of three parking spaces each.
- 1.4 The application site, which is shown on the OS extract attached as **Appendix A**, lies within an existing area of residential development. The site lies within the built-up limits of the village and is accessed off Kennylands Road. The site does not lie within any specially designated areas of land.
- 1.5 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are attached as **Appendix B**. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council’s website: www.southoxon.gov.uk.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

2.1 **Sonning Common Parish Council – Object**

- It represents a significant over-development of the site – replacing a two-bedroomed bungalow with ten bedrooms in two new dwellings.
- The character, scale and massing of the proposed property is completely out of keeping with the local area.
- The proposal is squashed into the site with inadequate parking and access arrangements. The lack of parking will result in overspill onto a dangerous bend in the road opposite a busy BT cabinet that is attended almost daily.
- It is counter to the design guidelines in our Neighbourhood Plan.
- It would have a detrimental effect on the privacy and amenity of existing neighbours. The drawing of the 45-degree angle is completely erroneous.
- Impact on hedging and biodiversity.

Countryside Officer (South and Vale) – No objection

- Bat surveys have concluded that the existing dwelling supports a transitory roost – as such a derogation licence from Natural England is needed.
- The recommended mitigation and compensation measures appear acceptable but more details needed – this can be secured via condition

Drainage (South and Vale) – No objection

- Subject to conditions to agree surface water and foul water drainage measures

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – No objection

- Conditions requested to ensure parking and manoeuvring areas are retained, that the existing access is closed off prior to the new access point being used and that the new access onto Kennylands Road is formed and laid out and constructed in accordance with local highway authority specifications.

Contaminated Land (South and Vale) – No objection

- Contaminated land questionnaire confirms no concerns for contamination.

Neighbours (6) Object

- The proposed development represents an overdevelopment of the site and does not blend in with the surrounding properties.
- The proposed development will be significantly larger than the surrounding properties.
- Not enough parking to serve the proposed dwellings – the roadside will become a carpark which will be hazardous.
- The proposed development would contravene a restrictive covenant. The covenant places restrictions on the type of buildings which can be erected.

- The height of the building and the windows at second floor will provide views of neighbour's gardens – resulting in a loss of privacy.
- The height of the proposed development would cast shadow on the garden and homes of neighbours.
- The proposed dwellings would be in excess of 1/2/3 bedrooms – the revised NP seeks to encourage 1/2/3 bedroom homes.
- The proposed development would adversely harm the visual amenity of neighbours – resulting in an overbearing impact.
- The reduction in height of 0.5m does not materially reduce the impact on the neighbouring properties which is detrimental in the extreme.
- There are no other semi-detached properties in the immediate area and such a large mass is out of keeping with the current street scene.

Neighbours (1) Support

- The attractive houses will be perfect for families to provide much needed larger homes than the 2/3 bed properties recently built in the village.
- There appears to be ample parking for the properties.
- The existing property is not suited to a family and is not in keeping. There are many properties varying in style and size along Kennylands and this is no different.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 N/A.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 N/A.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Development Plan Policies

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policies:

DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development

DES2 - Enhancing Local Character

DES5 - Outdoor Amenity Space

DES6 - Residential Amenity

DES8 - Promoting Sustainable Design

DES10 - Carbon Reduction

ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside

ENV2 - Biodiversity - Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Species

ENV3 - Biodiversity

EP3 - Waste collection and Recycling

EP4 - Flood Risk

H1 - Delivering New Homes

H16 - Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment

5.2 Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan 2016

H3 - Infill (housing)

D1 - Design

D1a - Design – storeys

D1b - Design on allocated and infill sites

ENV1 - Protecting the AONB

- ENV2 - Environment – landscape setting
- ENV2a - Green environment – pre-existing trees
- ENV2b - Green environment – new planting

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (emerging)

- RSB1 - Settlement boundary
- RH3 - Infill development (housing)
- RH4 - Garden boundaries
- RD1 - Design
- RD2 - Design – storeys
- RD3 - Design on allocated and infill sites
- RD4 - Design – plot widths and rhythm of street scene
- RENV2 - Locally valued landscape setting of village
- RENV3 - Protection of trees, hedgerows, orchards or wildlife corridors
- RENV4 - Provision of new trees, shrubs and hedging
- RENV5 - Commitment to mitigating climate change

The Council has decided to progress the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Review to referendum with the referendum planned to take place on Thursday 23 February 2023.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to have regard to a post examination draft neighbourhood plan, so far as material to the application. Policies in neighbourhood plans at this stage carry significant weight in decision making.

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

5.5 Other Relevant Legislation

- Human Rights Act 1998 - The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.
- Equality Act 2010 - In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The relevant planning considerations are the following:

- **Principle of development**
- **Design and character**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Access and parking**
- **Impact on ecology**
- **Contaminated land**
- **Drainage considerations**
- **Energy reduction**

6.2 Principle of development

The application site lies within the built-up limits of Sonning Common (which is a Larger Village). Policy H1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) supports the development of new housing on sites allocated within the SOLP and within Neighbourhood Plans. Outside of site allocations new residential development is supported on sites within Larger Villages, provided that an important open space of public, environmental, historical or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view harmed. Officers are satisfied that the application site does not have public, environmental, historic or ecological value and no important public views would be affected. Due to the location of the site, within the built-up limits of Sonning Common, the principle of this development is considered acceptable.

6.3 Design and character

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to ensure that all development is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and include the appropriate and effective use of landscaping. The housing and development policies within the council's development plan seek to ensure that all new developments are of a design and size that is in keeping with the surroundings and does not harm the character of the area. The council's Development Plan advises that all new development must be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings.

6.4 The Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure all new development demonstrates good quality design which respects the scale and appearance of the existing built environment, responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context. New buildings should be no more than 2 storeys in height (plus roof).

6.5 Local concerns to this development include the size and form of the proposed development, in context with other properties experienced within the locality. The parish and some neighbours consider the development to be an overdevelopment of the site. In this respect officers need to consider how much space is available on site to support the proposed dwellings. Each dwelling will have at least 190 square metres of garden space and would be served by three parking spaces. This would meet the standards required by the Joint Design Guide and the Oxfordshire County Council parking standards. As such, officers are satisfied that the development would not represent an overdevelopment of the site.

6.6 The houses along Kennylands Road vary in design and form. There are bungalows, two-storey houses, detached dwellings and semi-detached dwellings. Materials vary but these are predominantly red brick and clay or concrete roofing tiles. The height of dwellings varies – with a prominence of

two-storey houses with relatively tall roofs and window heights set close to the eaves of the roof. There are also several open front-facing gables which front onto Kennylands Road. Along this section of Kennylands Road properties follow an established building line some 12-15 metres set back from the road. The visual gaps between properties also varies with some large gaps and some other properties which lie close to shared boundaries.



- 6.7 The proposed development would be finished in red brickwork and slate roofing tiles. The properties would be sited in accordance with the established building line of the road and the front-facing open gables would respond to others experienced locally. The dwellings would not be disproportionately taller in size than other dwellings (7.8 metres (as proposed) vs. 7.2 metres (no. 34 Kennylands Road)) along this part of Kennylands Road and the gaps between the dwellings and neighbouring properties would be adequate to provide visual relief and avoid any visual coalescence of built form along the road. Moreover, the area has no prevailing building form or pattern of plot widths or spacing between buildings.



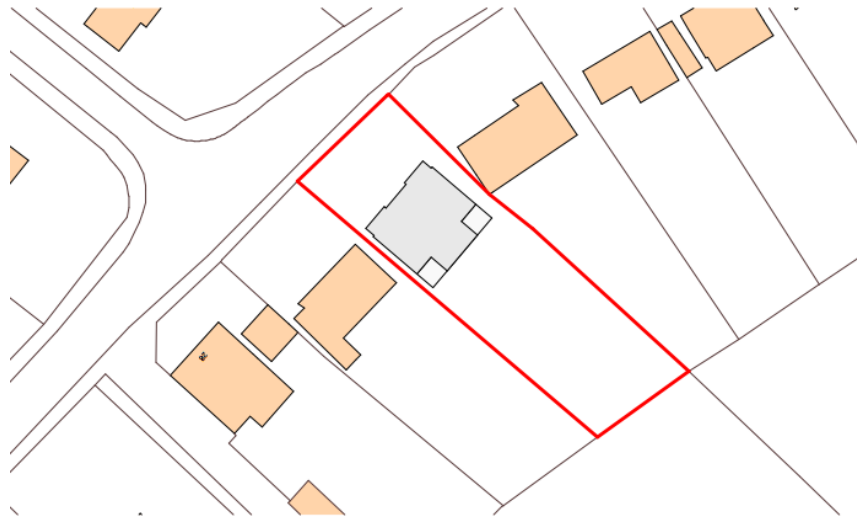


Figure 1 - Plan showing linear plan form of street scene



Figure 2 - Plan showing proposed street scene

6.8 The front of the site would accommodate six car parking spaces – whilst this is a large area of hardstanding it is acknowledged that other properties within the vicinity also have large expanses of hardstanding. Officers acknowledge the fact that the existing fence and hedging to the front would need to be removed in order to accommodate the level of parking. However, this fence and the hedging could be removed without needing to apply for planning permission and as such officers consider this not to be a constraint to the proposed development. The block plan does indicate that planting will be provided on site to help soften the proposed development and this can be secured via planning condition.

6.9

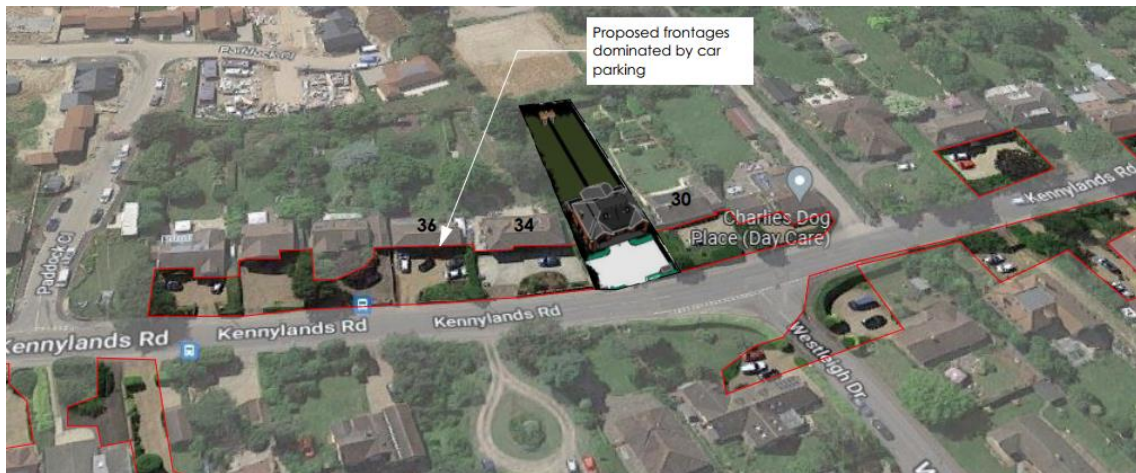


Figure 3 - Plan showing hardstanding along Kennylands Road

- 6.10 Officers are satisfied that the proposed development would respond positively to the character and appearance of the built environment experienced along Kennylands Road. The scale and design of the dwellings would not appear out of keeping with the street scene and the site is large enough to accommodate the development without resulting in an overdevelopment of the site.
- 6.11 **Residential amenity**
Policy DES6 (SOLP) seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses. Factors to consider include loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, dominance or visual intrusion, noise or vibration, smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions, pollution, contamination and external lighting.
- 6.12 Officers are satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely harm the amenity of those neighbours living across the road from the site, given the distances involved (approx. 35 metres). The two properties which will be most directly affected are the two adjacent dwellings nos. 30 and 34 Kennylands Road.
- 6.13 Neighbouring no. 34 Kennylands Road is south of the proposed development. The proposed development would extend further back from the rear of no. 34. However, the majority of the additional depth would be single storey with a flat roof measuring 2.5 metres. The closest opening to the proposed development from no. 34 is set in from the boundary by 1.4 metres and serves a study. Further to this, this neighbour has a long garden with a well planted boundary to the application site and as a result they have a significant sense of openness within the garden and privacy and enclosure. Officers consider that the proposed development would not adversely impact the amenity of those living at no. 34 Kennylands Road.

- 6.14 Neighbouring no. 30 Kennylands Road lies north of the application site. The proposed development projects further back in relation to this neighbour than it does with no. 34. Again, the majority of this projection would be a single storey aspect with a flat roof at 2.5 metres height. The closest opening of this neighbour’s property is a patio door which serves a larger dining/living area. This patio door is some 1.5 metres from the shared boundary to the application site. This neighbour’s dining/living area is open plan and large and is served by another, large, window. The larger window serving the dining/living area would not be obstructed by this development and would continue to serve this open plan area. Officers consider that the rear projection of the proposed development would not harm the enjoyment of this dining/living area. This neighbour also has a large and long garden area which would largely remain unobstructed. In officer’s view, the proposed development would not adversely impact the amenity of those living at no. 32 Kennylands Road.
- 6.15 **Access and parking**
Policy TRANS5 (SOLP) is relevant to this proposal. In respect to this proposed development, this policy seeks to, where appropriate provide for a safe and convenient access for all users to the highway network; be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other low-emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations; provide for loading, unloading, circulation and turning space; be designed to enable the serving of properties by refuse collection vehicles; provide for parking for disabled people; provide for the parking of vehicles in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council parking standards and provide facilities to support the take up of electric and/or low-emission vehicles.
- 6.16 Both properties would be served by a shared access off Kennylands Road and three parking spaces each. Each property would have four bedrooms. In accordance with the new Oxfordshire County Council’s Parking Standards for New Developments each four-bedroom dwelling should provide up to 2 spaces. The proposed development meets these standards and provides additional parking for visitors.



Table 4(b): Car Parking Standards for the rest of Oxfordshire (Villages & Hamlets)

Rural Oxfordshire	Parking Provision
1-bedroom dwelling	Up to 1 space per dwelling to be provided within the development site.
2-bedroom dwelling	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
3 – 4-bedroom dwellings	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
5+ bedroom dwelling	Up to 3 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site.

- 6.17 In consultation with the Local Highway Authority there are no objections to the proposed development on highway safety grounds. The new access would be more centrally located which is a betterment to the existing access as it provides better visibility. A condition is recommended to ensure that the parking and the manoeuvring, as shown on plan, is retained. Further conditions are recommended to ensure that the existing access is closed off prior to the new access point being used and that the new access onto Kennylands Road is formed and laid out and constructed in accordance with local highway authority specifications.
- 6.18 **Impact on ecology**
In consultation with the council's countryside officer bat activity surveys were recommended as the submitted Bat Scoping Report concluded that the existing dwelling likely supports roosting bats. These surveys were carried out and the results of this have been submitted. The surveys have concluded that the existing dwelling supports a transitory roost and as such a derogation licence from Natural England is needed. The council is satisfied that this licence will likely be granted. The bat survey report explores mitigation and compensation roost options but does not provide sufficient information for this. In officer's view, a condition can be imposed to secure the submission and agreement of mitigation and compensation roost options. In light of this condition, officers are satisfied that the proposed development would not harm protected species and can offer replacement roosts and biodiversity net gain.
- 6.19 **Contaminated land**
In consultation with the council's contaminated land officer the applicants were asked to provide a contaminated land questionnaire to demonstrate any possible contaminants. Following the submission of the questionnaire the council's contaminated land officer is satisfied that the proposed development will not be affected by contamination.
- 6.20 **Drainage considerations**
In consultation with the council's drainage engineer, there are no objections on drainage grounds. Two conditions are proposed to seek the submission and agreement of surface water or foul water drainage measures.
- 6.21 **Energy reduction**
Policy DES10 (SOLP) seeks to ensure that all new build dwellings achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. An energy statement has been submitted which demonstrates compliance with Policy DES10.
- 6.22 **Pre-commencement conditions**
In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, Section 100ZA (6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(a) the Council is required to confirm agreement to all pre-commencement conditions. These will all have been agreed by the applicant/agent in writing in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

6.23 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule applies to all relevant development proposals. 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 or net gain of residential use on site. This development would be liable to pay toward CIL and will be charged based on the net internal floor space provided.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Officers consider that the principle of the development is acceptable, and that the development would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbours and that appropriate measures are set out for the protection of bats and parking. In conjunction with the attached conditions, the proposal accords with relevant planning policy.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant Planning Permission

Standard Conditions:

- **Commence development within 3 years**
- **Implement development in accordance with approved plans**
- **Implement and retain parking & manoeuvring areas as shown on plan with SuDs compliant surface**
- **Withdraw permitted development rights for extensions (Part 1 Class A)**

Pre-occupation Conditions:

- **New vehicular access to be laid out in accordance with Local Highway Authority specifications**
- **Prior to new access being used the existing should be closed up in accordance with scheme to be agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority**
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Points to be installed**
- **All measures outlined within Energy Statement to be implemented and a Verification Report to be submitted for approval by Local Planning Authority**

Pre-slab Conditions:

- **Schedule of external materials to be agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority**
- **Landscaping (including hardsurfacing and boundary treatment) to be agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority**

Pre-commencement Conditions:

- **Details of surface water drainage scheme to be agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority**
- **Details of foul drainage scheme to be agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority**
- **Details of bat mitigation and compensation measures to be submitted for approval by Local Planning Authority**

Informatives:

**European Protected Species Licence (Bats) – need to apply for one
Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies – development has been
considered in line with these**

**Highways Informative – guidance on offences that should not be
committed**

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