

WAN/19489-X – Soames Properties Ltd.

Erection of 5 No. 3 bedroom dwellings and 3 No. 2 bedroom dwellings with access and parking including parking for the existing dwellings. Land adjoining 1-12 Naldertown, Wantage

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks outline permission for the erection of 8 no. 2 and 2 ½ storey dwellings arranged in a terrace of three and a terrace of five set at right angles to one another. Although in outline, the application includes all matters for consideration apart from landscaping.
- 1.2 The proposal includes access onto Naldertown and off street parking provision of one space for each of the dwellings in the existing terrace. The scheme also includes 15 parking spaces for the proposed dwellings.
- 1.3 The site is currently an area of open grass and scrub land surrounded by existing residential properties.
- 1.4 The proposed development of 8 dwellings on the site, which measures 0.185 hectares, equates to a density of 43 dwellings per hectare.
- 1.5 Extracts from the application drawings are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.6 The application comes to Committee as more than 4 letters of objection have been received from local residents.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 There is no specific planning history relating to this site.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy H4 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan refers to development within the built up areas of Wantage as defined by the development boundaries set out on the Proposals Map. The Policy states that within these areas development will be permitted providing the scale of the proposal is not such as to result in the Structure Plan requirement being significantly exceeded.
- 3.2 Policy H9 of the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan states that new development within the development boundary of Wantage will be permitted providing it is not on a site which contributes positively to the character of the area, would not result in the loss of a community facility, makes efficient use of the land, and the layout mass and design would not have a harmful impact on the character of the area.
- 3.3 Policies D1, D2 and D3 of the adopted Local Plan refer to the general design of development, the impact on neighbouring properties, and whether there is adequate access, parking and turning provision.
- 3.4 The same issues are covered by Policies DC1, DC5 and DC9 of the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.5 Policy H14 of the emerging Local Plan requires the net residential density on sites within Wantage, but outside the town centre, to be at least 40 dwellings per hectare providing there would be no harm to the character of the surrounding area or the amenities of adjoining properties.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Wantage Town Council raise no objections to the proposal but have raised a number of concerns. Their full comments are attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 4.2 The County Engineer's comments have yet to be received and will be reported orally at the Meeting.
- 4.3 The County Archaeologist requested an archaeological field evaluation be carried out prior to the determination of the application. This has been done and no significant features were revealed. The County Archaeologist has therefore confirmed that no further archaeological work is required.
- 4.4 22 letters of objection, and 2 letters of comment have been received from neighbouring properties raising the following concerns:
- The proposed dwellings are too high and will overshadow the neighbouring properties.
 - The proposed dwellings will over look the neighbouring properties.
 - The proposed access will be too close to the existing accesses onto Naldertown.
 - The proposal will result in the loss of a number of trees.
 - The access road onto Naldertown will be dangerous.
 - The quality of the design is very poor.
 - The design is out of keeping with the surrounding properties.
 - The proposed development is too dense.
 - The proposed development will result in an increase in traffic to the area.
 - The proposed parking for the existing dwellings is welcomed but concern is expressed that visitors will park across the access to Hamcroft.
 - Would like a fence constructed along the access road to improve privacy.

3 letters of support have been received making the following points:

- The proposal for 2 and 3 bedroom houses in this area is welcomed as this is what Wantage needs.
- This area of Wantage needs new housing.
- New housing in this area can only improve the surroundings.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The main issues to consider in determining this application are; i) Whether the principle of development on this site is acceptable; ii) The impact of the proposal on the character of the surrounding area in terms of design, layout and density; iii) The impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties; iv) Whether the proposed new access, parking and turning space are acceptable in highway safety terms; iv) whether there should be any requirement for affordable housing on the site; and v) whether the development would lead to the loss of any important trees in the area.
- 5.2 The site is well within the main built up area of Wantage and currently forms an area of open grass land (formerly allotments) and overgrown scrubland. The site is contained on all sides by existing residential development. Although visible from the road, the site does not form an important open space within the area, and it is not used for formal or informal recreation by the public, although it does provide a pleasant outlook for the occupants of 1-12 Naldertown. In your Officers opinion, the development of this site is acceptable in principle.
- 5.3 The area around the site is characterised by a varied range of property styles. The properties immediately adjacent to the site are an attractive terrace of brick cottages which have been altered over the years. To the east and south of the site there is a mix of more recent properties most likely from the 1960's and 1970's. In this varied context, your Officers do not consider that the proposed dwellings would appear out of keeping with the surrounding area in terms of layout and design. Although the dwellings are slightly higher than the adjacent cottages and do not relate in design to the existing adjacent terrace, it is not considered that refusal on design grounds could be justified. The density of the proposal equates to

approximately 43 dwellings per hectare which meets the requirements of emerging Policy H14.

- 5.4 Concern has been expressed by a number of neighbouring properties in relation to the impact of the proposed buildings. The terrace of three would be located with the flank wall facing the rear of the properties in Hamcroft and would be over 21 metres away, well above the minimum distance recommended in Council's Design Guidance of 12 metres. The properties to the south in West Hill are at least 27 metres from the application site boundary, and to the west of the site the rear gardens of 13-16 Naldertown adjoin the site. It is considered the proposal would have no harmful impact on these properties.
- 5.5 No 12 Naldertown (marked L on the layout plan) lies immediately adjacent to the terrace of 5 no 3 bedroom units. The flank wall of Plot 1 would be 2.6 metres from the boundary with the adjacent dwelling, but would be located some way down the plot away from the rear windows of this dwelling. Officers consider that although there would be some impact, the degree of harm caused would not be so significant to warrant refusal, as this property benefits from a substantial 21 metre long rear garden. No windows are proposed on the flank elevation.
- 5.6 The proposed access and parking area has been the subject of extensive discussions and negotiations with the County Engineer. The full comments have yet to be received with recommended Conditions, however these should be received in time to be reported orally at the Meeting. It is not expected that the County Engineer will object to the proposal. The scheme includes parking provision for nos 2-12 Naldertown which currently have no off street parking. This is considered to be a benefit for the area as a whole and will alleviate on street parking problems in the vicinity of the site.
- 5.7 In relation to affordable housing, in this area the threshold is 15 dwellings therefore at only 8, there is no requirement for this development to include any provision.
- 5.8 One of the concerns raised relates to the loss of trees on the site. There is currently a range of vegetation including a number of smaller trees. However, Officers consider that none of these are so significant to justify a Tree Preservation Order. Replacement planting on the site will be sought when the reserved matters application detailing landscaping is submitted.

6.0 **Recommendation**

- 6.1 *It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair, subject to no objections from the County Engineer, and subject to Conditions relating to material samples, removal of permitted development rights, obscure glazing on flank windows, drainage details, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatment, and highway conditions recommended by the County Engineer.*