

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2454/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	20.11.2013
PARISH	WANTAGE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Charlotte Dickson Fiona Roper Vacancy for Wantage Charlton Ward
APPLICANT	Croudace Homes Ltd
SITE	Land east of Chainhill Road Wantage
PROPOSAL	Application for Reserved Matters following Outline approval P12/V2316/O (Residential development (up to 85 dwellings), access onto Chainhill Road, internal estates roads, parking, landscaping and open space), for approval of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	440350/187513
OFFICER	Laura Hudson

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application relates to land to the East of Chain Hill, Wantage which lies on the southern edge of the town adjoining the existing built-up area.
- 1.2 The site is currently open agricultural land which slopes relatively steeply upwards away from the town towards the North Wessex Downs.
- 1.3 The site area amounts to approximately 4.15 hectares with the area closest to the town lying outside the North Wessex Downs AONB, however the southern most part of the site lies within the AONB. The northern most part of the site lies in the Lowland Vale.
- 1.4 The site is bounded to the north and east by sporadic planting and the existing residential area beyond, with a small paddock area at the north-east edge. The western site boundary is marked by a mature hedgerow and Chain Hill which sits at a lower level to the site. A small collection of isolated dwellings sits to the south-west of the site with open downland beyond.
- 1.5 Outline planning permission with all matters reserved other than access, was granted on 11th July 2013 for up to 85 dwellings and associated access as a result of the Councils five year housing supply deficit. A S106 Agreement accompanied this permission securing contributions towards local facilities and infrastructure, open space on site, and 40% affordable housing. A copy of the outline decision notice with conditions is **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 1.6 The application comes to Committee as more than four letters of objection have been received and Wantage Town Council objects.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is a reserved matters application which seeks permission for the detailed layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of the site following the previous grant of outline permission.
- 2.2 The layout largely follows the submitted illustrative plan which formed part of the outline application. The scheme proposes 85 dwellings served from a single access from Chainhill. A single main street runs through the development with a secondary street creating a loop and a number of small cul de sacs.
- 2.3 The scheme proposes a mix of dwellings consisting of six no. one bedroom flats, 30 no. two bedroom units, 22 no. three bedroom units, 23 no. four bedroom units and four no. five bedroom units. Of these 34 are affordable in a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom units equating to 40% of the total development. The exact tenure is set out in the S106 Agreement.
- 2.4 The proposed dwellings are largely two storey although there are some 2 ½ storey elements including part of the block of flats. The design of the dwellings includes materials and features found locally within Wantage. Materials include tile hanging, feather edge boarding, and Flemish bond brick work with dark headers all found locally.
- 2.5 The site incorporates a large area of open space towards the southern end of the site within the AONB which is proposed to be landscaped appropriately to reflect its sensitive setting. Within the layout there is a smaller Local Area of Play creating a central space to the development. The drainage strategy also includes a drainage pond towards the north eastern edge of the site which forms part of the Sustainable Drainage System.
- 2.6 Additional information has been received during the application process including section drawings and some minor design changes on the dwellings and site layout to reflect comments received and which have been the subject of re-consultation.
- 2.7 Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Wantage Town Council – *“The Town Council objected to this development. It still has concerns about the suitability of access to and from the site. There are also concerns about the prospect of tall buildings within the development overlooking properties in Orchard Way and adversely affecting privacy. Suitable attention should be given to planting appropriate trees to deal with this.”*

Oxfordshire County Council – Transport Development Control – Originally objected to the application due to lack of information in relation to the road hierarchy, lack of tracking plans for the roads within the site, and location of the bin stores. Amended plans have been received and revised comments state no objection.

Oxfordshire County Council – Drainage – No objections.

Oxfordshire County Council – Archaeology – *“The application area has been subject to archaeological field evaluation. This did not reveal any heritage assets and therefore there are no archaeological constraints to this application”.*

Environment Agency (Lesley Tims & Cathy Harrison) - No objections.

Crime Prevention Design Adviser - No objections.

Thames Water Development Control - No comments as reserved matters.

Landscape Architect – The landscape treatment along the southern site boundary with the AONB will need to be robust but at a height which allows views across the area. Concern over the current proposed boundary treatment and the scope to provide sufficient planting adjacent to the flats and associated parking area. Concern regarding proposed lighting along the edge of the site. Concern regarding some of the proposed species of tree along the southern boundary. Concern over some of the site levels particularly the bank adjacent to the entrance road and how the level changes will be accommodated – this will require careful detailing (conditions attached to the outline permission require full details of landscaping including species and sizes, and details of the access including levels).

Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse) – Concern over some of the submitted tree survey information and lack of tree protection plan which was a condition of the outline permission. Justification is required for some of the proposed development within root protection areas such as roads.

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – *“The material plan shows permeable paving to be used and this will form part of the SUDS drainage strategy. No further observations at this stage until the detailed drainage strategy is submitted.”*

Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) – The current application is for reserved matters and not the discharge of the biodiversity strategy condition. Despite this a strategy has been submitted and some comments are made in relation to this but would be addressed as part of the discharge of conditions application.

Urban Design Officer (South Oxon & Vale of White Horse DC) – Concern that the majority of the public open space is not well integrated with the development, some comments in relation to providing a more active frontages along the footways, and in relation to the shape of some gardens. The flats have no private amenity space. Concern over some of the site levels and the houses built at the highest point rather than lowest creating large plinths and some retaining walls are substantial. (The plans have been amended to address these points as far as possible and conditions recommended to address other points such as slab levels etc).

Waste Management Officer (District Council) – No objections subject to bin provision meeting standards for the flats.

Housing Dev. (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse DC) – No objections – mix reflects the S106 agreement.

AONB Officer – *“The North Wessex AONB unit appreciate that thought has gone into the design process to minimise the impact from this development on the wider AONB landscape. Planning conditions should be attached to secure the proposed tree and hedge planting and to secure a management plan of the proposed meadow area that forms the public open space. It is recommended that an ecologist prepares the management plan for this area as there may be opportunity for chalk grassland restoration.”*

Letters of comment and objection have been received from 17 local residents raising the following concerns:

- More development in Wantage with no infrastructure proposals.
- Additional traffic to the area which cannot be catered for on local roads.
- The proposed houses are too high and will tower over existing properties – they should be restricted to two storeys only.
- The proposal will result in an increase in flooding in the area.
- Not enough details on the landscape and planting plans.
- There are no safe links to town without walking through Alfredstone Place which is private and there are no details of the proposed new footpath and crossing in this application.
- The proposed access will be unsafe.
- Concerns over the drainage proposals and the pond which will be dangerous.
- The local roads are already gridlocked.
- The field is good quality agricultural land.
- Chainhill is too narrow.
- There are no cycle paths from the site.
- Where will the occupants work?
- The proposal will harm the landscape.
- There are too many houses on the site.
- Concern over the impact of construction.
- The proposed dwellings will overlook existing properties resulting in a loss of privacy due to the land levels.
- Concern over boundary treatment between the proposed development and existing houses.
- The pond will become a stagnant rubbish dump.
- There is no provision for the elderly on the site.
- There is insufficient parking provision on the site.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P12/V2316/O](#) - Approved (11/07/2013)

Outline application for residential development (up to 85 dwellings), access onto Chainhill Road, internal estate roads, parking, landscaping and open space. A copy of this decision notice is attached at Appendix 1.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan*

Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.

Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking and suitable access from the public highway.

Policy DC6 requires hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and surroundings and to maximise nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.

Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.

Policy H17 requires 40% provision of affordable housing in schemes of more than 15 dwellings in the larger settlements.

Policy NE6 refers to development within the North Wessex Downs AONB and says that it will only be permitted if the natural beauty of the landscape is conserved or enhanced.

Policy NE9 refers to development in the Lowland Vale as defined on the local plan proposals map.

5.2 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 14 and 49). Paragraphs 34 and 37 encourage minimised journey lengths to work, shopping, leisure and education, and paragraphs 57, 60 and 61 seek to promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment. Paragraph 109 requires development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

5.3 The *Residential Design Guide* was adopted in December 2009 and sets out the design principles for new residential development including how to create a successful layout in terms of road and street hierarchy and permeability and connectivity (chapter 3). It also emphasises the importance of site context in this section and adding character and details to development with context in mind. Section 4.1 refers to developments of 10 or more units providing more detailed advice in terms of accommodating cars and creating spaces within developments. The design guidance also sets out acceptable distances between existing and proposed dwellings in order to protect residential amenity.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Introduction

6.1 Outline planning permission was granted in July 2013 for up to 85 dwellings on the site. This permission established the principle of residential development in this location and included the site access as a detail at this stage. This permission also considered the wider highway impact, pedestrian links to the town centre and traffic calming improvements to Chainhill. These issues are therefore not part of the consideration of this current application. Conditions attached to the outline permission (copy attached at Appendix 1) require full details of the access, details of the land grading around the access, details of traffic calming, details of the proposed works to create a pedestrian link and crossing on Chainhill, and details of construction traffic. These conditions will need to be discharged prior to work commencing on site. A S106 Agreement was also signed with both the County and District Councils to secure contributions to local infrastructure and to secure affordable housing on this site. The impact of the proposal on local infrastructure does not form part of the consideration of this detailed application.

Issues

6.2 The main considerations in determining this reserved matters application relate to the layout of the site, the appearance of the development, the scale of dwellings, and the landscaping for the site. In this context the main issues to consider are: i) The design of the development and impact in the character of the area; ii) the impact of the development on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties; iii) the road network within the site and parking and manoeuvring provision; iv) ecology and trees; v) drainage; and vi) affordable housing provision.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

- 6.3 The outline application included an illustrative masterplan showing the road hierarchy and layout through the site, the location of the open space, and indicative housing blocks rather than detailed plots. This current application largely follows the road layout and the open space provision. The road layout proposes a primary street with secondary street from this forming a loop through the development. Within this there are smaller cul de sac areas creating smaller pockets of development and intimate spaces. There are key buildings on the prominent corners and at the ends of roads to provide a focus, and the design of buildings take account of the road layout to create an active frontage wherever possible. The Councils urban design officer has made some comments which have been taken into consideration as far as possible, however it is considered that the layout largely reflects the Councils design guidance and creates an interesting and varied development.
- 6.4 There is a small area of open space located at the heart of the development and which is overlooked by some key prominent buildings and the block of flats. However the majority of the open space lies to the edge of the development to the south and falls within the AONB. Whilst it would be preferable to integrate all of the open space amongst the development, the current proposal creates a more useable area which is overlooked by housing along the southern edge of the site and results in more efficient use of the developable site area i.e. the area outside the landscape designation. This open space is proposed to be left largely open given its downland setting with some appropriate planting to soften the edge of the development. A management plan for this area is also a requirement of the outline permission to ensure that it provides a valuable community resource whilst respecting its landscape and biodiversity value. The AONB officer is largely supportive of the proposal subject to conditions.
- 6.5 The plans have been amended during the process to address some of the comments from the urban design officer in terms of providing open space for the flats and improvements to create a more active frontage in some areas. It is accepted that the open space for the flats is still small however the Local Area of Play is located opposite.
- 6.6 As has been previously stated the site slopes relatively steeply downwards towards the town therefore the site levels are crucial in creating an appropriate development in terms of its setting in the landscape and relationship to neighbouring properties. There are concerns over some of the units particularly fronting the site onto Chainhill where the finish floor levels require plinths. The plans have been amended to reduce this particularly on plots 4 and 84, however it is still considered that the property could be built from the lower level and set into the site. A slab level condition is recommended to cover the whole site so that this issue can be addressed.
- 6.7 The designs of the dwellings themselves propose a mix of property types and sizes. It is considered that the mix of unit sizes is good and includes a range of smaller market units as well as affordable units. The detailed mix is set out in section 2 of this report.
- 6.8 The majority of the houses are two storey with single and 1 ½ storey projections such as garages etc. There are some limited 2 ½ storey elements but these are contained within the development so that they do not appear prominent and out of place, and they create the key focus buildings. These units are located on plots 80 and 81, 11, 68 and 71, 31, 34, 35, 23, and the corner element of the block of flats containing units 72-77.

- 6.9 The scheme proposes a good quality palette of materials mixed throughout the development and to reflect local vernacular including natural slate and plain tile roof treatments, a mix of bricks including flemish bond with dark headers to create the checker board effect found locally, tile hanging, black feather edge boarding and some render. A condition is recommended requiring the submission of materials samples in addition to wall panels on site.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.10 One of the main concerns of local residents relates to the impact of the development on residential amenity particularly given the relative site levels. The existing properties in Orchard Way which bounds the site to the north are set at a lower level to the application site. During the application process section drawings were requested to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed dwellings to existing and these have been received. All of the proposed dwellings along this boundary are no higher than two storey with some lower elements. It is accepted that there will be some impact in terms of view as the open aspect from these existing houses will be lost however this is not a material planning consideration. The issue of over looking and dominance/overshadowing is however relevant. It is considered that given the relatively large gardens of the existing dwellings of between 30 to 35 metres in length, and the fact that the majority of the proposed dwellings along this boundary have a rear garden length of 11 metres that the proposal would not be as harmful as to justify refusal. The main rear windows of the proposed houses would be around 40 – 46 metres away from the rear of the neighbouring houses therefore well in excess of Council design guidance recommendations of 21 metres to protect privacy. This therefore allows for the difference in levels. Given the distance involved it is therefore considered that the proposal would not over-dominate, overshadow, or overlook the neighbouring houses to an unacceptable degree. Furthermore, additional landscaping is proposed along this boundary to soften the impact visually.
- 6.11 Plots 53 and 54 are located slightly closer to the boundary however there are no rear windows proposed and as they are flats they have no permitted development rights and could not therefore add openings at a later date. Plot 1 is located adjacent to the relatively small curtilage associated with No. 19 Chainhill and is set at a much higher level. However it is set around 8 metres from the boundary and is side onto this neighbour. There is only one proposed side facing window at first floor level however this is a bathroom and is obscure glazed. It is therefore considered that the relationship between these two units is acceptable.

Road Network and Parking

- 6.12 As previously stated the access to the site was determined at the outline permission subject to details required by condition. The County Highway Engineers comments relate only to the internal site layout in terms of road hierarchy, parking and manoeuvrability. While initial concerns were raised in relation to the lack of information, this has now been addressed. The road layout is considered acceptable and the parking provision meets standards and relates well to the development. In some areas parking is grouped together but is largely close to the plot it serves ensuring that it is useable. In these areas landscaping is proposed to improve the quality of the street scene. A condition is recommended to ensure that the garage accommodation within the site is retained for parking. The County Engineer now raises no objections.

Trees and Ecology

- 6.13 The Council Arboriculturalist has raised some concern over the submitted tree survey

and the relationship of the development to some existing trees. These are located largely around the site perimeter as the majority of the site is open agricultural land. A condition on the outline permission would ensure that root protection areas are identified and the development reflects these.

- 6.14 Some concerns have been raised in relation to the biodiversity management plan which was not submitted originally with the application. This is a requirement of a condition on the outline permission and is not therefore required as part of the consideration of the reserved matters. Despite this the applicants have now submitted one. The Council's countryside officer has made some comments on this and these will need to be addressed when the conditions on the outline permission are discharged prior to commencement.

Drainage

- 6.15 The detailed drainage strategy for the site including the SUDS system and results of the foul water drainage capacity study and solution are requirements of the outline permission and therefore relate to the principle of development on the site. There are conditions on the outline permission which prevent commencement of the development without these issues being addressed.

Affordable Housing

- 6.16 The application proposes 40% affordable housing amounting to 34 units in a mix and tenure set out in the S106 Agreement. The applicants have not specified the location within the site as they state that it will be determined by the provider (RSL). It is a Council requirement that the affordable units are distributed evenly throughout the site and are not all located together. A condition is recommended requiring the submission of a plan to be approved when the location is determined and prior to commencement.

Conditions

- 6.17 Conditions are recommended in relation to the details of the proposal including materials and the removal of permitted development rights for some of the smaller plots to protect the quality of the development and relationship between units. All the conditions applied to the outline permission also apply to the development and would need to be discharged prior to commencement.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Outline planning permission has been granted and therefore the principle of the development along with access is established. This proposal for reserved matters considers the details of the development. It is considered that the layout, design, scale, and landscaping of the site is acceptable. The proposal respects local vernacular, relates well to the existing residential area, would have no harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and includes useable areas of open space with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. The proposal complies with the adopted policies in the local plan which relate to detail, the guidance set out in the adopted residential design guide and the NPPF.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that reserved matters are granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : TL3 - Time limit - Reserved Matters reflecting the time frame of the outline.

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- 2 : Fire Hydrants – submission of details.
- 3 : MC2 - Materials (Samples) (Full)
- 4 : MC8 - Wall Materials (Panel) (Full)
- 5 : RE11 – Restriction on the change of use of Garage Accommodation without permission.
- 6 : RE18 - Slab Levels (Single Dwellings) (Full)
- 7 : Submission of full details of any solar panels to be installed.
- 8 : RE2 - PD Restriction on Dwellings and outbuildings – plots 1-3, 25-58, 60-61, 64-66, 68-71 and 78-83
- 9 : RE6 - Boundary Details to be approved.
10. Lighting details (along the main streets) to be approved.
11. Affordable housing distribution to be agreed.
12. Details of bin storage for flats.
13. Notwithstanding submitted landscaping scheme, further landscaping details required for approval.

Informative: The outline planning permission reference number P12/V2316/O together with this approval constitute the planning permission for this development. All of the conditions imposed on both the outline permission and this approval must be complied with.

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