

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2085/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	3.10.2013
PARISH	LONGCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs R.J Lampard
SITE	Land at Shrivenham Road, Longcot
PROPOSAL	Residential development and associated works (As clarified by Phase 1 Geo- Environmental Appraisal & Archaeological Evaluation accompanying email from agent dated 5 February 2014 & Glanville Drainage Strategy & associated drawing accompanying email from agent dated 19 March 2014)
AMENDMENTS	Two – Additional Information – As above
GRID REFERENCE	427245/190714
OFFICER	Mr Peter Brampton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to agricultural land, most recently used as a paddock. It lies on the southwestern edge of Longcot and is accessed from a field gate at the end of a private gravelled drive. Five relatively modern properties take access from this driveway, and they are orientated to face it. The residential curtilages of Field House and Meadow View bound the southeastern boundary, whilst 6-8 Church Close bound the site to the northeast. The remaining boundaries face open countryside beyond the village.
- 1.2 The site is around 0.35 hectares in size. From observations on site, the land is largely overgrown, with some mature trees along site boundaries.
- 1.3 The application comes to committee as Longcot parish council recommends refusal, and as five letters of objection have been received.
- 1.4 A location plan is **attached** as Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applicants propose to erect 3 two-bed dwellings on the site, arranged in a loose farmstead style arrangement. The buildings are all single storey, with car parking contained in subservient attached “cart barns”. The applicants contend in the Design and Access Statement that the new houses would achieve Level 6 (Carbon Neutral) when assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes. However, the accompanying Code for Sustainable Homes assessment indicates Level 5 will be achieved, so the application has been considered on this basis.
- 2.2 The proposed buildings have a modern appearance, with large glazed screens to primary accommodation and smaller openings to service and private areas. In terms of materials, the walls will be vertical timber boarding, with some oak framing, whilst the roofs will be sedum green roofs.
- 2.3 During the determination of the application, additional information relating to drainage and archaeology have been submitted for consideration, in response to technical

objections.

- 2.4 Plans of the development are **attached** as Appendix 2. Supporting documentation, including the Design and Access Statement, can be viewed on the council's website.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Longcot Parish Council** – Recommends refusal on the following grounds

- Site lies outside built up limits of the village and has been refused and dismissed on appeal twice on this point
- Drainage and flooding concerns
- Concerned whether access to site is adequate
- Concerns over where bins will be collected from
- Potential impact on bat populations
- Unsustainable location for new residential development
- Proposed houses are out of keeping with style of village

The full response of the parish council is **attached** as Appendix 3

3.2 **Neighbour Representations** – Letters of objection from five neighbours have been received. The main concerns can be summarised thus:

- Unsustainable location for residential development
- Site falls outside the built up limits of the village
- Insufficient local facilities to support expansion in population
- Sufficient new development in Longcot has already been permitted for local need
- Increase in flood risk
- Local sewer capacity has insufficient capacity to accommodate new development
- Inappropriate access along gravelled track
- Widening of access will cause loss of trees and cross private land
- Conflict between vehicular movements between new and existing properties
- Disturbance and light pollution from car movements on existing neighbours
- Poor amenity standards for new occupiers
- Inappropriate design for new units
- Impact on ecology of area, including local bat populations
- Concerns over boundary planting and time to establish appropriate screening
- Plan inaccuracies regarding land ownership
- Will set precedent for further development outside built up limits of village

3.3 **Environmental Protection Team** – No comments

3.4 **Oxfordshire County Council Highways Liaison Officer** – No highway safety concerns, the dwellings are accessed via an existing private driveway. Visibility is good onto Shrevenham Road, whilst sufficient parking and turning space is proposed within the site. Notes the location is not particularly sustainable so dependency on the private car is likely to be high. Any consent should have conditions relating to the access, parking, turning space and the retention of the carport accommodation.

3.5 **Drainage Engineer** – No objections following receipt of Glanville Drainage Strategy

3.6 **Waste Management** – General comments on council bin provision provided. Confirms bins to be presented at the same point as adjacent properties on collection day

3.7 **Contaminated Land Officer** – No objections

3.8 **County Archaeologist** – No objections following submission of archaeological field

evaluation.

- 3.9 **Forestry Officer** – Concerned over impact of new access on trees either side of entrance, within ownership of neighbouring properties. This is in terms of the root protection area and conflict with the canopy from vehicles accessing the site. Recommends any consent be supported by detailed tree protection pre-commencement condition
- 3.10 **Landscape Officer** – Proposed buildings would not be prominent in long-distance views from the public right of way network surrounding the village. Conditions are necessary to cover maintenance of screen planting along the northern boundary, boundary treatments and the existing planting around the entrance of the site
- 3.11 **Countryside Officer** – There are no existing records of protected species or habitats within the site. No objections subject to pre-commencement condition requiring reptile survey
- 3.12 **Thames Water** – General comments about surface water drainage and water pressure provided. No objections to the proposal on foul drainage or sewer capacity grounds

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P10/V0725/O](#) - Refused (24/06/2010) - Refused on appeal (06/07/2011)
Outline application for the erection of two new dwellings
[P06/V1150/O](#) - Refused (22/08/2006) - Refused on appeal (04/05/2007)
Outline application for the erection of one dwelling.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;**

GS2 - Development in the Countryside
DC1 - Design
DC5 - Access
DC6 - Landscaping
DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC13 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
DC14 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
H12 - Development in the Smaller Villages
HE10 - Archaeology
HE9 - Archaeology
NE9 - Lowland Vale

5.2 **Emerging Vale of White Local Plan 2029, Part One**

Village Facilities Study

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/SPG)**

Residential Design Guide – December 2009
Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
Open space, sport and recreation future provision – July 2008
Affordable Housing – July 2006
Flood Maps and Flood Risk – July 2006
Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012**

Paragraphs 14 and 29 – presumption in favour of sustainable development
Paragraph 17 – Make full use of public transport, walking and cycling

Paragraph 29 – Sustainable travel modes

Paragraphs 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey length to work, shopping, leisure and education

Paragraph 47 – five year housing supply requirement

Paragraph 50 – create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities

Paragraph 55 – Housing in rural areas

Paragraphs 57, 60 & 61 – promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Current policy position

- 6.1 Under the current Local Plan 2011, Longcot is designated as a smaller village. Consequently, this scheme is contrary to Policies GS2 and H12 of the Local Plan, which combine to restrict housing developments outside the built up limits of the smaller villages of the district. Thus, ordinarily, the council would only consider the potential development of this land through the local plan process given the site's location.

Emerging policy position

- 6.2 Under the emerging Local Plan 2029 Part One, Longcot is designated as a smaller village. As a consequence, the emerging policy position is that only very small scale residential development will be permitted in Longcot. Such development will be limited to within the existing built up areas of the village. Proposals for resident development will only be supported where they seek to meet local housing needs. However, it is important to note the emerging Local Plan Part One has only limited weight at this time.

Principle of development

- 6.3 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF confirms the need for a council to have a demonstrable five-year supply of housing land. It is well documented this council does not currently have this five-year supply.
- 6.4 As outlined in Para 6.1, It is clear this application is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, whilst the council does not have a five-year housing land supply, these two policies are inconsistent with the NPPF. Therefore, the council must assess the proposed application on its site-specific merits and whether, under the NPPF, it is a sustainable form of development.

Sustainability Credentials

- 6.5 The NPPF's tests of sustainability primarily relate to location, design, landscape impact, drainage and highway safety. It is important to highlight at an early stage that applications for residential development on this site have been submitted twice during the current Local Plan period and refused. In both instances, the applicant appealed this refusal unsuccessfully, with the Inspector supporting the council's view that the proposals lay outside the built up limits of the village and thus were contrary to Policy H12. A number of objections, including that from the parish council, contend there has been no material change in circumstances that would warrant a different stance with this proposal. However, for the reasons outlined above, that is not the case. The NPPF has come into force since both applications were determined, and has weakened Policy H12 considerably as a tool to resist this type of development.
- 6.6 The reduced weight that can be attached to Policy H12 was recently highlighted at an appeal in Longworth (Planning Reference: P13/V0373/FUL). This was an application for two houses beyond the built up limits of the village and the council was not supported on a reason for refusal that contended Longworth was an unsustainable location for new development. The Inspector highlighted there was no objection on sustainability grounds from the Highways Authority (as is the case here) and concluded,

“It has not...been demonstrated that the proposal’s relationship to services and facilities would lead to an unacceptable increase in private vehicle use. In this regard it would accord with the [NPPF] which, whilst seeking to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside, notes that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.”

This clear steer from the Planning Inspectorate has to be a material consideration in the assessment of this proposal.

- 6.7 This Longworth example is particularly relevant here, as the Village Facilities survey confirms that Longcot and Longworth are identical in terms of the facilities within the village. Both, for example, have a primary school, a place of worship, a village hall and recreation facilities. Whilst recognising local comment that the local school is at capacity, there have been no objections on this point from Oxfordshire County Council.
- 6.8 It is also important to highlight that neither the current or emerging local plan restrict any residential development in Longcot completely, merely stating that it has to be within the built up limits. The NPPF requires an assessment of how places work, rather than applying this restriction strictly. With this in mind, it is important to highlight how closely these houses would relate to the village. The site does not project any further northwest into open countryside than Church Close, nor does it project any further southeast beyond housing facing towards Shrevenham Road. In terms of access to the facilities of the village, these new houses would be closer to them than many other properties in Longcot. For example, St Mary’s Church is only around 150 metres from the entrance to the site, whilst the primary school is a walk of less than 400 metres.
- 6.9 Overall, this site cannot be protected from development any longer simply because it lies outside the village. The proposals location will represent a sustainable extension to the built up limits of the village that accords with the NPPF, which takes precedence over in the in-principle objection of Policy H12. Therefore, the principle of residential development on this site should now be supported.

Landscape and visual impact

- 6.10 Given the sensitive edge-of-village location, the impact of this proposal on the local landscape is important. Longcot falls within the Lowland Vale and Policy NE9 seeks to protect the area from development that would have an adverse impact on the landscape, particularly in long open views. Views of this site are not readily available from the roads to the south and east. Public footpaths lie to the north and west. From here, any views of the development will be seen in context with development beyond.
- 6.11 The single storey design of the buildings is helpful in limiting the landscape impact of this proposal. This, coupled with the existing boundary vegetation, and the proposed additional planting that will enhance the screening, ensures there are no concerns this proposal will cause material harm to the character and quality of the landscape. Pre-commencement conditions are necessary to ensure a full landscaping scheme (and its implementation) are agreed. This scheme will need to demonstrate the maintenance of the northern screen planting, which is vital to preserve the landscape character. A condition relating to boundary treatments is also necessary. Standard close-boarded fencing will not be acceptable in this location.
- 6.12 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan states that development will be permitted provided that it is of high quality and inclusive design. The layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials and relationship to adjoining buildings should not adversely affect those attributes that make a positive contribution to the character of the locality. Both parish council and neighbours have objected to the design of the new houses as being out of keeping with Longcot. It is true that Longcot generally has traditional building forms,

constructed of brick or render under pitched roofs. However, there are some more modern individual buildings and there is no overriding character for this proposal to follow. Given the existing and proposed planting, this is a self-contained site, allowing the opportunity for a more individual, modern approach. This approach allows the applicant to achieve the high level of sustainability outlined in Section 2.

- 6.13 Generally, the layout, the use of vertical timber boarding and single storey nature gives the development a farmstead feeling that is appropriate for the rural location. The scale of the buildings is acceptable, relating well to the size of the site and the grain in the area. The density of the developable area of the site is 17 dwellings to the hectare. These are low-key contemporary buildings forming a self-enclosed enclave of development. Whilst there may be nothing comparable in the village, this does not translate to planning harm. Overall, this is a striking, but acceptably designed scheme that will add to the variety of the housing stock within the village without undermining local distinctiveness. The proposal complies with Policy DC1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 6.14 A number of immediately adjoining residents have highlighted the potential impact of this proposal on the private drive that will allow access to it. It is important to note that the council's primary responsibility is to ensure any development will not impact negatively on the public highway network (Policy DC5). The power of the council to intervene with concerns over the level of usage of private roads is limited to whether it would contravene public safety.
- 6.15 Currently, five houses take access from this private drive. This proposal would increase the total to eight. It is a gravelled drive that is not straight, so vehicle speeds will inevitably be low. The highways officer has raised no concerns the intensification of use of this drive will materially endanger public safety. Visibility at the point the drive meets Shrivenham Road is acceptable. Thus, whilst recognising the concerns of those residents who already use this drive, there is insufficient evidence to indicate the traffic movements from an additional three houses would render it unsafe.
- 6.16 Importantly, the proposal incorporates turning space within the site so that no car will need to reverse onto the driveway. This is not the case with some of the existing properties. The level of off-street parking within the development is acceptable, providing two spaces per house in line with County Council standards.
- 6.17 It is not clear if there is private or civil legislation that would limit the amount of cars that can use the private drive. However, this would not be a matter that could affect the determination of this planning application. Overall, there are no concerns this proposal would materially affect public highway safety.

Surface and Foul Water

- 6.18 Local objection has also focussed on the frequency this site floods. The applicants have provided a drainage strategy in response to these concerns and the objection of the council's drainage engineer. The drainage strategy confirms that soakaways are not acceptable due to the impermeable nature of the local soil. Thus, a SUDS approach is necessary, so that the paving within the development will be porous, with pipes underneath directing the water to a new surface water sewer. This will lead to the existing surface water sewer that runs roughly along the northeastern boundary of the site, within the gardens of Church Close. This new sewer will incorporate a flow control to ensure that the existing sewer is not overwhelmed. The council's drainage engineer has agreed this strategy, subject to a typical Grampian condition. This condition will secure further details of the proposed strategy. It may prove that further on-site interventions are needed to ensure the existing public sewer is not overloaded with

additional flow.

- 6.19 In terms of foul water, local concerns about the capacity of the existing foul sewer are noted. Thames Water have confirmed no objections on this point and this development will be able to easily connect to the existing sewer network. The above Grampian condition will cover this aspect of the scheme, with consultation taking place with Thames Water before the foul drainage strategy is agreed.
- 6.20 *Archaeology*
The County Archaeologist has requested an archaeological field evaluation be done prior to determination. This has been done and is agreed by the archaeologist, subject to the conditions outlined in Section 8.
- 6.21 *Other matters*
Due to the single storey nature of the buildings proposed, and the distances to neighbouring properties, there are no concerns this proposal will impact on neighbouring amenity. However, this is subject to a condition restricting the flat sedum roofs being converted to balconies. Concerns over disturbance from additional traffic are not considered material.
- 6.22 The council's forestry officer has confirmed that this layout is acceptable in terms of retaining the existing trees shown as such on the plans. The main area of concern is the impact of widening the entrance to the site on two trees, laying either side of the driveway. This is both in terms of impact on their root protection area from the works needed to the entrance, and the impact on their canopies from passing traffic. However, the forestry officer has indicated this can be covered by a detailed pre-commencement condition, which is necessary to make the proposal acceptable.
- 6.23 The site clearly offers good habitats for a wide range of local wildlife. However, there are no records of protected species using the site. Accordingly, there are no grounds to object to this proposal on ecological grounds. However, the countryside officer has confirmed a reptile survey should be carried out prior to work commencing on site, with any mitigation agreed.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The principle of residential development on this site is now accepted, having regard to recent changes in local and national planning policy and recent appeal decisions. The site is a sustainable location for Longcot to grow. The proposal will have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and wider landscape. The impact on highway safety is acceptable, whilst concerns over surface water flooding and foul drainage have been addressed. There are no material concerns relating to archaeology, ecology, neighbouring amenity or tree protection. Thus, subject to the proposed conditions, this proposal complies with all relevant national and local policy and should be approved.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Grant Planning Permission subject to:

- 1 : Commencement Three Years**
- 2 : Approved plans**
- 3 : Samples of all external materials to be agreed**
- 4 : Slab and ridge heights to be agreed**
- 5 : Landscaping scheme to be agreed**
- 6 : Implementation of landscaping scheme to be agreed**
- 7 : Boundary details to be agreed**

- 8 : Access, Parking & Turning as approved**
- 9 : Car ports to be retained**
- 10 : No Drainage to Highway**
- 11 : Drainage Details (Surface and Foul) to be agreed**
- 12 : Reptile Survey to be agreed**
- 13 : Tree Protection to be agreed**
- 14 : Archaeological Watching Brief to be agreed**
- 15 : Programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation to be agreed**
- 16 : Code Level 5 to be achieved as per supporting statement**
- 17 : Restriction on use of roofs as balconies**

Author: Peter Brampton
Contact Number: 01491 823751
Email: peter.brampton@southandvale.gov.uk