

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P16/V0304/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	10.2.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	LONGWORTH
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Anthony Hayward
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr Alan Sharkey
<b>SITE</b>	Squirrel Cottage Hinton Road Longworth Abingdon, OX13 5EA
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Proposals for full planning permission for the extension of the existing Squirrel Cottage, the conversion of an existing Pool House into a four bed dwelling, and the creation of nine new dwellings on the adjacent land, and provision of footway.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	(13 June 2016 - Amended plans received) None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	438727/198987
<b>OFFICER</b>	Martin Deans

---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Squirrel Cottage is a detached dwelling that lies on Hinton Road, opposite the junction with Rectory Lane. There is a relatively large outbuilding to the west of the dwelling that contains a swimming pool. The application site is the curtilage of the cottage and a rectangular area of open lane enclosed by hedgerows to the west, as far as Lodge Lane. Currently there are two vehicular access points to the site, one to the east side of the cottage and one opposite the nursery.
- 1.2 To the east of the site lies nos. 1 and 2 Lark Rise Cottages. To the north, on the opposite side of Hinton Road, is the Potting Shed Nursery. To the west of the site are three houses in Lodge Lane, Warren Cottage (a detached house), St Mary's Cottage and Holly House (a pair of semi-detached houses). To the south is an agricultural field associated with Frilford Farm.
- 1.3 The village conservation area is orientated along Rectory Lane and the southern end encompasses Squirrel Cottage itself. A site location plan and a plan of the southern end of the conservation area is **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 The application comes to committee because of the objections of Longworth Parish Council and a relatively large number of local residents.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application has three elements. The first is for the construction of nine dwellings, the second is for the conversion of the pool building to a dwelling, and the third is for single storey extensions to Squirrel Cottage itself. The newly constructed dwellings would be built on the land to the west of the cottage, five facing Hinton Road and four around the corner, facing Lodge Lane. Six would be 4-bedrooms and three would be 2-bedrooms in size. The existing pool building would be converted to a 4/5 bedroom dwelling including extensions to the west and south. Four of the proposed ten dwellings would be affordable (plots 6 – 9). The site area containing the proposed ten dwellings is approximately 0.9 ha, which makes the density approximately 11 dwellings per hectare.

2.2 The scale of the proposed new build houses is two storeys with eaves generally set down slightly, so that some of the first floor is in the roof. Materials will be a mixture of stone, brick and render walls, with clay tile roofs. Four new vehicular accesses would be created on Hinton Road and three on Lodge Lane. The extensions to the pool building will be faced in timber and glass with a tiled roof. The existing access to the pool building would be retained. The single storey extensions to the cottage will be on the rear elevation, constructed mainly of full-length glazing under tiled lean-to roofs. Plans are **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 The following represents a summary of responses. Full details can be found on the council's website [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Longworth Parish Council	Object for the reasons <b>attached</b> at Appendix 3
Neighbours	<p>59 letters of objection - the grounds can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside the built limits of the village</li> <li>• Contrary to the neighbourhood plan</li> <li>• Unsustainable development</li> <li>• Unsuitable site – not infill</li> <li>• Harm to the countryside</li> <li>• Erosion of tranquil village character</li> <li>• Not needed given other developments</li> <li>• Contrary to previous appeals</li> <li>• Too much housing for a small village</li> <li>• Inadequate local services</li> <li>• Harm to the conservation area</li> <li>• Danger from increased traffic</li> <li>• Dangerous new accesses</li> <li>• Likely parking on the roads</li> <li>• Drainage problems</li> <li>• Noise and other pollution</li> <li>• Dangerous precedent for the future</li> </ul>
Oxfordshire County Council	<p>Transport No objection subject to the widening of the shared access for the converted pool house and plot 1, financial contributions for bus services and conditions</p> <p>Education No objections</p> <p>Property No objections</p> <p>Minerals No objection</p> <p>Archaeology</p>

	No objection
Thames Water	No objection
Conservation Officer	No objection subject to conditions
Forestry Officer	No objection subject to conditions
Housing Officer	No objection
Architects' Panel	Suggested changes to the original layout to set housing back from the road and reduce the width of access points
Urban Design Officer	Amended plans, showing the proposed dwellings set back from the road, are an improvement.

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Below is a summary of the planning history which is relevant to this current application.

##### 4.1 [P15/V2402/PEM](#) - Extension of existing cottage, conversion of existing pool house and the creation of 3 new dwellings.

[P04/V1433](#) - Approved (25/10/2004)

Demolition of existing boundary wall and rebuild, retrospective application for section of new boundary wall. Proposed linked hallway to existing garage.  
Conversion of existing garage.

[P04/V1308](#) - Approved on appeal (15/06/2005)

Proposed garage/pool enclosure and gymnasium.

[P01/V0230](#) - Approved (10/04/2001)

Demolition of existing garage. Extensions and alterations, new main access and driveway.

[P97/V1011](#) -Refused on appeal (01/09/1998)

Erection of a house and garage.

[P95/V1254](#) - Refused (26/09/1996)

Erection of a tractor/implement shed and store.

[P91/V0655](#) - Approved (19/12/1991)

Erection of 2 dormer windows and conversion of existing store/play room over garage to form bed/sitting room, kitchen and shower room.

#### 5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

##### 5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

The following saved policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan are relevant to this application:-

GS1 – Development in Existing Settlements

GS2 – Development in the Countryside

DC1 – Design

DC5 – Access

DC6 – Landscaping

DC7 – Waste Collection and Recycling  
DC8 - Provision of Infrastructure and Services  
DC13 – Flood Risk and Water Run-off  
DC14 – Flood Risk and Water Run-off  
H12 – Development in Smaller Villages  
H15 – Housing Densities  
H17 – Affordable Housing  
HE1 – Conservation Areas  
NE7 – North Vale Corallian Ridge

## 5.2 **The Emerging Local Plan 2031**

The draft local plan 2031 has been through examination and the inspector has produced interim findings. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be attached to relevant policies in the emerging plan subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections, and the degree to which its policies are consistent with the NPPF. At present officers consider that the emerging local plan policies carry limited weight except for the affordable housing policy (core policy 24) which officers consider can be given more weight due to the lack of objection to the policy and the considerable amount of up-to-date evidence that supports it. The relevant core policies from the emerging local plan are as follows:-

1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
3 – Settlement hierarchy  
4 – Meeting housing need  
8 – Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area  
22 – Housing mix  
23 – Housing density  
24 – Affordable housing  
33 – Sustainable Transport and Accessibility  
35 – Public Transport, Cycling and Walking  
37 – Design and Local Distinctiveness  
44 – Landscape  
46 – Conservation and Bio-diversity

## 5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Design Guide (March 2015)

The following sections of the design guide are particularly relevant:-

DG6 – Character study  
DG9 – Site appraisal  
DG23 – Connect with the existing  
DG26 - Density  
DG29 – Development Edge  
DG51 – Scale  
DG63 – Amenity  
DG78 – Landscape character and setting

## 5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework, 2012**

The following paragraphs of the NPPF are particularly relevant:-

14 – the presumption in favour of sustainable development  
17 – core planning principles  
32 – the severe impact test for transport issues  
47 – significant boost to housing supply  
49 – the five year supply

- 50 – the creation of mixed and inclusive communities
- 55 – sustainable housing development in rural areas
- 128 – 138 – heritage assets
- 216 – the weight to be attached to emerging plans

**5.5 Planning Practise Guidance, 2014**

The planning practise guidance includes advice on neighbourhood planning. Paragraphs 082 (41-082-20160211) and 083 (41-083-20160211) relate to the position where a neighbourhood plan is emerging or made and the local planning authority does not have a five year supply of housing. This advice states that the housing supply policies of a neighbourhood plan should be treated in the same way as those of a local plan. In other words, where there is not a five year supply of housing, the housing supply policies of a neighbourhood plan have limited weight and paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged.

**5.6 Neighbourhood Plan**

The draft Longworth Neighbourhood Plan has been to examination and a referendum is due to take place on 18 August 2016. The draft plan can be viewed on the council's website in the planning policy section. The following policies of the draft neighbourhood plan are relevant:-

Policy 1: A Spatial Plan for the Parish – this allows limited infill development inside the built-up areas of the village – the built-up areas are defined as the main centre of the village and the area around the Appleton Road/Harris's Lane junction;

Policy 2: Design – this seeks to ensure that the design of new buildings within the defied built-up areas sustain and enhance the distinctive character of each part of the village and that the design of new buildings outside the built up areas which are in accord with development plan policy is controlled appropriately.

Appendix C of the plan identifies character areas. The Hinton Road/Lodge Lane area is mainly identified as an area where the sense of open spaces and rural atmosphere is most heavily experienced.

The site lies outside the built-up area defined in policy 1. However, as the neighbourhood plan is still in draft form, and yet to be endorsed by referendum, officers consider that limited weight should be attached to it at this point in time. Further, as specified in paragraph 5.5 above, officers consider the status of the neighbourhood plan is also affected by the district's five year supply shortfall.

**6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in the determination of this application are as follows:-

- The Principle of Development and Policy Position
- Locational Credentials
- Design and Layout, Landscape and Visual Impact
- Heritage Impact
- Highway Issues
- Drainage
- Section 106 Contributions

**6.2 The Principle of Development and Policy Position**

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless

material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan currently comprises the saved policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that, where there is a shortfall in the five year supply of housing land, relevant local plan policies for the supply of housing are not up-to-date.

- 6.3 The court decision in *Crane v Secretary of State* (2015) endorsed that it is for the decision-maker to determine how much weight to attach to out-of-date policies depending on the circumstances. The circumstances include the extent to which the policies fall short of providing the requisite five-year supply and the prospect of development soon coming forward to make-up the shortfall. Since the production of the SHMA, which significantly increased the district's housing requirement, officers have advised that the housing supply policies of the adopted local plan (based on much lower housing targets) fall well short of providing a five-year supply, and for this reason have little weight.
- 6.4 The court decision in *Woodcock Holdings v Secretary of State* (2015) established that paragraph 49 of the NPPF applies to policies in a draft neighbourhood plan. The government has acknowledged this in the latest Planning Practise Guidance on neighbourhood plans referred to in paragraph 5.5 above. Moreover the emphasis on the provision of new housing in the NPPF was underlined by the court in *Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council v Gallagher Estates Ltd* (2014), and was stated as being a "radical change" from previous national guidance.
- 6.5 In June the Council received the inspector's Interim Findings on the emerging local plan. Whilst this was a positive step, the Inspectors letter has limited weight particularly in relation to the five year supply of housing. This is because currently the council does not have a five year supply of housing land. Similarly the housing supply policies of the emerging local plan have limited weight and, consequently, so does the weight to be attached to the prospect of new development coming forward soon to make up the shortfall.
- 6.6 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states that decision-makers can give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan
  - The extent to which there are unresolved objections to the plan
  - The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF

The parish council argue that the emerging neighbourhood plan should be given significant weight as it has advanced beyond examination, has no unresolved objections, and complies with the policy framework of the emerging local plan. Officers acknowledge the progress that the neighbourhood plan has made. However officers are mindful that, in the *Woodcock Holdings* decision, the court drew a distinction between the level of evidence testing applied to a local plan at examination, against the objectively assessed housing needs of the district as a whole, and the necessarily lower level of testing applied to a draft neighbourhood plan at examination,

- 6.7 Given the nature of the five year supply shortfall, and the emphasis in the NPPF on boosting housing supply, officers consider that the housing supply policies of the adopted local plan (and the draft neighbourhood plan) have limited weight at this time and paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged. This means that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

- 6.8 Members will be aware of an outline application for up to 13 new houses on the site opposite, The Potting Shed Nursery, which came to committee on 20 April 2016 (ref P15/V2863/O). Committee resolved to grant planning permission. Subsequently this application has been called-in by the secretary of state. A planning inquiry is due to be held on this call-in in due course. In March 2016 the government published a new procedural guide to called-in planning applications. Paragraph 1.6 of this guide states that a local planning authority must make the secretary of state aware of any decision it wishes to take on a similar development. The application qualifies as a similar development. Thus if committee are minded to grant permission the secretary of state will need to be notified.
- 6.9 **Locational Credentials**  
Longworth is defined as a small village in the emerging local plan 2031. As a Smaller Village, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.
- 6.10 In terms of services and facilities it has a primary school, a pub, a village hall, and a church. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF supports sustainable housing development in rural areas where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Objectors argue that existing village facilities will not absorb the impacts of the proposal and point out that the former bus service has now been ended. Longworth village currently consist of approximately 150 dwellings. This proposal will add approximately 6% to the housing stock. Officers consider a development of new housing, constrained in numbers by the relatively small size of the site, would help to support the existing services and facilities in the village, as envisaged by the NPPF, without necessarily causing significant harm to the character of the village
- 6.11 **Design, Layout, Landscape and Visual Impact**  
The proposal faces two roads, Hinton Road and Lodge Lane. The intention behind the design and layout of the Hinton Road frontage is to reflect the distinctive alternating pattern of housing on Rectory Lane, where gable-end walls and conventional front walls follow in repeat succession along the lane. On the Lodge Lane frontage the proposed housing faces the road in a conventional layout. The design and layout has been amended following comments made by the architects' panel and the urban design officer. The proposed houses have been set back from the Hinton Road frontage and the proposed vehicular accesses reduced in width. The materials proposed for the dwellings have been simplified. The designs are reflective of local detailing and are considered to be locally distinctive and of good quality.
- 6.12 The site is currently contained by a mixed hedgerow with some trees. The development will result in the loss of some of the trees and hedgerow to form new access points. The forestry officer has identified three principal trees that should be retained, two oaks and a sweet chestnut. The amendments made to the layout have addressed his early concerns regarding these trees. The proposal includes new tree planting near to the junction and new hedge planting on the roadside and between the proposed houses which can be secured as part of a landscaping scheme. This should provide an ecological off-set for the lost parts of hedge.
- 6.13 Although proposed landscaping will soften the impact of the new housing over time, it is clear that the proposal will significantly change the appearance of the site. Objectors state that the development will harm the tranquil nature of the area. Due to the

presence of surrounding mature hedgerows along Hinton Road and Pinewoods Road, officers consider the impact of the change in appearance will be a localised one, and the development will not have a significant impact on the wider landscape including the North Vale Corallian Ridge.

- 6.14 Officers consider that this more limited visual impact is a key difference between the application proposal and the appeal decision at Cow Lane to which the parish council refers in its objections (ref P13/V0373/FUL). The appeal proposal at Cow Lane was on a site that is significantly more open in terms of views from the road, and thus made a clear contribution as a space to the approach to the village. The current application site is enclosed by mature hedgerows and officers therefore consider it does not fulfil the same function.
- 6.15 **Heritage Impact**  
The southern limit of the conservation area runs south along Rectory Lane and encompasses Squirrel Cottage itself. The proposed extensions to Squirrel Cottage lie within the conservation area while all the proposed housing lies outside. The proposed extensions to Squirrel Cottage are single storey and to the rear and have no impact on the conservation area.
- 6.16 The proposed housing will be seen from within the conservation area and, therefore, will have an effect on its setting. Objectors argue that the change brought about by the development will harm the setting of the conservation area. The council has a legal duty to ensure that new development either preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its setting. The conservation officer has identified the significance of the conservation area as exemplifying a small village with a key positive characteristic being informal development along the roads. The amendments made to the layout of the scheme have introduced more informality which has mitigated its impact on the setting of the conservation area. Officers consider the proposal will not harm the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.17 **Highway Issues**  
The highway safety implications of the proposal have been carefully assessed by the county highways officer. Local objections point to the safety of increased traffic using the local lanes and the new accesses themselves. Members will be aware that the threshold at which the county highways officer can object has been raised in the NPPF to “severe” impact. The county highways officer considers that the amount of traffic generated will be relatively modest and can be accommodated safely on the local network. He considers the proposed level of car parking meets standards and should not lead to dangerous on-street parking. He also considers the new access points can be provided with suitable visibility to meet standards but has requested that the proposed shared access to be used by plot 1 and the converted pool house is widened to 4.1m to enable two vehicles to pass.
- 6.18 As part of the amendments to the proposal, officers have sought to narrow the proposed access points so they appear less engineered and more sympathetic to the rural appearance of the area. As the shared access will only serve two dwellings, officers consider the likelihood to two vehicles arriving to depart and enter at the exact same time is low, and that this does not outweigh the visual harm that will be caused by an overly-wide access. Officers therefore consider the proposed single-width access point is acceptable. The amendments have also secured a proposed new footpath along the site frontage, made from the existing grass verge. The details of this footpath can be secured by condition.
- 6.19 **Drainage**



A flood risk assessment has been submitted. This identifies the site as being within flood zone 1, and therefore not at risk of river flooding. With regard to surface water drainage it is proposed to use a sustainable approach involving permeable surfaces and attenuation if necessary. The drainage engineer has reviewed this information and is satisfied subject to a condition to provide a detailed surface water drainage scheme. It is proposed that foul water is discharged into the existing public sewer in Hinton Road. Thames Water has no objections to the proposal. Thus there are no objections to the drainage implications of the development.

**6.20 Section 106 Contributions**

The county council has requested financial contributions towards bus services on the A420. Other requests for contributions have been ruled out due to pooling restrictions. The district council requires contributions for waste and recycling bins. The contributions are as follows:-

<b>Vale of White Horse DC</b>	Contribution
Waste and recycling bins - £170 per dwelling	£1,700
Monitoring fee	£350
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,050</b>
<b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>	Contribution
Bus services along A420 - £1,000 per dwelling	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,000</b>

**7.0 CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

7.1 In the absence of a five year supply of housing land the housing supply policies of the adopted local plan and the emerging neighbourhood plan are not up-to-date. Therefore paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged. Sustainable development involves three dimensions, economic, social and environmental. The proposal will provide economic gains through employment during the construction of the dwellings and subsequent financial support for local services such as the village pub. It will provide social gains in terms of providing four much needed affordable houses and has potential to support local facilities such as the village school. Environmentally the proposal involves the loss of existing trees and hedges, to be off-set by a net gain in new tree and hedge planting. The impact on the setting of the conservation area is considered to be neutral.

7.2 To conclude, when applying the test in paragraph 14 of the NPPF, officers can identify no significant or demonstrable harm from the proposal that outweighs the identified benefits. Therefore the proposal is considered to amount to sustainable development and the application is recommended for planning permission.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning, subject to:

- i. The notification of the application to the secretary of state and to him deciding not to call-in the application.
- ii. The completion of a Section 106 agreement to secure the affordable housing and financial contributions.
- iii. Conditions as follows:
  1. Time limit.
  2. Approved drawings.
  3. Samples of materials.
  4. Architectural details.
  5. Hard landscaping details.
  6. Boundary treatment details.
  7. New access details.
  8. Parking and turning as shown on approved drawings.
  9. Details of new footpath.
  10. Travel information packs.
  11. Construction traffic management plan.
  12. Details of cycle storage.
  13. Sustainable surface water drainage scheme.
  14. Foul water drainage scheme.
  15. Arboricultural method statement.
  16. Soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and implemented.
  17. Details of refuse storage.

Author: Martin Deans

Email: [martin.deans@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:martin.deans@southandvale.gov.uk)