

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0497/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	28.3.2013
PARISH	NORTH HINKSEY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Eric Batts Debby Hallett
APPLICANT	Bovis Homes
SITE	Land off Lime Road, Botley Oxford Oxfordshire
PROPOSAL	Erection of 136 residential dwellings, infrastructure, open space and associated ancillary structures and buildings.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	448729/205055
OFFICER	Martin Deans

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a reserved matters application for 136 dwellings on a site that is allocated for new housing in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Outline planning permission was granted on 25 February 2013 (PO6/V1269/O). The outline permission included details of access, with all other matters reserved. A site location plan is **attached** as appendix 1.

1.2 The site contains a total of three detached houses and is approximately four hectares in area. It is relatively well contained by existing trees and hedgerows. The north boundary of the site runs along a bridleway and Lime Road. The east and south boundaries lie adjacent to existing housing and to part of the Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill Campus. The west boundary lies alongside sports fields owned by Oxford Brookes. The sports fields and the Harcourt Hill campus lie in the Oxford Green Belt. Levels rise gradually across the site from north-east to south-west.

1.3 The application comes to committee because of the objections raised by North Hinksey Parish Council and a number of local residents.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 As approved at outline stage the main vehicular access will be taken immediately west of the house on Lime Road known as Hillhead. This house will remain as part of the proposal. The proposed housing will be in a mix of 6 x 1-bedroom, 47 x 2-bedroom, 45 x 3-bedroom, 32 x 4-bedroom, 5 x 5-bedroom and 1 x 6-bedroom. Documents have submitted in support of the application include a design and access statement, a transport statement, a drainage strategy, and an ecological appraisal.

2.2 The design and access statement has assessed existing residential areas in Oxford, particularly the Waterways development in west Oxford, and this analysis has informed the design and layout of the proposal. The layout has been designed to reflect the local grain of housing, using a network of primary and secondary streets with focal buildings of greater scale at corners and at the end of vistas to provide legibility. Consequently buildings are mainly two storeys with focal buildings of three storeys. A different external treatment has been used to distinguish buildings in the primary streets from buildings in the secondary streets. Buildings in the primary streets have ashlar render and/or stone detailing, whereas buildings in the secondary streets have simpler brick detailing. Primary external materials are either red brick or render for the walls and plain

tile or artificial slate for the roofs. Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** as appendix 2.

2.3 Affordable housing is proposed in five groups throughout the site. Parking is provided either on plot, on street, or in parking courts that are overlooked by flats-over-garages. Three areas of public open space are also provided across the site.

2.4 The application has been amended in response to concerns raised, principally by the replacement of two four-storey buildings with lower three-storey buildings. The amended plans have been the subject of re-consultation.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 North Hinskey Parish Council – original plans – objects for the reasons **attached** as appendix 3

Amended plans – any comments received will be reported to the meeting.

3.2 Neighbours – original plans - 15 letters of objection have been submitted. The grounds of objection are as follows:-

- The development is too dense and the proposed dwellings are too high
- Loss of privacy from overlooking
- The traffic generated will cause highway safety problems on surrounding roads which suffer from on-street parking and are used by many local schoolchildren at Matthew Arnold school
- The access is in a dangerous location
- The traffic data is out of date
- There are no measures to improve local bus use, eg a bus lay-by
- There should be a vehicular connection with Harcourt Hill campus, particularly for buses, to reduce congestion
- Lack of information about boundary treatments
- There should be measures to ensure no access to the private road part of Yarnells Hill
- Increased noise and disturbance from future residents and their vehicles
- There will be an adverse impact on local drainage and watercourses, including the hydrology of Raleigh Park
- Additional loading on local facilities and services
- The number of dwellings appears to have risen from the outline stage
- Noise and disturbance from construction traffic
- Reduced security from increased use of the bridleway
- The new houses are likely to change the social make-up of the area
- Loss of property value (this is not a material consideration)

Amended plans – any comments received will be reported to the meeting

3.3 Councillor Debby Hallett has raised concerns regarding the height of some of the proposed dwellings, harm to privacy from overlooking, the traffic implications of the proposal, and the potential unneighbourly impact during construction.

3.4 County Engineer has no objections in view of the established outline planning permission

3.5 Environment Agency – no objections

- 3.6 Thames Water – no objections
- 3.7 Drainage Engineer has requested more information which has been submitted – an update on this will be reported to committee
- 3.8 Landscape Officer has concerns regarding the visual impact of the higher proposed buildings on the area and about details of the proposal – the amended plans were being considered at the time of preparing the report and an update on this will be reported to committee
- 3.9 Forestry Officer has requested more information which has been submitted and was being assessed at the time of writing the report – an update on this will be reported to committee
- 3.10 Countryside Officer has no objections subject to conditions
- 3.11 Housing Services – no objection subject to the agreed mix of affordable housing
- 3.12 Waste Management Service – no objection subject to appropriate bin provision and access for refuse vehicles

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P06/V1269/O](#) - Approved (25/02/2013)
Proposed residential development, open space and means of access.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Relevant policies from the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 include policy DC1, which requires all new development to be acceptable in terms of design. Policy DC9 covers the impact of any proposal on neighbours, policy DC5 deals with highway safety, policy DC6 relates to landscaping, policy DC7 covers waste collection, and policy DC8 the impact of new housing on local services and facilities. Policy H3 (v) is the policy that allocated the site for housing. Policy H17 requires 40% of new housing on larger sites to be affordable, and policy H23 seeks to secure 15% of the site area of large housing sites for public open space. Policy DC14 deals with surface water drainage and policy NE1 with ecological appraisals.
- 5.2 National policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework. This strongly supports sustainable development.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The principle of housing on the site has been established by the outline planning permission. Botley is the most sustainable of all large settlements in the Vale due to its direct links with Oxford, a fact that was recognised by the local plan inspector when he decided to allocate this site. The NPPF has introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Officers therefore consider new housing development here is strongly supported by the NPPF.
- 6.2 Local concerns have been raised about whether the application can be considered to be a reserved matters application in light of the fact that the proposed number of dwellings has increased from a figure of 130 suggested at the outline stage to 136. The outline planning permission was for residential development and the number of dwellings was not specified. Officers' investigations have shown that a relatively small increase in the number of houses between the outline and reserved matters stage does not undermine the original outline planning permission. Therefore officers consider that the application is a reserved matters application and that the principle of the housing

has been established. A section 106 agreement accompanied the outline planning permission and ensures that 40% of the new housing is affordable and captures financial contributions towards local facilities and services. These matters aside, the main issues are the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; the impact on neighbours; and access and parking.

- 6.3 Regarding the first issue, officers have considered the rationale contained in the design and access statement and the submitted layout and house types. The site was allocated for housing in the adopted local plan and policy required a density of 40 dwellings per hectare to ensure efficient use of land. The applicants secured the site on this basis and argue that, to achieve this density on the site, and to devote 15% of the site to public open space in accordance with policy H23, some three storey buildings are necessary. The original plans showed two buildings of four storeys but these have been amended to three storeys following objections. None of the proposed buildings are now higher than three storeys.
- 6.4 The site does occupy a sensitive position, on a plateau at the top of the hill containing the Elms Rise estate. Approximately 600 metres east of the site is Raleigh Park, from which clear views of Oxford can be obtained. Concern has been expressed over the visual impact of the proposed three storey buildings on the area, and on the landscape setting of Oxford. The proposed three storey buildings are mainly located on the primary street to provide focal points at corners and at the ends of vistas. Officers have investigated the degree to which these three storey buildings will be visible, particularly from Oxford. The local topography falls quite sharply to the north and east, which curtails views of the site from nearby viewpoints such as Raleigh Park. From Oxford the area of the site is not visible generally, but it is visible from elevated view points such as Carfax Tower.
- 6.5 Carfax Tower is approximately two miles from the site. From here, looking west, houses on the Elms Rise estate are clearly visible on the hill slope. The woods on Raleigh Park are also clearly visible, as are some detached houses that sit amongst the trees. The slopes above Raleigh Park, on the line of sight to the application site, appear more densely covered by woods and the visual ridgeline is marked by a line of mature poplar trees. These poplar trees lie on the west boundary of the sports fields at Harcourt Hill campus, approximately 200 metres west of the application site, and the base of their trunks lie at approximately the same elevation as the higher part of the application site. The application site therefore sits in front of these trees when viewed from Carfax Tower. The poplars are approximately 20 – 25 metres tall. The proposed two storey buildings on the application site are typically eight metres tall, while the proposed three storey buildings are between 11 and 12 metres tall, a difference of three or four metres. Accounting for the relatively very small distance between the site and the poplar trees, when seen from Carfax Tower, officers consider that the ridges of the proposed three storey buildings will sit significantly below the tops of the poplars, and will not break the skyline. Some of the proposed buildings, particularly the roofs, are likely to be visible, but the density of the woods on the upper slopes means they are likely to provide an effective screen for much of the proposed housing. Consequently the visual effect is likely to be similar to that of the rest of the slope, that of housing seen amongst trees. From this assessment officers consider that the degree to which the proposed three storey buildings will be visible, compared to the proposed two storey buildings, is not sufficient to warrant refusal of the application on the grounds that it will cause harm to the setting of Oxford. Given the sensitivity of this issue, however, a slab level condition for all dwellings is considered to be prudent
- 6.6 Local views from the west are mainly obtained from the adjacent playing fields, or across these fields from the adjoining section of Lime Road. The existing substantial

tree and hedgerow in the north and west boundaries of the site will provide effective screening from this direction. Local views from the north will be largely screened by the existing houses on Lime Road.

- 6.7 From examination of the design and access statement, and the scheme in general, officers consider the proposal to be of high design quality. The differentiation between the treatment of buildings in the primary street and secondary streets is welcome and adds to the legibility of the overall development. Public facing boundaries to back gardens will be treated with brick walling, and street trees will be used to enhance the visual appearance of the public highway within the site. The existing line of mature trees and hedgerow on the north and west boundaries, which are a positive feature of the site, will be retained. The areas of public open space are spread throughout the site and, following amendments to the proposal, have a satisfactory level of surveillance. A total of 54 affordable housing units are proposed, which equates to 40%, and officers consider the proposed areas of affordable housing are spread across the site to an acceptable degree.
- 6.8 The second issue is the impact on neighbours. Existing housing surrounds three sides of the site, in Lime Road and Yarnells Hill. The layout has been designed to ensure that the distances between the proposed houses and the existing houses obey the council's adopted minimum standards to ensure privacy, and will not lead to harmful levels of overshadowing. A surface water drainage strategy has been submitted and further details were being considered at the time of writing the report. An update on this will be reported to committee.
- 6.9 The third issue is access and parking. The location of the main vehicular access from Lime Road was approved at the outline stage. The impact of additional traffic from the development was also assessed at this time and is considered to be acceptable. The level of parking within the site meets adopted standards for this type of sustainable location. The issue of a bus link from the adjacent Oxford Brookes campus through the site was raised at the time of the outline application. At that time, committee agreed that, although a link would be desirable, it would be unreasonable to require the applicants to commit to providing one. The applicants consider that the proposed layout of the site near to the boundary with the campus is not conducive to a bus route, but have provided a pedestrian and cycle link to help with movement to and from the campus. Officers consider that this is reasonable. The county engineer has carefully considered the scheme and has no objections subject to conditions.
- 6.10 With regard to other matters raised, officers consider there is no reason to assume that noise and disturbance from the site will be abnormally high, or that security of surrounding houses will be materially affected. Noise and disturbance during construction is a matter to be controlled through environmental health legislation. A condition requiring a construction management plan is suggested to minimise disruption to local traffic during the construction stage.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The principle of housing has been approved by the outline planning permission. The design and layout of the proposal is considered to be of high quality and the impact of the proposal on its surroundings is considered to be acceptable. Neighbours' levels of privacy and amenity will be protected in accordance with the council's adopted standards, and the impact on highway safety is considered to be acceptable. Consequently the proposal accords with relevant policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

i) It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning, in consultation with the chairman of the committee, subject to the expiry of the consultation period on the amended plans, the receipt of no new substantive objections, meeting the deadline in the planning performance agreement, and to the following conditions:-

TL1 – Time Limit Reserved Matters
MC2 - Samples of materials
RE7 - Boundary treatment in accordance with plan
RE14 – Slab levels
HY12 – Parking in accordance with plan
HY16 – Adoption of carriageways
HY19 Drainage to highway
MC32 Construction management plan
LS2 – Landscaping
LS5 – Tree Protection
MC24 Surface and foul water drainage
MC28 Sustainable drainage

INFORMATIVE

The applicant is advised that the maximum number of dwellings approved by this planning permission is 136.

ii) It is also recommended that authority to refuse the application is delegated to the head of planning, in consultation with the chairman, if timely progress is not achieved and the deadline in the planning performance agreement cannot be met.

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