

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0631/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	27.3.2013
PARISH	WEST HANNEY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Matthew Barber
APPLICANT	Mr Alan Cottrell
SITE	Land at Priors Court Farm Church Street West Hanney Wantage, OX12 0LW
PROPOSAL	Erection of six dwellings (resubmission).
AMENDMENTS	Received 19.08.13
GRID REFERENCE	440445/192740
OFFICER	Laura Hudson

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application relates to land at Priors Court Farm, West Hanney. The site forms a small level paddock located on the southern edge of the village contained by mature hedgerows on all sides and adjacent to the existing residential area on the northern and western site boundaries. The eastern site boundary lies adjacent to an access track which provides a secondary access to Priors Court Farm.

1.2 The site is outside the village conservation area but falls within the lowland vale as defined on the local plan proposals map. The access track also serves as a public right of way.

1.3 The application comes to Committee due to an objection from West Hanney Parish Council and nine letters of objection have been received from local residents.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of six dwellings accessed from the adjacent access to the farm. The application has been submitted to address the Councils five year supply deficit.

2.2 The proposed dwellings would be arranged around a central courtyard taking on the appearance of a former converted farmyard with barn style dwellings of traditional proportions and single storey projections. The properties consist of three five bedroom dwellings, one four bedroom dwelling and two two bedroom units.

2.3 The access track would be widened for a short section adjacent to the site to 4.8 metres to enable vehicles to pass. The proposal also includes improvements to the visibility splays where the access track meets Church Street.

2.4 The application includes two affordable dwellings which equates to 40% as required by Policy H17.

2.5 The proposal includes off street parking within the site for all the dwellings providing four spaces for the four and five bedroom houses and two spaces for the two bedroom houses.

2.6 A previous application for four dwellings on the site was withdrawn due to concerns over the design, layout, lack of affordable housing and lack of improvements to the site access.

2.7 Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** at Appendix 1.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 West Hanney Parish Council – Objects “primarily on the grounds of safety. Access to the development is via a very narrow road where there is no room for passing vehicles and the route is also designated a footpath. Furthermore we are concerned about the impact of the development on flooding, in particular the proposed development land and Church Street itself already experience significant standing water during periods of heavy rain.”

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) - No objections. Previous concerns on the withdrawn scheme have been addressed by widening the lane adjacent to the site and improving visibility onto Church Street. Sufficient levels of parking and appropriate turning space are proposed within the development. Conditions recommended.

Conservation Officer Vale – The scheme contains a variety of dwelling sizes and styles and has been designed to resemble a traditional farm courtyard, a design solution appropriate to the sites location. Would prefer not to see a gated access to the development. Recommend planning permission subject to conditions in relation to details and materials.

Landscape Architect - Vale of White Horse DC – The site is located in the Lowland Vale which seeks to protect the long open views within or across the area. The site would be predominantly viewed from the local footpath network to the south and would be seen in the context of the existing housing and building which are located to the north. Whilst there would be a local visual impact this would not justify refusal.

Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) – The main habitat on the site is grassland which is of poor quality and would not be classified as a priority habitat. The loss of the small section of hedgerow to facilitate the access is not significant. The Walnut tree may be suitable for roosting bats and contains several woodpecker holes however it is shown to be retained. An informative is recommended in relation to the need for a licence if bats are affected by the development.

Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) – Initial request for a full tree survey. This has been carried out and shows that the removal of a section of hedgerow and some trees will have a limited impact. Concerns over the proximity of plot 4 to the Walnut tree and amended plans are awaited to address this concern. An update will be provided at the meeting.

Thames Water Development Control - No objections.

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – No objections subject to standard conditions requiring further details.

Housing Dev. (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse DC) - No objections. The scheme provides 40% affordable and the proposal for two bedroom units is appropriate. A S106 Agreement should be entered into to secure the provision.

Waste Management Officer (District Council) - No objections. Contributions of £170 per units for bin provision – total requirement £1020.

Provision of street name plates – contribution required of £213.60 (including

installation.)

Nine letters of objections have been received from neighbouring properties raising the following concerns:

- Concerns over increase traffic given the narrow lane from the Green to the Church.
- The field floods therefore concerns over where the water will go once the houses are built.
- Church Street floods and the proposal will add to this.
- The village cannot take any more houses.
- The school is filled to capacity.
- Public transport in the area is poor.
- The Highway Officer objected to the previous application.
- The access lane is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass.
- The access lane is a public footpath and additional use will be dangerous.
- The proposal will increase the village boundary – all development should be within the village boundary.
- The field is regularly used by wildlife.
- The sewage system cannot cope with additional dwellings.
- The proposal would result in the loss of peace and tranquillity to the area.
- The number of houses proposed in the village far exceeds the number set out in the IHSP (this is no longer relevant).

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V1910/FUL](#) - Withdrawn (04/02/2013)
Erection of four dwellings.

[P10/V0390](#) - Approved (21/04/2010)

Demolition of existing modern farm buildings. Conversion and alteration of existing timber framed barn to form a 5-bed dwellinghouse. Conversion of existing open-fronted cartshed to form a garage and store. Conversion of part of existing covered walkway to provide a garden room. Erection of new stone boundary walls to demarcate garden areas to north and south of proposed dwelling.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

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

Policy H13 lists West Hanney as one of the smaller villages in the district suitable for new residential development on sites capable of accommodating not more than four small dwellings within the built-up area of the village.

Policy GS2 indicates that outside the built-up areas of settlements new building will not be permitted unless it is on land identified for development or is in accordance with other specific policies.

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 for schemes of more than five dwellings in villages.

Policy NE9 refers to development in the Lowland Vale stating that it will not be permitted if it would have an adverse impact on the landscape particularly the long open views across the area.

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 length 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.

Paragraphs 47 – 49 require local planning authorities to identify a five year supply of housing sites. Where this cannot be demonstrated relevant local plan policies for new housing development should not be considered up-to-date until the shortfall is rectified.

5.3 The *Residential Design Guide* was adopted in December 2009. This sets out minimum distances between properties in order to protect residential amenity. Guidance is also provided on good site layouts recommending courtyards as providing defensible space and relating well to existing development by not backing immediately onto it. The guidance also recommends development responds to its setting and provides examples of details found in the local area which can be incorporated into the development including appropriate materials.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues to consider in determining this application are: i) The principle of the proposed development in this location in relation to planning policy; ii) the design of the proposed development and its landscape and visual impact; iii) impact on neighbouring properties; iv) access and highway safety considerations; and v) drainage issues.

6.2 *Principle of the proposed development*

The site currently consists of undeveloped paddock land located to the south of the main built-up area of the village. Although the site is visually well contained and relates well to the existing settlement pattern with residential development on two sides, the land falls clearly beyond the existing built up area of the village and is considered to form part of the open countryside in planning terms. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies H12, GS1 and GS2 of the adopted local plan.

6.3 However, the council does not currently have a five year supply of housing land, as required by paragraphs 47 – 49 of the NPPF. Where the council does not have a five year supply of housing land, the relevant local plan housing policies, including policies H12, GS1 and GS2, are not wholly consistent with the NPPF and, therefore, hold limited weight. The NPPF makes clear that, where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies out of date, planning permission should be granted unless

any adverse impacts would demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. The proposed development, therefore, must be considered on its site specific merits and, in particular, whether it constitutes a sustainable form of development as defined in the NPPF.

6.4 West Hanney is classified as a smaller village within the adopted local plan and the more recent village hierarchy assessment on the basis that the village itself has very limited services and facilities. However, the village is located a short walk from East Hanney, a large village with a range of facilities including a shop and school located in close proximity to West Hanney. The NPPF encourages sustainable development in rural areas including where there are groups of smaller villages where development in one village may support services in a village nearby (para 55). On this basis it is considered that a proposed development of this scale in West Hanney would be considered sustainable in terms of proximity to local services and facilities when balanced against the shortfall in housing supply.

6.5 *Design and visual impact*

The site currently forms an area of paddock land outside the built-up area of the village. However, the site adjoins existing residential development on two sides to the north and west and is visually well contained on all sides by a mature hedgerow. The site, therefore, is distinctly separate from the more open farmland beyond. The proposed development is relatively low density amounting to only 15 dwellings per hectare and the majority of the surrounding hedgerow in addition to the mature Walnut tree would be retained. This, coupled with its location set against the existing village development, would help reduce its prominence from the surrounding landscape.

6.6 The council's landscape officer considers that the proposal would have a limited impact on the long open views within the lowland vale and that refusal on landscape grounds could not be justified.

6.7 In terms of design the proposed dwellings would be arranged around a central courtyard emulating a former farmyard to reflect the sites rural setting. The maximum height of the proposal is two storeys with single storey projections to provide some articulation and reduce the overall scale when viewed from the wider area.

6.8 The previous application for four dwellings proposed a much more suburban layout which was criticised by the Architects Panel who suggested a more rural form such as a courtyard, hence the current proposal.

6.9 *Impact on residential amenity*

The closest existing dwellings to the site are located to the north fronting Church Street with relatively long gardens backing onto the site. Plots 1 and 6 are located at right angles to the site boundary although the subservient element to plot 6 runs parallel to the boundary. Plot 6 is approximately 30 metres away from the rear wall of the neighbouring properties and Plot 1, 38 metres so well in excess of the minimum distance set out in Council Design Guidance.

6.10 Plot 6 backs on to the neighbour to the west of the site, however this neighbouring property sits in a generous curtilage and there is a mature hedgerow along the common boundary. The rear of plot 6 sits around 13 metres from the boundary which is considered acceptable.

6.11 The proposal is considered acceptable in residential amenity terms and complies with

Policy DC9 of the adopted Local Plan which is fully consistent with the NPPF and the adopted residential design guide.

6.12 *Highway safety*

The site would be accessed via the existing farm track with some improvement to meet the requirements of the County Engineer. The improvements include greater visibility splays where the access meets Church Street facilitated by removing the hedge to the east. In addition the proposal includes widening the access on land within the applicants ownership adjacent to the site to allow for vehicles to pass each other. Whilst a 48 metre section running between Hainwood and Sunrise Cottage would remain as existing, the County Engineer has raised no objections given the relatively small number of additional traffic movements created by the proposal and the other improvements proposed.

6.13 Within the site, the houses would be arranged around a central courtyard from which off street parking would be provided for each dwelling. The two bedroom units would each have a car port space with additional space in front, the four bedroom unit has a double car port with two spaces in front and the five bedroom properties would all benefit from a double car port and two spaces in front. The parking provision more than meets County Standards for this location and there is sufficient turning within the courtyard.

6.14 Concern has been raised over pedestrian safety given the public footpath status of the access, however, again the County Engineer is satisfied the proposal would not result in pedestrian and vehicle conflict given the relatively modest nature of the development.

6.15 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with adopted Policy DC5 which is fully consistent with the NPPF.

6.16 *Drainage*

Concern has been raised over the surface and foul water drainage and the impact on existing flooding problems in the area. The site is not classified as an area at risk of flooding therefore the Environment Agency have not commented on the application. However the Council Drainage Engineer has raised no objections subject to the submission of further details by condition to ensure that the site is effectively drained and does not lead to flooding elsewhere. In addition Thames Water has raised no objections in relation to capacity in the local area to cater for an additional six dwellings both in terms of foul drainage capacity and water supply. Refusal on these grounds could not therefore be justified.

6.17 *Ecology*

Concerns have been raised over the impact of wildlife on the site however the Councils ecologist has confirmed that the site is not priority habitat. Whilst the Walnut tree has some ecological value this is proposed to be retained and an informative is recommended to ensure that bat roosting areas are not affected.

6.18 *Contributions and deliverability*

The application includes 40% affordable housing in accordance with local plan policy H17 and the applicants have agreed to provide the bin and street naming contributions. Given the small scale nature of the development, the County Council have not requested any contributions to education or other county services and facilities. The site is deliverable and, therefore, would help contribute to the current housing land

supply shortfall. A one year permission from the date of the decision is recommended to ensure the development is delivered quickly.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 It is accepted that the application does not accord with the development plan, however in light of the current housing land shortfall the proposal has to be assessed against the NPPF. The proposed development lies adjacent to the existing built-up area of the village and has been designed to have a limited impact on the character of the area. The facilities of East Hanney, one of the larger villages in the District, are within easy reach of the proposed development.

7.2 It is considered that the proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development within the definition of the NPPF, and the housing can be delivered quickly to help address the current housing land shortfall.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to a S106 agreement to secure the affordable housing and contributions to bin provision and street naming, and subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : TL1 - time limit - full application (full)
- 2 : Approved plans
- 3 : HY2[I] - access in accordance with specified plan(f)
- 4 : HY7[I] - car parking in accordance with plan (full)
- 5 : HY11[I] - turning space in accordance with specified plan (full)
- 6 : LS1 - landscaping scheme (submission) (full)
- 7 : LS2[I] - ;andscaping scheme (Implement) (full)
- 8 : LS4 - tree protection (full)
- 9 : MC2 - materials (samples) (full)
- 10 : MC9 - building details to be submitted (full)
- 11 : MC24 - drainage details (surface and foul) (full)
- 12: Sustainable drainage system deteails to be submitted
- 13 : RE6 - boundary details to be submitted (details not shown)(full)
- 14 : RE17 - slab Levels to be submitted (dwellings) (full)

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