

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0458/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	7.3.2013
PARISH	BLEWBURY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Janet Shelley
APPLICANT	Albright Dene Ltd
SITE	Chailey House Bessels Way Blewbury Didcot, OX11 9NJ
PROPOSAL	Outline application for demolition of existing bungalow. Erection of 30 dwellings comprising, 4x1 bed flats, 3x2 bed flats, 8x3 bed homes and 3x4 bed houses (open market housing), 1x2 bed flat, 8x2 bed houses, 2x3 bed houses and 1x4 bed houses (affordable housing), extension to existing access, improvements to Bridus Way and provision of open space including 'Leap'.
AMENDMENTS	19 June 2013
GRID REFERENCE	453496/186265
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for a residential development for 30 dwellings. Access, layout, scale and appearance are due to be considered at this stage with only landscaping being a reserved matter.
- 1.2 The 1.46 ha site lies on the northern edge of the village to the rear of properties on Whites Orchard, Bridus Mead, and the Ladycroft caravan park. It is relatively flat and comprises the existing house and gardens of Chailey House and a grassed field to the west, all partially enclosed by hedgerows with trees and post and rail fencing. Access is proposed from the existing point, via Whites Orchard. The whole of the site lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB and a BOAT (Bridus Way) runs along the south east side of the site.
- 1.3 The application comes to committee because the application is a departure from the development plan and a number of objections have been received along with an objection from Blewbury Parish Council.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is a major development submitted to help address the council's current five year housing land deficit.
- 2.2 The scheme comprises 30 dwellings and flats with a mix of one, two, three, and four bedroom units, 40% of which will be affordable. The scheme has been developed with reference to the principles of the council's residential design guide and the proposed housing has been designed in a traditional style to reflect local vernacular found in the village. The dwellings are predominantly two storeys arranged around three cul-de-sacs at a density of 20.5 dwellings per hectare. Public open space is provided on site, together with a locally equipped area of play (LEAP).
- 2.3 Blewbury village has a range of facilities, including a school, village hall and shops and is classified as a large village in the local plan. The parish has approximately 714

households and an estimated population of 1581 residents. This proposal would result in an estimated additional 72 residents (based upon the district-wide average household figure of 2.409), which represents approximately a 4.55% increase in the parish population.

2.4 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the council's website:

- Planning statement
- Design and access statement
- Transport statement
- Flood risk assessment
- Arboricultural report
- Ecology assessment
- Sewer Impact Study

2.5 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to secure on-site facilities such as public open space and affordable housing and to agree levels of financial contribution towards off-site services to mitigate the impact this proposal will have on those services through the increase in population. The following contributions have been requested:

Vale

- Waste bin provision – £5,100
- Art – £9,000
- Street naming – £460.80
- Recreation – £58,144

County

- Transport (Science Vale UK) – £82,110
- Transport (vehicle activated sign on B4016) – £6,500
- Transport (to enhance the bus service to Didcot) – £30,000
- Education (towards expansion of the village primary school) – £88,904
- Education (secondary schools) – £118,758
- Education (sixth form) – £23,752
- Education (special educational needs schools) – £4,673
- Property (libraries, youth support service, waste management, museum resource centre, social / health care) – £19,781

2.6 A site location plan and extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 1. The plans have been amended to take account of officer comments in relation to trees and the location of the LEAP.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Blewbury Parish Council** – objection. A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 2.

3.2 **Local residents** – A total of 43 representations of objection have been received from local residents together with a round robin letter (32 copies), and comments from Ladycroft Park residents association. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Access and highway safety
- Traffic generation
- Inadequate on site parking
- Drainage capacity and flood risk

- Impact on AONB
- Impact on public views / character of the village
- Too urban in scale and density for a rural location
- Design is not high quality
- Lack of sustainable / energy efficient measures
- Neighbour amenity impacts – loss of privacy, security, and over dominance
- Impact on wildlife
- Increased pressure on local infrastructure
- Precedent

3.3 **County Highways** – no objection, subject to conditions and financial contributions.

3.4 **Landscape Architect** – Original comments: “The proposed site is to the north of the village and is visually relatively well contained. There is an important native hedgerow with trees along the western section of the northern boundary which is to be retained. There is an existing conifer hedge along the north eastern edge of this boundary which does provide a good screen but is not native. There is no information about how the hedgerow and trees will be protected during construction and how they will be managed later. 2. What is the treatment of the various boundaries, will they be fenced and how? This will have a visual impact especially along the southern boundary from the Caravan Park and Bridus Way. 3. There are existing overhead cables which run over plot 14C south to the pedestrian access at Bridus Way, are these to be removed? 4. Some of the plots are located very close to the boundary and existing planting especially along Bridus Way, plot 2B, 3-6A, 21F, can they be moved back? 5. Root protection zone for Poplar T19, on corner position of northern boundary is 15m radius. This means the root protection area comes out beyond the building line of plot 28C and 29C. This is an important tree within the development, can the dwellings be moved back out of the tree protection zone, how will it be protected during construction? 6. The LEAP is proposed within 10m of plot 30D. It is generally recommended that play areas are located 20m from dwellings. The LEAP could be relocated just south of the path which cuts across the open space and meets the public footpath adjacent to the western boundary. This would ensure it was 20m away from plot 30D and static caravan 11 in Ladycroft Caravan Park. 7. Some of the gardens look small 2B, 16B and 3-6A but assume these are related to flats.”

Amended comments: “The proposed play area has been located further away from the houses as recommended which is good. The amended plan, Site Plan P01g, is acceptable.”

3.5 **Arboriculturalist** – no objection, subject to conditions.

3.6 **Countryside Officer** – no objection.

3.7 **Environment Agency** – no objection.

3.8 **Thames Water** – An initial investigation has identified an inability of the existing water supply and waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. If planning permission is granted, Thames Water recommends a 'Grampian' condition is imposed requiring a drainage strategy to be completed.

3.9 **Drainage Engineer** – The impact study report identifies a solution to the capacity issue on the foul water sewer and has identified an off-site solution to cater for the proposed development. Therefore, with this additional information, I confirm that my holding objection can be removed subject to conditions.

- 3.10 **Housing Services** – no objection, the affordable housing is being provided in accordance with the council's policies.
- 3.11 **Waste Management Team** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins per plot to be provided and financial contribution for supply of bins.
- 3.12 **Lesiure Services** – Maintenance of open space areas should be clarified and secured either by adoption by the parish council or through a management company. Financial contributions required for off site sports provision.
- 3.13 **Thames Valley Police** – No objection subject to proposal achieving 'secured by design' accreditation.
- 3.14 **County Funding Officer** – Financial contributions required.
- 3.15 **County Councillor Stewart Lilly** – "I am the current County Councillor for Blewbury. Bessels Way (B4016) is a well used local highway and carries a large volume of traffic. In the past few years the OCC officers have had to modify the speed limits for this road and I am constantly receiving communications of speeding. As the Highway officer has commented significant Highway modifications (inc chicane, and/or VAS equipment is essential as the vision at the point of access to this proposed scheme is very poor and wider (& probably 3rd party land is required) to make the proposed junction safe. Likewise, having lived in this area for over 25 years I am very conscious of the unusually high water table that exists in the village of Blewbury. This has been demonstrated in recent months as a result of excess rain that Thames Water & OCC have had to deploy tankers into the village to take away excess water (both storm & foul) to ensure that homes were not flooded. After some 5 weeks this action remains in place. Until a more satisfactory and proper engineering solution, can be found, and the shortfall of the current highway situation can be resolved, I have to support the Parish Council in their plight for this application to be refused."

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P09/V1297](#) - Approved (02/09/2009)

Retrospective application for the erection of a polytunnel on paddock area behind the dwelling.

[P04/V0763](#) - Approved (15/06/2004)

Erection of a conservatory.

[P97/V0814](#) - Approved (22/07/1997)

Convert existing integral garage into bedroom with extension to rear and erection of detached garage.

[P81/V0534/RM](#) - Approved (15/04/1981)

Erection of a bungalow and double garage.

[P79/V0440/O](#) - Refused (10/03/1980) - Approved on appeal (05/12/1980)

Erection of a dwelling.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements

GS2 - Development in the Countryside

- DC1 - Design
- DC3 - Design against crime
- DC4 - Public art
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- DC7 - Waste collection and recycling
- DC8 - The Provision of infrastructure and services
- DC9 - The impact of development on neighbouring uses
- H11 - Development in the larger villages
- H13 - Development elsewhere
- H16 - Size of Dwelling and lifetime homes
- H17 - Affordable housing
- H23 - Open Space in new housing development
- NE6 - The North Wessex Downs area of outstanding natural beauty

5.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance (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
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play are a set of 12 core planning principles, the following of which are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Be genuinely plan led
- ii. Not simply be about scrutiny, but be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
- iii. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- iv. Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it
- v. Support the transition to a low carbon future, taking account of flood risk and encourage the reuse of existing resources
- vi. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- vii. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, wealth, and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

5.4 In delivering sustainable development, the framework sets out a variety of detailed guidance and the following sections are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Supporting a prosperous rural economy – promoting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages
- ii. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes – housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered to be up to date if a five year supply of deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated.
- iii. Requiring good design – achieving high quality and inclusive design to contribute positively to making places better for people.
- iv. Promoting healthy communities – planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities along with access to high quality open spaces.

- v. Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding – managing risks through suitable adaptation measures to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- vi. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – protect and enhance valued landscapes, minimising impacts on biodiversity, seek to use poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality and place great weight on conserving landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National advice

- 6.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that councils should grant planning permission where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date. This is unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole (Para 14 refers).
- 6.2 The current lack of a five-year supply of housing sites in the district is due to the lack of delivery of new housing by developers, rather than an under-supply of allocated housing land. This lack of delivery is primarily due to delays in the progress of some major allocations due to the economic downturn and bringing forward the council's new local plan. This lack of a five-year housing land supply requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF when assessing applications that do not accord with local plan policy.
- 6.3 This approach is necessary for a limited time, and is aimed at identifying sites suitable to address the housing shortfall whilst meeting the relevant sustainability and design criteria of the NPPF.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 This assessment needs to balance the desire of the council to assess the scheme through a strategic sites allocation process against the NPPF tests, which primarily relate to location, design, landscape impact, drainage, and highway safety.

Use of land

- 6.6 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states, "*planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.*" The site is presently in agricultural use, so it is not brown field land. This green field site lies in the open countryside and the North Wessex Downs AONB, albeit on the edge of Blewbury. Thus, the development of the site for housing is contrary to Policy H11. However, as indicated above, this is not a restricting factor given the shortfall in housing land.

Sustainability credentials

- 6.7 Blewbury is one of the larger villages within the district and scores within the top 20 in the village hierarchy. The location of the residential site is considered to be reasonably close to the range of services and facilities available within the village. In addition, the NPPF puts strong emphasis on housing being used to further enhance rural vitality and the proposal would help to ensure the long term provision of existing facilities. Officers consider the proposed site is a sustainable location for housing development.

Access / Highways

- 6.8 The site would be accessed from Whites Orchard via its existing access. This is considered to be acceptable, together with the amended off-site highway improvements proposed in the locality. There is sufficient off street parking to meet the needs of each dwelling within the site along with turning areas.
- 6.9 Local concern has been expressed that the proposal would cause traffic congestion. However, there are no objections from the County Engineer on traffic generation or highway safety grounds.

Visual impact / Design

- 6.10 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that “*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*”. Despite the site being located within the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is adjacent to an existing built up area of the village. It is visually well contained and the council’s landscape architect is of the view that the local landscape will not be harmed by the proposed development. From the wider landscape, the proposed development would be set against the backdrop of the existing built-up area and would not appear prominent in the landscape or out of keeping. Consequently, the natural beauty of the AONB would be conserved.
- 6.11 In terms of treatment of boundaries, this can be dealt with at the reserved matters stage with a view to minimising the impact of the development on wider views from the footpath network. In terms of the impact on the views from existing nearby housing this is considered to be acceptable. Although these properties currently enjoy an open outlook across the site, the protection of a private view is not a material planning consideration.
- 6.12 The NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design in terms of layout and building form as a key aspect of sustainable development. The proposed layout is considered to be acceptable observing many principles of the council’s residential design guide, with active street frontages and good visual linkages. Each dwelling is considered to sit comfortably within its plot and sufficient outdoor amenity space and on-site parking is provided for each. Their design is considered to be high quality, with the use of sympathetic materials, pitched roofs and traditional gables. Overall, the scheme is considered to be visually acceptable and is not an overdevelopment of the site. However, to ensure the quality of the development, conditions relating to materials, boundary treatments, landscaping and tree protection are considered to be necessary.

Impact on the residential amenity of neighbours

- 6.13 The proposed residential development would not have any harmful impact on residential amenity of adjacent houses in terms of noise and disturbance, overshadowing, over-dominance or loss of privacy and security. Amenity standards within the council’s residential design guide have been observed. Officers consider the proposal is thus acceptable in amenity terms.

Drainage and flooding issues

- 6.14 The site is considered large enough to deal with surface water without causing surface water runoff to the highway or onto neighbouring properties and can be controlled through planning conditions.
- 6.15 In respect of foul drainage, the new dwellings will be connected to the main sewer, which is acceptable in principle. However, Thames Water has identified a capacity issue with the existing system and the applicants are in continuing discussions with them on the appropriate drainage strategy to overcome the technical / engineering

issues with the existing system. In response, a sewer impact study has been produced which identifies a solution to the capacity issue on the foul water sewer and has identified an off site solution to cater for the proposed development. Officers are confident the required measures can be delivered within the lifetime of the permission and the drainage engineer raises no objection to the proposal, subject to the detailed design being approved (by condition).

Affordable housing

- 6.16 The affordable housing requirement has been confirmed by the applicant to be workable as part of the scheme and the council's housing officer has no objection to the proposal. Affordable housing is located in both cul-de-sacs and affordable unit locations within the development are acceptable. This provision will be secured through a legal agreement should the recommendation of approval be agreed.

Social infrastructure

- 6.17 Concerns have been raised that existing social and physical infrastructure within the village could not cope with the proposed increase in population resulting from this proposal. However, contributions (as detailed in section 2) can be secured to offset the impacts arising from the development. The applicant has agreed to the principle of addressing these needs through contributions which can be secured through a section 106 legal agreement.

Precedent

- 6.18 With regard to precedent, whilst this can be material where other sites suitable for similar development can be identified in the locality, members will be aware that each proposal must be considered on its own merits. Officers consider, therefore, that the issue of precedent is not such as to warrant refusal of this application.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal does not accord with the development plan and has been publicised as a departure. However, in the light of the current shortfall in the council's five year housing land supply, the proposal's location adjoining an existing larger village with close availability of services and facilities should be afforded appropriate weight. As the proposal would result in a sustainable development in terms of its relationship and proximity to local facilities and services, the principle of the proposal is considered to accord with the NPPF.
- 7.2 In site specific terms, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the landscape character of the area, the residential amenity of nearby properties, any local heritage assets, highway safety or flood risk and, therefore, given the current housing land shortfall, it complies with the NPPF.
- 7.3 In addition, the scheme can be delivered within one year, making a measurable contribution to help address the current housing land shortfall. A condition requiring the commencement of development within one year of the date of the grant of planning permission is recommended and is acceptable to the applicant.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 To grant planning permission subject to:

1. Completion within the agreed PPA period of section 106 agreements for on-site affordable housing provision, on site open space provision, contributions towards off-site facilities and services including highways works, education improvements, waste management and collection, street names signs, public art, library and museum service, social and health care, local and area hub recreational and community facility

improvements.

2. The following conditions, including the requirement for the commencement of development within 12 months from the date of the issue of planning permission to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:

- 1 : UNIQUE – 12 month commencement date (outline apps)
- 2 : OL2 - standard OL condition (landscape)
- 3 : Approved plans
- 4 : MC2 - materials (samples) (full)
- 5 : LS1 landscape
- 6 : LS4 trees
- 7 : LS5[I] - retain exist. hedgerow/trees bound (full)
- 8 : LS6 - mainten. of open space/Play areas (full)
- 9 : boundaries
- 10 : Prior to the commencement of the development, a drainage strategy (both surface water and sewage) of the development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the district planning authority. This shall be developed in accordance with the revised flood risk assessment rev C dated 27/03/13 and the foul water impact study produced by Thames Water ref:X4503-512 v1.0. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of any dwelling to which the scheme relates.
- 11 : Prior to the occupation of the development, a sustainable drainage system (suds) shall be implemented in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the district planning authority.
- 12 : HY2[I] - access in accord.with specified plan (F)
- 13 : parking
- 14 : RE11 - garage accommodation (full)
- 15 : construction traffic

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