

Sonning Common Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Village Hall on Monday 01 April 2019 at 1915.

Present: Mr Rawlins (Chairman), Mr Fort, Mr Kedge, Mr Stoves, Mrs Lewis, Mrs Diwell, Mr Scott-Giles as well as Deputy Parish Clerk Mrs Varnes and seven members of the public.

P19/148 Apologies for absence: none.

P19/149 Declarations of interest: Mrs Diwell declared an interest in agenda item P19/151.02. She sat out of the committee during the discussion and voting on the item.

P19/150 Public consultation time. Seven members of the public attended the meeting in relation to agenda item P19/151.01.

P19/151 New applications:

151.01/P19/So800/FUL. The construction of a two-storey, two-bedroom dwelling with parking space and a landscaped garden at Jalna, Peppard Road RG4 9NJ.

After discussion the committee resolved unanimously to recommend refusal of the application (see attached letter).

152.02/P19/So843/HH. The construction of a double-storey rear extension, garage conversion and replacement of the existing cladding at 1 Churchill Crescent RG4 9RU.

After discussion the committee resolved unanimously to recommend approval of the application.

P19/152 Applications granted:

152.01. P19/So182/HH. The demolition of the existing garage with the erection of a new single side and rear extension at 15 Kennylands Road RG4 9JR. Noted.

152.02. P19/So325/A. The replacement of an externally-illuminated sign above the frontage and the erection of a sign on the front elevation, erection of a sign located on the side elevation, a freestanding sign and a sign displayed inside the building at 2c Green Lane RG4 9NA. Noted.

P19/153 Updates on:

153.01. The implementation of landscaping planning conditions at Lea Meadow. The deputy clerk reported that an SODC planning enforcement officer was liaising with Bewley Homes to try to ensure that planning conditions were implemented.

153.02. The progression of plans to develop new sport and recreation facilities at Memorial Hall Field, off Reades Lane. Cllr Rawlins reported that an application for groundworks was being prepared.

P19/154 Matters for future agendas. The deputy clerk reported that a new, related application had been submitted for a proposed development on Peppard Road (related to agenda item P19/151.01)

The meeting closed at 2005.

Date of next meeting: Monday 15 April 2019 at 1915.

Chairman:

Dated:

SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

VILLAGE HALL, WOOD LANE

SONNING COMMON, OXON, RG4 9SL

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Ms Davina Sarac
SODC Planning Officer
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Tuesday 02 April 2019

Dear Ms Sarac

Re P19/So800/FUL. The construction of a two-storey, two-bedroom dwelling with parking space and a landscaped garden at Jalna, Peppard Road RG4 9NJ.

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee discussed the above amended application at its meeting of Monday 01 April 2019. Members unanimously resolved to vigorously object to the application.

The committee's chief objections are that the proposed new dwelling is over-development, of poor design and would have a detrimental effect on neighbouring properties and the character of the area. It is also contrary to the infill and housing design policies within the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (see attached).

They wish to draw your attention to the full Neighbourhood Plan text on infill which states that plot widths should be in keeping with neighbouring properties. The existing settlement pattern should be respected. The plot of the proposed new build is very narrow, as evidenced by the need to make a kink in the plot to enable the property to be accessed from the side.

The side of the proposed new build is also set right on the northern boundary of the site leading, potentially, to issues with the eaves of the proposed new-build projecting over the land of the old house. Neighbours are concerned about water running off the proposed dwelling onto their property, which is lower.

The gap between the two buildings is enough for only for a 1m path, indicating how cramped and out of character this proposed new build would be. Additionally, the proposed new build still extends beyond Silverlea on the track side. Although it is proposed that the first floor extension be restrained it still has a full, pitched roof, which the committee considers would have an adverse impact on Silverlea.

In addition, under Neighbourhood Plan policies on good design for appropriate infill development, harsh parking forecourts should be avoided and boundaries should be softened by planting. This application fails to meet these Neighbourhood Plan policy standards in both regards.

Members consider that the proposed new build is not materially different to that which was put forward under P18/S2245/FUL and, as such, their previously circulated objections about the dwelling remain. The committee's concerns, raised in previous correspondence with SODC, relating to access, traffic and highways safety, also remain.

The committee is concerned about the capacity of the track behind the site to accommodate heavy construction traffic safely. There is barely enough space for a turning a car without access onto private land and no scope for turning an HGV vehicle. Vision splays onto Bird in Hand Lane are poor and a large vehicle could not be backed safely onto the lane.

Members recommend to SODC that the proposal be rejected. Please keep the Parish Council informed of all developments in relation to this proposal, particularly if you are considering approving the plan. In this case we ask that the application is referred to SODC's Planning Committee for a decision.

Please be advised that members believe there are some inaccuracies with the block, location and floor plans posted on your website. The block and location plans appear to be incorrect and are inconsistent with one another and with the floor plans.

The submitted plans do not show the old house as it is but rather portray it as if it had already a large extension. The floor plan shows a fence going over a parking space for the proposed new-build. The proposed path and fence line would not provide good pedestrian access to the proposed new-build, if cars were parked in designated spaces.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ros Varnes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ros Varnes
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Infill and Design Policies and Character Statement

Housing infill statement

Any development must enhance the local character and distinctiveness, including its woodland and rural dimensions.

Objective: To support infill development providing that it does not have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.

Policy H3: Infill

Development proposals on infill sites (the infilling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage or group of houses where they are surrounded on all sides by other buildings) will be supported where they are of a design which:

- positively responds to, where appropriate, the prevailing size, height, scale and mass, materials, layout, density and access of the surrounding area;
- reflects the existing character of the village;
- demonstrates that the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers will not be adversely affected through overbearing development and loss of light;
- includes an appropriate amount of landscaping which complements and enhances the green and wooded character of the local area.

The Sonning Common Character and Design Assessment 35 provides additional relevant background to Policy H3.

Design statement

Good design is applicable to all new development, including but not limited to housing. Local character is rural with a strong woodland character. Trees are prevalent and often large – right into the centre of the village. Aerial photographs illustrate the extent of trees and this nature is of course sustainable and supportive to the wider environment. Hedges and plot enclosures, together with well planted rear gardens, add to the rural feel. The form of properties is generally quite mixed within streets thus avoiding a bland identikit character. Most development sites are ‘green field’, possessing low existing use values.

Sonning Common is a rural area with virtually no development originally built as more than 2 storey in form. Clearly there have been some reasonable loft extensions with dormer windows where this does not cause adverse effects for neighbours or the street scene. Generally flat roofed dormers have only been approved at the rear of properties and where they do not intrude on the street scene nor harm the amenity of neighbouring properties. High rise buildings which would urbanise and harm local character will not be appropriate.

Source: Sonning Common Character Assessment and Design Statement 2013, Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan

Design policy

Policy D1: Design

All new development within Sonning Common must demonstrate good quality design. This should include respecting the scale and appearance of the existing built environment, responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context. The development of the residential allocations should use soft boundary treatments such as trees, hedges or planting to enclose the front of plots and be in keeping with the character of the village street scenes, unless viability or other material considerations show a compelling justification for a different treatment. Every effort should be made to avoid harsh urban parking courts. Design should ensure that parking is provided in a discreet and sensitive manner.

Policy D1a: Design – storeys

In order to respect the rural character of Sonning Common, new buildings should be no more than 2 storeys plus roof (pitched or as normally acceptable) unless there is a robust justification for a taller building. Such a justification will need to include evidence to demonstrate how the proposal addresses local character and residential amenity.

Policy D1b: Design on allocated and infill sites

Proposals to develop infill sites and the sites allocated in this Plan must be accompanied by a design brief that demonstrates how the proposal:

- reflects and positively responds to the good quality existing character of Sonning Common taking careful account of the Sonning Common Character Assessment and Design Statement and SODC Design Guide;
- complies with the relevant site-specific allocation policy in this Plan.

Nothing in Policy D1a is intended to restrict loft extensions or dormer windows in roofs where a planning application to do so would be acceptable or where permitted development rights allow a laissez-faire regime. The style of roofing for any dormer windows in roofs should respect the local rural character and flat roofs for such dormer windows should be avoided where they will be visually prominent or cause adverse amenity impacts.

In Sonning Common good design means:

- achieving high quality design that respects the scale, coverage and character of existing and surrounding buildings
- respecting established building set back and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges
- using soft boundary treatments such as trees, hedges or planting to enclose the front of plots and be in keeping with the character of the street scene
- incorporating street lighting on new sites at a level compatible with the rural environment
- avoiding harsh urban parking courts
- ensuring proposals relate to established plot widths within streets where development is proposed, particularly where they establish a rhythm to the architecture in a street
- using good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within Sonning Common
- adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), where appropriate
- meeting the requirements of 'Secure by Design' to minimise the likelihood and fear of crime and
- using innovation to achieve low carbon sustainable design