

Sonning Common Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the
Village Hall on Monday 12 September 2016 at 1930 hours.

Present: Mrs Lewis (chairman), Mr Rawlins, Mr Fort, Mr Rust, Mr Kedge, Mrs Varnes (Deputy Clerk).

P17/057 Apologies for absence: none.

P17/058 Declarations of interest: none.

P17/059 Public consultation time: none present.

P17/060 New applications:

060.01/P16/S2943/FUL. The construction of a new dwelling with access at 23 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD. After discussion the committee agreed to recommend refusal of the application on the grounds that it was out of character with the area, forward of the building line and provided an inadequate parking and turning area, as highlighted by the county council's Highways department. (Further comment in attached letter).

060.02/P16/S2871/HH. The erection of a store at The Hawthorns, 1 Baskerville Road RG4 9LS. After discussion the committee agreed to recommend refusal of the application on the grounds that the appeal inspector, who allowed the development, had applied a planning condition that permitted development rights should be removed from the site.

060.03/P16/S2908/A (advertisement consent). The installation of one internally illuminated fascia and one internally illuminated projector logo plus three non-illuminated wall-mounted panels at the Co-op, 44 Wood Lane RG4 9SL. After discussion the committee unanimously voted to approve the application.

P17/061 Applications granted:

None.

P17/062 Memorial Hall Field project.

062.01. Report of the first meeting of the Memorial Hall Field Working Party on Thursday 08 September 2016 regarding progress with plans for the development of new sport, recreation and community facilities on Memorial Hall Field, off Reades Lane.

It was reported that the Parish Council chairman had attended the meeting to oversee the election of the new working party chairman, Diana Pearman. Cllr Rawlins was subsequently elected as vice-chairman. The draft Terms of Reference for the new working party were discussed and amendments suggested.

The working party agreed to try to set up a meeting with LK2 to discuss taking the project forward.

062.02. Feedback from SODC on the SC Neighbourhood Plan examiner's requirements for Memorial Hall Field. No feedback had been received due to the planning officer's leave of absence.

The meeting closed at 2000.

Date of next meeting: Monday 26 September 2016 at 1945.

Chairman:

Date:

SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

VILLAGE HALL, WOOD LANE
SONNING COMMON, OXON, RG4 9SL

Clerk – Philip Collings

Tel 0118 972 3616

Email: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

Mr Edward Church
SODC Planning
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Thursday 22 September 2016

Dear Mr Church

Re: P16/S2943/FUL. The construction of a detached three-bedroom dwelling with a vehicular access at 23 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common.

I am writing with regard to the above application which was discussed at Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee meeting on Monday 12 September 2016. The committee recommended that the application be refused.

In determining the application the committee requests that you closely consider those policies in the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan relating to infill and good design, which are relevant in this case (see the extract from the Plan below).

After four years of preparation and extensive public consultation, the Plan will be put to a referendum among residents on Thursday 29 September 2016.

In view of the fact that both the independent examiner and SODC have approved this Plan and passed it for referendum, and due to the fact that specific policies within the Plan are relevant in relation to this proposed development, the committee requests that SODC defers a decision on this application until after the referendum.

The Plan allocates suitable new sites for housing development in Sonning Common which more than meet the village's obligations for new housing. It also clearly illustrates that one and two-bedroom properties are in short supply in the village. This is where our main housing need lies, much less so in three, four and five-bedroom properties.

Extract from Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan (Final Submission Version)

Housing infill

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 Policies

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 NDP

Objective: To ensure that new housing and development is designed and built to a high quality and respects the existing character of Sonning Common.

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.

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

This application is clearly contrary to many of the policies within the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan should bear significant weight in determining this application.

Please keep the Planning Committee informed as to the progress of this application.

With best wishes



Ros Varnes
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council