

Sonning Common Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the
Village Hall on Monday 15 June 2015 at 1915 hours.

- Present:** Mr Rawlins (chairman), Mr Reynolds, Mr Rust, Mr Kedge (ex-officio), Mr Stoves (ex-officio), Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk).
- P16/026** Apologies for absence: Mrs Lewis, Mr Richens (due to holiday).
- P16/027** Declarations of interest: none.
- P16/028** Public consultation time: none present.
- P16/029** New applications:
029.01/P15/S1511/HH. A first-floor extension to the existing dwelling at 102 Wood Lane RG4 9SL. After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application.
029.02/P15/S1824/HH. The construction of a front porch at 75 Peppard Road RG4 9RN. After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application.
- P16/030** Application granted:
030.01/P15/S0922/HH. Two-storey rear extension (revised plans submitted on 6 May show lowering of the roof height by 0.5m) at 10 Sedgewell Road RG4 9TA. Noted.
- P16/031** Appeal lodged:
APP/Q3115/W/15/3022094. Appeal lodged against the refusal of planning permission for land adjacent to 31 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD. The committee resolved to submit a letter to the appeal examiner to urge that the refusal of planning permission be upheld (see attached).
- P16/032** Compilation of future street names. The committee reviewed some potential street names, as suggested by residents, and resolved to hold them on file until needed.

The meeting closed at 1940.

Date of next meeting: Monday 06 July 2015 at 1915.

Chairman: Dated:

Parish Office

SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL
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The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3/10
Temple Quay House
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Temple Quay
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Thursday 18 June 2015

Dear Planning Inspector

Re: APP/Q3115/W/15/3022094 (Land adjacent to 31 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD)

At its meeting on Monday 17 November 2014 members of Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee voted unanimously to recommend to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) that the above application be rejected. Parish council representatives and residents attended a subsequent meeting of the district council's Planning Committee to speak against the proposal and were delighted when district councillors rejected the plan.

The parish council now urges the Planning Inspectorate to uphold the refusal of planning permission on this application. It is opposed to the application on seven main grounds.

1. It is an over-development of the site (contrary to policies G2, CSH1 and CSH2)

A three-bedroom, three-storey detached house is excessive in terms of mass and density for this site and would dominate surrounding properties. The site at 0.028ha provides less than 75 per cent of the recommended minimum space available per dwelling, based on SODC's policy of 25 dwellings per hectare – that is 0.4ha for an average-sized dwelling. In terms of CSH2 this proposal would plainly have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area and existing properties. Proper access to the back gardens of both 31 and 31a Woodlands Road would be impractical. Access to the rear of 31a is just 0.65m at its narrowest point, while the recommended separation distance is 1.5m.

2. It is out of keeping with the character of area and would have a detrimental impact on the street scene (contrary to policies G2 and G5)

Surrounding properties are all medium to large-sized detached and semi-detached houses with sizeable front and rear gardens plus driveways and garages to provide satisfactory off-road parking. There are also adequate separation distances between surrounding properties unlike with this proposal. The applicant claims the proposed separation distances are similar to those between 27, 27a and 25 Woodlands Road (Design and Access Statement 4.4). The separation distance between no. 27 and its neighbours, gable to gable, is 2.4m with number 25 and 2m with 27a - both well within the recommended separation distance.

3. It is detrimental to the local landscape (contrary to policies C4 and C9)

Despite the agent's assurances that no trees would be removed to accommodate the proposed new dwelling (Design and Access Statement 4.14), neighbours reported that an established cherry tree, thought to be about 60 years old, was felled in the back garden of 31 Woodlands Road sometime during 25 to 30 August 2014. The visit by SODC's planning officer took place on 28 August. Additional trees/shrubbery were also removed from along the rear boundary of the site, affecting local wildlife. The additional loss of an established and attractive hedgerow at the front of the site – removed within two weeks of the application being refused – degrades further the woodland and rural character of Woodlands Road, one of the oldest and most established roads in the village.

4. It is of traffic and parking concern (contrary to policies D1, D6, T1 and T2)

The proposed, unsightly shared access to the site would set an extremely unwelcome precedent for Woodlands Road. The proposed access arrangement would be completely out of character with surrounding properties which all have private accesses and garages. Inadequate parking on-site is likely to lead to parking overspill onto Woodlands Road, thereby compromising visibility and affecting the safety of drivers and pedestrians.

5. It is detrimental to the privacy of neighbours (contrary to policy D4)

The proposed new three-storey dwelling does not provide for a reasonable level of privacy for existing neighbours. This has been exacerbated by the unscheduled removal of the mature cherry tree from the garden of 31 Woodlands Road, which has left neighbouring residents in the adjacent single-storey bungalows at 2 and 3 Appletree Close feeling particularly exposed. The proposed new dwelling would overlook the homes and gardens of neighbouring residents in single-storey dwellings and affect their enjoyment of their properties.

6. It is detrimental to the existing drainage system (contrary to policy D10)

The existing drainage system, thought to have been established in the 1930s, already serves three houses and neighbouring residents are concerned about its ability to cope with a fourth.

7. It is contrary to the policies of the Draft Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan (SCNDP)

The Draft SCNDP – on which public consultation has been completed - is seeking to ensure that future housing developments in Sonning Common are appropriate, sustainable and in keeping with the character of the area and residents' wishes. It is aiming to define when any future developments would harm the village's character – especially when the density of proposed new housing would exceed that of the surrounding properties, as in this case.

In summary, Sonning Common Parish Council's planning committee considers that this proposal is wholly inappropriate for the site. It represents a significant over-development of the site, and, with the proposed access and parking arrangements, is out of keeping with the area. The committee urges the Inspectorate to uphold the district council's refusal of planning permission for this application.

I should be grateful if the Inspectorate could advise the parish council of when the site visit will take place.

Yours sincerely



Ros Varnes, Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council