

East Area Planning Committee

5th August 2015

Application Numbers: 1. 14/02550/FUL
2. 15/01485/FUL

Decision Due by: 1. 12th November 2014
2. 14th July 2015

Proposal:

1. Erection of a part single, part two storey side and rear extension. Erection of first floor front extension. Formation of 1 no. front and 2 no. rear dormers and new vehicular access onto Railway Lane (Amended plans)
2. Formation of vehicular entrance with boundary wall, pillars and gates

Site Address: Beenhams Cottage, Railway Lane, Oxford (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Littlemore Ward

Agent: Mr Ben Holland

Applicant: Mr Richard Evers

Application Called in –

1. by Councillors Tanner Fry, Sanders and Lygo for the following reasons - sensitivity of any development in the conservation area and local concern
2. this application was not called-in but is being brought before Committee because there are similar access arrangements proposed to the first application

Recommendation

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve planning permission for the two applications for the following reasons:

Reasons for Approval (14/02550/FUL):

- 1 The proposed development will form an appropriate visual relationship with the original house and surrounding forms and would protect the special character and appearance of Littlemore Conservation Area. There will be no unacceptable effect on the current and future occupants of adjacent properties. Concerns over flooding and access can be dealt with by condition and the proposals therefore comply with Policies CP1, CP8, CP10, CP13, NE15 and HE7 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 – 2016, Policies CS11

and CS18 of the Core Strategy and Policies HP9 and HP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan.

- 2 Officers have considered carefully all objections to these proposals. Officers have come to the view, for the detailed reasons set out in the officers report, that the objections do not amount, individually or cumulatively, to a reason for refusal and that all the issues that have been raised have been adequately addressed and the relevant bodies consulted.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

1. Development begun within time limit
2. Develop in accordance with approved plans
3. Samples materials in Conservation Area
4. Specific exclusion approved plans the new vehicular access, HP-00-D16,
5. Design - no additions to dwelling
6. Amenity - windows to side
7. Amenity - no balcony
8. Sustainable drainage
9. Landscape plan required
10. Landscape carry out by completion
11. Landscape hard surfacedesign - tree roots
12. Landscape underground services - tree roots
13. Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 2
14. Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1

Reasons for Approval (15/01485/FUL):

- 1 The development will form an acceptable visual relationship with the existing building and Littlemore Conservation Area. Concerns over highway safety, landscaping and tree, flooding and the appearance of materials used in the build can be dealt with by condition and the proposals therefore comply with Policies CP1, CP8, CP10, HE7 and NE15 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 - 2016, Policies CS11 and CS18 of the Core Strategy and Policies HP9 and HP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan.
- 2 Officers have considered carefully all objections to these proposals. Officers have come to the view, for the detailed reasons set out in the officers report, that the objections do not amount, individually or cumulatively, to a reason for refusal and that all the issues that have been raised have been adequately addressed and the relevant bodies consulted.
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other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

1. Development begun within time limit
2. Develop in accordance with approved plans
3. Sample materials in Conservation Area
4. Highway safety
5. Landscape plan required
6. Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 2
7. Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 2
8. Sustainable drainage

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 (OLP)

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

HE7 - Conservation Areas

NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows

NE16 - Protected Trees

Core Strategy

CS11_ - Flooding

CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

Sites and Housing Plan (SHP)

MP1 - Model Policy

HP9_ - Design, Character and Context

HP13_ - Outdoor Space

HP14_ - Privacy and Daylight

HP16_ - Residential car parking

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

This application is in or affecting the Littlemore Conservation Area.

Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Site History:

58/00815/M_H - Site for one or two storey dwelling house with access: Approved

59/00237/M_H - Dwelling house (Approved on appeal 4.2.1960): Refused

12/00180/FUL - Erection of 2x3 bedroom and 1x2 bedroom dwellings: Approved

12/00181/CAC - Conservation area consent for demolition of existing cottage and outbuilding: Approved

14/00652/FUL - First floor front extension, part single storey & part two storey side & rear extensions. (Additional information): Withdrawn

Representations Received:

(1) (14/02550/FUL)

- 70 Medhurst Way: Out of keeping with surroundings, lack of information relating to hedging, highway safety issues, some concern over loss of trees.

Further consultation was carried out on the amended plans, the following comments were received:

In Support:

- Mulberry House, Railway Lane
- The Manor House, Sandford Road
- The Old Post Office, Railway Lane

Whilst the above comments can be summarised as in support of the proposal, some of the comments, notably from The Manor House, suggest that the current scheme may even have gone too far in softening the original modernist approach.

In Objection:

- No address given: Loss of trees and resultant overlooking of properties on other side of Sandford Road, overly large and not in keeping with Conservation Area.

(2) (15/01485/FUL)

No letters of comment have been received in relation to this application

Statutory Consultees:

(1) (14/02550/FUL)

- Oxfordshire County Council Highway Authority: Informal objection: lack of set back from highway and inappropriate visibility splays.

(2) (15/01485/FUL)

- Local Highway Authority: No objection subject to condition
- Littlemore Parish Council: Raises concerns about the siting of proposed vehicular entrance and the loss of established trees in a conservation area.

Officers Assessment:

Site description and proposal

1. Beenhams Cottage occupies a prominent corner site on the corner of Railway Lane and Sandford Road, the main thoroughfare through this part of

Littlemore Conservation Area (**appendix 1**).

2. The site appears to share a vehicular access with the house next door and is well screened by trees and hedging, although some of the trees are in poor condition and may have a limited life expectancy.
3. The house itself would have been completed in the early 1960's. With its white painted brick walls and angular appearance it is of its time and replaced existing buildings on the site.

Proposal

4. The two applications are seeking planning permission for the following works
5. (14/02550/FUL): The erection of a part single, part two-storey side and rear extension, and erection of a first floor front extension to the dwellinghouse. The formation of a single dormer in the front elevations and 2 dormers to the rear. The formation of a new vehicular access onto Railway Lane.
6. The proposals have been amended since they were initially submitted due to concerns raised about the potential impact of the original proposals upon the character and appearance of the conservation area, and also highway safety.
7. (15/01485/FUL): The formation of a vehicular entrance with boundary wall, pillars and gates.
8. Officers consider that the main determining issues in this case are
 - Impact on character and appearance of Conservation Area
 - Impact on adjacent occupiers
 - Highway safety / parking and access
 - Trees
 - Flooding

Visual impact / effect on Conservation Area

9. Despite being absorbed as a part of Oxford's suburbs Littlemore retains its village qualities and is noted for the vernacular forms and materials and contribution of trees and greenery. The published conservation area appraisal notes specifically that these qualities are vulnerable to new developments that involve the use of materials and textures that do not correspond or complement the established warm and muted tones of the historic core of the village.
10. Conservation principles, policy and practice seek to preserve and enhance the value of heritage assets. The National Planning Policy Framework explains that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.
11. The Government sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the

achievement of this. The NPPF sets out twelve core planning principles that should underpin decision making (paragraph 17.). Amongst those are:

not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives; □

proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs; conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generation.

12. The Council expects new development to enhance the quality of the environment, and Policy CP1 states that all new development should respect the character and appearance of the area. Policies CP8 of the OLP and CS18 of the Core Strategy require all new development to demonstrate high quality urban design and ensure that the siting, massing and design creates an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the local area.
13. Policy CP8 states that building design should respect, without necessarily replicating, local characteristics and should not rule out innovative design. This is taken a stage further in the text of the Core Strategy which states that Oxford's historic environment and local townscapes are the product of change and should be considered as an inspiration for good urban design, respecting the old but also perpetuating the tradition of creating great modern buildings. Policy HE7 states that planning permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation area or its setting. Policy CS18 requires that developments demonstrate high quality urban design that respects the unique townscape and character in different areas of Oxford.
14. The NPPF and accompanying Practice Guide (NPPG) explain that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and '*the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be*'. Recent case law (Barnwell) has demonstrated that this responsibility, rooted in the legislative requirements of the Planning Acts, should be given special consideration when considering the balance between any harm and the planning merits of the proposal.
15. Our historic environment is the product of changing needs and changing architectural fashions (both architect designed and vernacular). Historic England advises (in its Good Practice Advice Notes) that local planning authorities should not be prescriptive about the appropriateness of architectural styles in new development; what is important are matters such as siting, scale, height, mass and materials.
16. Given the contemporary nature of the design and use of materials of the existing building and the contemporary nature of the proposed extensions this is an important consideration

17. The site sits on a prominent corner, with views of the existing building currently filtered (but not blocked) by the hedge and tree cover. The proposed increased extent of the building:
- additional rear projection of around 1.8m on ground floor
 - substantial additions at first floor to provide 3 additional bedrooms, shower room and mezzanine
 - Introduction of new materials across new and existing parts of the building including stone, coloured render, zinc cladding and timber
 - Creation of a cantilevered porch feature to south west corner of the building with full height glazing and some timber screening
 - Two roof dormers to the railway lane roof slope
 - changes to fenestration, including projecting windows
18. The applicant has sought to address how to mediate the relationship of this modern building in this historic context by focusing on the scale of the individual elements and the materiality of the elevations. Thus the design illustrates a scale that would remain domestic albeit maintaining the contemporary approach using the muted tones and colours that distinguish the village character:- stonework to the front wall, a soft coloured render to the body of the house and timber panelling and louvres.
19. The applicant has produced evidence to show that the traditional context into which this building needs to fit has been properly considered, with particular regard to the visual impact of the existing building, the height and footprint and architectural detailing. A number of design details, such as the dormers to Railway Lane and the cantilevered porch to the south and west elevations reflect the scale and shape of bays and building blocks of nearby houses.
20. Several other changes have also been incorporated into the current proposal that did not form part of the original submission, such as more defined reveals to some of the window openings and the rear porch, all of which will serve to modulate and soften the stark appearance of the existing building without compromising its contemporary style. The other main changes relate to the elevation to Railway Lane, where, as well as the building's stone front wall, the dormers have been introduced as a contemporary interpretation of the traditional dormer with a scale that has an appropriate regard to the dormers and traditional vernacular further down Railway Lane.
21. In summary, the proposed development involves the refurbishment and extension of a contemporary, but tired looking, existing dwelling in a prominent position within the Littlemore Conservation Area. The existing building does not enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, but the current proposal, with its softer, more muted palette and details, reflects the more vernacular styles around the site, and as such will preserve the existing character and with appropriate landscaping has the potential to reinforce the existing verdant qualities of the village. As such the proposal is in accordance with Policies CP1, CP8 and HE7 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 - 2016, Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy and Policy HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan.

Effect on adjacent occupiers

22. Oxford City Council requires development proposals to safeguard the privacy and amenities of adjoining occupiers and policies CP1 and CP10 of the OLP and Policy HS14 of the SHP support this aim. Appendix 7 of the SHP sets out the 45 degree guidance, used to assess the effect of development on the windows of neighbouring properties.
23. The proposed development is some way from the nearest buildings and the main area of land affected will be a shared parking / turning bay facing onto Railway Lane. The proposal complies with the 45-degree guidance, will not have a material effect on adjacent properties, and complies with Policies CP1 and CP10 of the OLP and Policy HP14 of the SHP.

Highway safety / parking and access

24. Policy CP1 of the OLP states that permission will only be granted for development that is acceptable in terms of access, parking and highway safety. This is supported by policy CP10 which states that access to the site should be practical.
25. The level of parking proposed is adequate for the extended house but to counter concerns about the highway safety of the proposed access position and design amended access details have been submitted under a separate application, 15/01485/FUL. These revised details are considered to be satisfactory subject to further information on the proposed visibility splays, which can be covered by condition.

Trees

26. Policy CP1 of the OLP states that where relevant, development proposals must retain and protect important landscape and ecological features. NE15 that permission will not be granted for development proposals which include the removal of trees and other valuable landscape features that form part of a development site where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest. Policy CP11 also requires that existing trees of significant landscape value are retained, and states that where development is permitted near trees, protection during site works will be necessary and expects these to be required by a condition of planning permission.
27. There are no protected trees on site and officers are of the opinion that the trees that are proposed for removal are low quality and value and their removal will not have a significant harmful effect on amenity in the area. If the Lawson cypress hedge is removed from alongside Sandford Road and Railway Lane and is replaced with a beech hedge as proposed this will improve the appearance of this part of the conservation area, however any grant of permission should be subject to conditions to ensure there is no additional damage during construction and that the replanting schedule (including a new hedge to be planted behind the proposed boundary wall) is

adhered to, to ensure the loss of existing tall evergreen boundary hedging along Railway Lane is adequately mitigated and that there is no unacceptable effect on amenity and in accordance with Policies CP1, CP11 and NE15 of the OLP.

Flooding

28. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to limit the effect of development on flood risk and expects all developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems or techniques to limit or reduce surface water run-off.

29. The development will add to the level of non-porous surfaces on the site, resulting in an increased level of rain water run-off. However the increase is relatively modest and subject to a condition to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the principles of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems, the proposals will not result in an unacceptable risk of flooding and complies with Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion:

30. The proposed developments will form an appropriate visual relationship with the original house and surrounding forms and would protect the special character and appearance of Littlemore Conservation Area. There will be no unacceptable effect on the current and future occupants of adjacent properties. Concerns over flooding and access can be dealt with by condition and the proposals therefore comply with Policies CP1, CP8, CP10, CP13, HE7 and NE15 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 – 2016, Policies CS11 and CS18 of the Core Strategy and Policies HP9 and HP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a

recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers: 14/02550/FUL and 15/01485/FUL

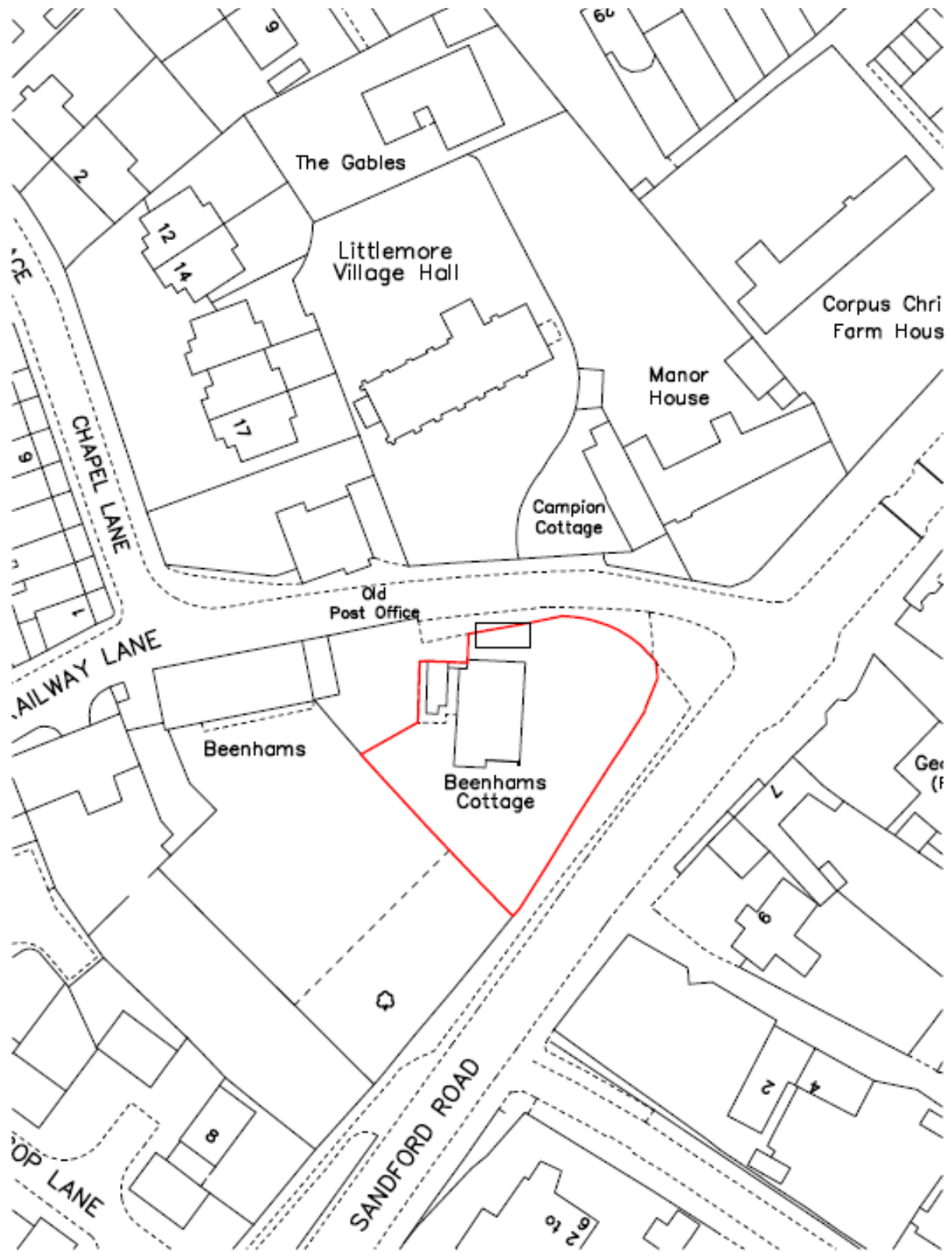
Contact Officer: Tim Hunter

Extension: 2154

Date: 23rd July 2015

Appendix 1

Site location



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