

**WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

17<sup>th</sup> April 2013

**Application Number:** 13/00290/FUL

**Decision Due by:** 8th April 2013

**Proposal:** Erection of two storey side extension

**Site Address:** 55 Wolvercote Green Oxford OX2 8BE

**Ward:** Wolvercote

**Agent:** Ms Lesley Cotton

**Applicant:** Mr & Mrs Robert & Cathy  
Scott

Application called-in by Councillors Gotch, McCreedy, Goddard and Fooks due to concerns that consideration of the application should not be too prescriptive with respect to the design of the extension.

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## **Recommendation:**

APPLICATION BE REFUSED

For the following reason:-

- 1 The proposed extension features both excessive and inappropriate fenestration on both the front and side elevations which serves to accentuate the substantial scale of the extension and thus fails to respect the character and appearance of the original and uniform terrace in which it is located. Consequently the proposals fail to accord with policies CP1, CP8, CP9 and CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 as well as policies HP9, HP13 and HP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan.

## **Main Local Plan Policies:**

### **Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016**

**CP1** - Development Proposals

**CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context

**CP9** - Creating Successful New Places

**CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

### **Core Strategy**

**CS18**\_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

### **Sites and Housing Plan - Submission**

**HP9**\_ - Design, Character and Context

**HP14**\_ - Privacy and Daylight

HP13\_ - Outdoor Space

**Other Material Considerations:**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Relevant Site History:**

06/01466/FUL - Two-storey side and rear extension. Permitted 7th September 2006.

10/03177/FUL - Two-storey side extension to form 2-bed dwelling, access road, amenity space, parking, refuse and cycle storage, means of enclosure and landscaping. Permitted 22nd March 2011.

11/02438/FUL - Side and rear two storey extension. Permitted 12th December 2011.

12/03036/FUL - Erection of two storey side and rear extension (amended plans). Permitted 25th January 2013.

**Representations Received:**

None

**Statutory and Internal Consultees:**

No comments received

**Officers' Assessment:**

Application Site and Locality

1. The application site relates to a modest two bedroom end of terrace house set at one end of a 1930's era three-house red brick terrace which overlooks Wolvercote Green directly abutting the Wolvercote and Godstow Conservation Area. The application property occupies a larger plot than the two others within the terrace as its garden is wider where it projects out towards The Plough public house. The application house and the others within the terrace can unusually only be accessed by foot along the Wolvercote Green footpath rather than by road. However the footpaths are well trafficked by pedestrians as they allow access through to a nearby children's play area as well as Wolvercote Meadow, a protected public open space.

The Proposal

2. The application seeks consent for the erection of a two storey side and rear extension to the house.
3. Officers consider the principal determining issues in this case to be:
  - Design and appearance; and
  - Impact on Neighbouring Properties.

### Design and Appearance

4. Policies CP1 and CP8 of the Local Plan as well as policies CS18 of the Core Strategy and HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan (SHP) require development proposals to create an appropriate visual relationship with the surrounding area in terms of form, grain, scale, materials and design detailing. Policy CP8 then goes on to state that building design is specific to the site and its context and should respect local characteristics. Policy CP8 also adds that on sites of high public visibility, development should enhance the style and perception of the area particularly by retaining features which are important to the character of the local area.
5. The design of development is a well-founded material planning consideration irrespective of the location of the site and the above development plan policies have been adopted to provide the Council with the framework by which this important planning issue can be assessed. Committee should therefore have regard to these policy requirements in their determination of the application. The requirements of the above policies is reflected in Government guidance in the NPPF which states that *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”*. Government guidance also adds that *“permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”*.
6. A two storey side extension to the house was first granted planning permission back in 2006. Whilst this extension was subservient in height to the original house, the extension approved was significant in width. The approved extension therefore represented a significant increase in the size of the house in actual terms which would also be readily apparent from Wolvercote Green. This extension was not built during the lifetime of the planning permission though consent was granted in 2010 for exactly the same extension though this time it was proposed as a separate house. Following this, in 2011, an application for the same extension as approved in 2006 was submitted to the Council as it was no longer intended to build the extension as a new house. This application was again approved. Consequently the principle of constructing a two storey side extension to the house has now been well established.
7. The extension approved between the period from 2006 and 2011 responded to the existing form and design detailing of the original house and its wider terrace. Therefore, whilst it was a little too wide to be considered truly sympathetic in scale to the original house, its design detailing was consistent with the original house and therefore continued the uniform appearance of the terrace in which it was proposed to sit. It was therefore considered to be visually appropriate.
8. In late 2012 a different applicant submitted an application looking to build an even larger extension to the building (the same width as that already approved though quite considerably deeper). Initially the form and

appearance of the proposed extension was in stark contrast to that of the existing terrace with the use of white render and timber cladding on the external walls as well as a pitched roof form that ran perpendicular to the roof form of the terrace. After a number of design iterations were submitted a larger extension was finally approved (that increased the floor area of the house by approximately 125%) though more traditional design features were incorporated to ensure that the large extension would sit more comfortably with the terrace in which it was proposed to be located. This involved a reduction in the number and re-location of rooflights (the current terrace's roof form is original and unbroken), use of matching red brick on the majority of the front and side walls of the proposed extension rather than render, as well as more traditional fenestration patterns that were consistent with that found in the rest of the terrace.

9. Following the approval of that application in January 2013 this current application was submitted seeking to reverse some of the design changes made following negotiations with officers on the previous application. Essentially this involves more significant glazing on the front elevation at first floor level, the insertion of more rooflights in the side roofslope, the return of higher level fenestration on the side elevation facing The Plough pub as well as the insertion of the front door in the extended part of the dwelling rather than the original house.
10. As already pointed out in this report, the extension proposed is substantial in scale in comparison with the original house despite its set-down ridge height. Recognising the significant scale of the extension, officers were previously prepared to accept such an increase in the size of the dwelling (and therefore terrace) provided the design features as well as the form and general appearance of the extension reflected that found in the existing terrace to ensure that it was, on balance, visually appropriate on such a prominent site overlooking Wolvercote Green and abutting the conservation area.
11. The application property is not of any particular architectural merit. However, the terrace in which it sits still appears predominantly as it was originally constructed without significant alteration or extension affecting the front façade. This ensures that together the house terrace makes a positive contribution to the area whereas individually they are unremarkable. Officers therefore consider it important that, where planning control allows, alterations and/or extensions to the terrace reflect its important characteristics as required by policy CP8 of the Local Plan.
12. Unfortunately the return to excessive levels of rooflights in the currently unbroken terrace and a run of bland high level windows rather than more traditional casements on the side elevation are at odds with the character of the terrace. Furthermore, the large patio doors at first floor level on the front elevation span almost the entire width of the extension and thus not only contrast with the more traditional windows on the terrace but also visually accentuate the significant width of the side extension. It is also disappointing that the front door is proposed to be inserted in the extended

part of the house rather than the original house as this also contributes to the loss of apparent primacy of the original dwelling and further reflects the loss of sympathetic subordination that is generally expected of extensions to dwellings.

13. Cumulatively the changes result in an awkward hybrid extension that is neither completely contemporary nor traditional in form or appearance. As such officers find that the changes from the approved scheme result in an extension that does not respect the general appearance of the existing house, or, more importantly, the terrace in which it sits. Consequently officers have concluded that the proposals fail to accord with the design related policies of the development plan set out earlier in this section of the report and cannot be supported.

#### Impact on Neighbouring Properties

14. The proposed extension is of the same dimensions as that already approved by the Council in January 2013. Consequently the impact of the extension on the outlook and light enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings must continue to be acceptable. Furthermore, no windows are now proposed that would give rise to a potential increase in overlooking of neighbouring properties. Consequently the proposals are considered to accord with CP1 and CP10 of the Local Plan as well as HP13 of the SHP which together seek to safeguard neighbouring residential amenity.

#### Other Matters

15. In the event that Committee is minded to approve the application officers suggested that a condition is imposed requiring biodiversity improvement measures to be incorporated into the scheme (due to proximity to Wolvercote Meadow) as well as a condition securing materials to match that in the submitted plans. Finally officers would recommend that permitted development rights be removed by condition for any further additions or alterations to the house to ensure future consideration can be given to their impacts on the terrace.

#### **Conclusion:**

16. The proposed extension was previously approved despite its substantial size on the basis that it generally adopted features characteristic of the original terrace in which it sat. As a result of its return to inappropriate and excessive fenestration patterns, the proposed extension will visually fail to respect the original unaltered terrace in which it is located. It would therefore appear as a discordant feature within the terrace when viewed from Wolvercote Green. Consequently Officers recommend refusal of the application for the reasons set out at the beginning of the report.

#### Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to refuse this application. They consider that the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8/Article 1 of

Protocol 1 is justifiable and proportionate for the protection of the rights and freedom of others or the control of his/her property in this way is in accordance with the general interest.

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 refuse, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

**Background Papers:** 13/00290/FUL,

**Contact Officer:** Matthew Parry

**Extension:** 2160

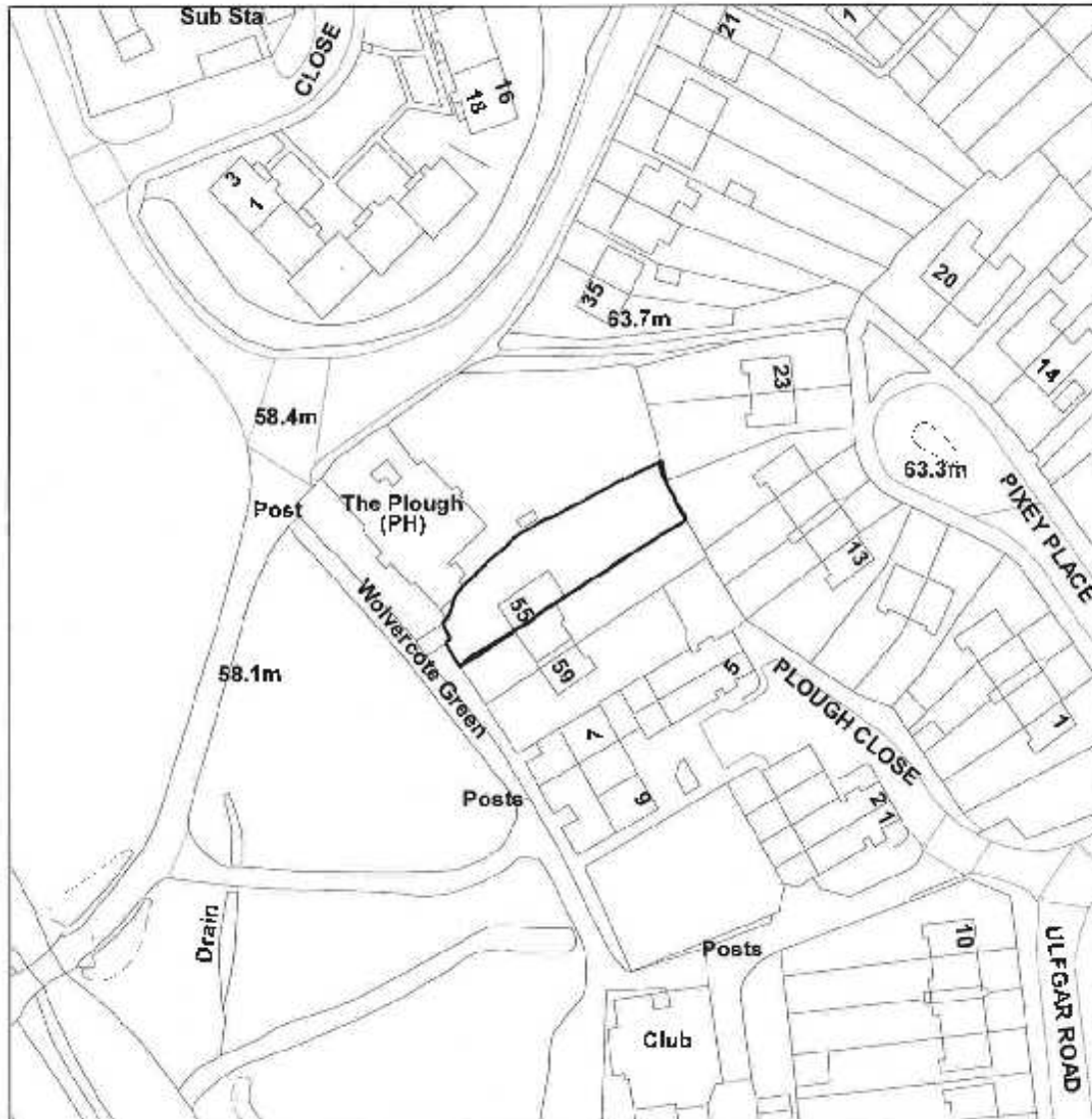
**Date:** 25th March 2013

# Appendix 1

## 55 Walvercote Green



GIS by ESRI, Inc.



Scale : 1:900

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<b>Organisation</b>	Oxford City Council
<b>Department</b>	City Development
<b>Comments</b>	13/03/01
<b>Date</b>	17 March 2011
<b>SLA Number</b>	601 501

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