

East Area Planning Committee

-6th November 2013

Application Number: 13/02285/CT3

Decision Due by: 29th October 2013

Proposal: Provision of 18 residents' parking spaces on existing grass verges.

Site Address: Land fronting 33 to 61 Blackbird Leys Road (**Site plan: Appendix 1**)

Ward: Blackbird Leys

Agent: Mr Stewart Thorp

Applicant: Oxford City Council

Recommendation:

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The proposal responds to the growing need to increase resident car parking spaces in the area and to prevent indiscriminate parking on grassed areas. Important trees will be retained and planting will be incorporated into the scheme. Officers were mindful of comments raised through consultation and conclude that the proposal is acceptable in design terms and would not cause any acceptable levels of harm to residential amenity. The proposal accords with the relevant policies of the local development plan.
- 2 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.

Subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Tree Protection Plan to be approved
- 4 Ground resurfacing - SUDS compliant
- 5 Landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on plan
- 6 Details of verge protection measures to be approved

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9** - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11** - Landscape Design
- CP20** - Lighting
- NE15** - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows

Core Strategy

CS18_ Urban design, town character, historic environment

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Representations Received:

37 Blackbird Leys Road – will not be able to park as close to house which will impact on a wheelchair user; entrance to car park will create congestion at Balfour Road; other areas could be used; loss of grass and trees; impact on future property buyers

39 Blackbird Leys Road – loss of grass and green space; other areas could be used; spaces not allocated

Statutory and Internal Consultees:

Blackbird Leys Parish Council – no objection

Highways Authority – no objection

Oxfordshire County Council Environmental Services – Drainage - drain the proposed parking places using SUDs methods as shown

Issues:

Visual impact
Residential amenity
Trees
Access

Sustainability:

1. All new spaces will be constructed to Sustainable Drainage Standards. The new spaces will make a purposeful and improved use of the existing space and help avoid the existing landscaping being gradually degraded.

Background to proposals

2. Most of the parking provision in the City's heartland social housing estates was constructed as the estates were built in the 1950s, 60s and 70s when it was unusual for social housing tenants to own cars. In the 1980s, additional parking bays were constructed primarily in Blackbird Leys and some other high density areas as the demand for parking grew.
3. Parking pressure on the estates is continuing to increase, being one of the top three issues raised by residents at Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG's) and in resident surveys.
4. Car ownership on the estates is now commonplace with many families having more than one car and the increased number of Houses of Multi-occupation (HMO's) also adds to the pressure.
5. Parking hotspot locations, particularly at high and low rise flats and cul-de-sacs, have resulted in residents parking on grass verges and larger grassed areas causing damage to the surface. Oxford City Council initially adopted a "defensive" approach by installing bollards and trip rails to preserve the look of the estate grassed areas, and more recently, the City Council have accepted the need for more "on grass" parking by installing Grass Grid systems at various locations. These "grass grids" have had some success but are not a truly permanent solution. There is strong interest in more permanent solutions at Parish Council level as well as from the residents of the estates.
6. The proposed schemes would provide formal parking areas on existing grassed areas in five locations across the City. Providing a formal parking area with level access should discourage indiscriminate parking on grassed areas which causes damage to the surface, as well as improving highway safety by formalising accesses. The five areas are:
 - Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys
 - Monks Close, Blackbird Leys
 - Normandy Crescent, Lye Valley
 - Chillingworth Crescent, Woodfarm
7. The new spaces would be unallocated.

Officers Assessment:

Site description

8. The application site comprises an area of land in front of properties near the

top of Blackbird Leys Road, at the junction with Balfour Road. The area is grassed with several trees.

Proposal

9. It is proposed to create a formal parking area for residents comprising of 18 spaces, accessed off Balfour Road.

Visual impact and trees

10. The number of spaces at this site was derived to provide enough parking so that residents would no longer park on the existing grass areas both immediately at the site and also further along the road. The site is on a main route into the estate and it positively contributes to the appearance of the area, providing an open green space, with a number of mature trees. The creation of the parking area will result in the loss of a significant amount of this open space, but in designing the scheme, the spaces have been sited at the northern end of the strip of land so as to avoid the removal of trees. The retention of trees will help to preserve the appearance of this area, and two new trees will be planted on the Blackbird Leys frontage to provide some natural screening and to improve the verdant character of the site.
11. Providing parking spaces at this site will reduce the need for residents to park on the grass verges further down the road, where currently the surface is damaged by vehicles. To discourage further informal parking on the grass, timber posts are proposed. A condition is suggested requiring details of the timber posts to be approved to ensure they are an appropriate height and would not lead to a sense of enclosure.
12. The proposals require parking spaces to be constructed within the Root Protection Area (RPA) of two trees; however, these are low quality trees and the potentially harmful effects of root damage on these trees and on amenity in the area will be mitigated by the proposed tree planting adjacent to Blackbird Leys Road.

Access

13. Currently there is no vehicle access available to the front entrances for the houses on Blackbird Leys Rd no's 33 to 61. Any vehicles accessing the area are bumping up the kerb over highway footpath and driving across Council owned grassed areas. This practice has no formal approval. When designing schemes of this nature, disabled access is always considered. The new scheme gives vehicle access via a new entrance to the area via Balfour Rd. This entrance therefore provides approved vehicle access close to their front doors. The scheme also incorporates highway standard, DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant, level, hard surface footpath access which is ideal for wheelchair use into the new parking spaces. One of these footpaths connects the existing front door access footpath from in front of nos. 35 and 37 right into the middle of the scheme itself, thus giving flat even surface wheelchair access straight to any awaiting vehicle.

Whilst the new scheme does not have allocated spaces, if required in the future, one or two spaces could be converted to dedicated disabled parking bays.

Conclusion: Approve

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

Contact Officer: Rona Knott

Extension: 2157

Date: 29th October 2013

This page is intentionally left blank