

**CASE OFFICER'S (MSH) REPORT
ON APPLICATION NUMBER
23/02038/FUL**



**Site: 9 Windmill Road
Mortimer Common
Reading
RG7 3RN**

MEMBER EXPIRY DATE - 11/10/2023

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of 4no. 3 bed dwelling houses at 9 Windmill Road Mortimer Common Reading RG7 3RN.

The site is an undeveloped plot of land mostly consisting of unkept grass land. There are some dilapidated buildings to the rear of the site. The proposed development includes 4 dwellings arranged as two sets of 2 houses semi detached from each other. Parking would mostly be to the front of the dwelling and gardens would be to the rear.

During the course of the application the proposed parking layout and design of the dwellings were adjusted in response to comments by officers. These amendments were reconulted on with key consultees, a site notice, and letters to those who have made representations.

PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant planning history.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

EIA:

Given the nature and scale of this development, it is not considered to fall within the description of any development listed in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, EIA screening is not required.

Publicity:

Site notice displayed on 29/09/2023 at the front of the site; the deadline for representations expired on 20/10/2023.

CIL:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floorspace (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres).

CIL liability will be formally confirmed by the CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following the grant of any permission. More information is available at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil

CONSTRAINTS AND DESIGNATIONS

Within the settlement boundary of Mortimer (Urban Area under Policy ADPP1)
Outer zone of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant policies of the statutory development plan for West Berkshire are listed below. These policies can be read online at www.westberks.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026

Policies: ADPP1, ADPP6, CS1, CS4, CS5, CS8, CS13, CS14, CS19

Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026

Policies: C1 and P1

West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007

Policies: OVS.5, OVS.7, TRANS.1

Policies RS1, RS3, RS6, GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4, GD5, GD6 and B2 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017

The following are relevant materials considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Quality Design SPD (2006)
- The West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document on Quality Design (2006);
- The Stratfield Mortimer Village Design Statement (2007)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council: The Committee liked the designs submitted and believe this is a positive move on the currently un-used plot of land however object due to insufficient parking spaces assigned to each of the dwelling houses, i.e. the WBC standard Zone 3 policy (P1) of 2.5 space per 3 bed house and as adopted in Stratfield Mortimer's Neighbourhood Plan (Policy GD2) under 9.2.2 Internal & External Access and Parking in what is already a densely populated neighbourhood. It was noted that the proposed plans indicate that the existing retained property on the plot would have no parking facility at all.

The PC were consulted on amended plans during December 2023 and maintained their objection.

The PC were further consulted during March 2024 on amended plans

Highways Authority: Objections raised initially- amended plans overcame this objection.

Lead Local Flood Authority: No objection subject to conditions

Waste Management Service: No response within the 21 day consultation period

Thames Water Utilities: No response within the 21 day consultation period

Ecology Officer: No response within the 21 day consultation period.

Archaeology Officer: No objections

Environmental Health: No objections subject to conditions.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Total received:4

Object: 4

Support: 0

Ambivalent: 0

Summary of representations:

- Objection raised in regard to lack of parking and the development potentially leading to on street parking in the future if approved.
- The introduction of houses would reduce the current opportunities for on street parking in the area
- The depth of the frontage is not sufficient to provide adequate parking
- The proposed development is close to the junction of Briarlea Road and further cars, parking and on street parking would create a dangerous section of road.
- The width of Windmill Road already causes difficulties in enter and existing driveways.
- No provision for visitor parking has been made
- The height of the proposed buildings will block late afternoon and evening sunlight to the properties opposite the proposed development
- The design details for the new properties must be sympathetic to the age and style of the existing properties opposite the proposed development
- 15 parking spaces should be provided as this would comply with the 'top-end' requirement of planning policy.
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PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site is situated within the settlement boundary for Mortimer Common, where policies ADPP1, ADPP6 and C1 permit new residential development on suitable sites, subject to the following considerations. According to Core Strategy Policy ADPP1, Mortimer is a Rural Service Centre which has a range of services and reasonable public transport provision - opportunities to strengthen role in Rural Service Centres meeting requirements of surrounding communities a smaller village with a settlement boundary is suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement.

The provision of dwellings within the settlement boundary is generally in accordance with the development plan in principle. The development plan also includes general development management policies which seek to ensure that the impacts of any development are acceptable (e.g. design); such policies are considered below.

The site is located outside of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield. It falls within the outer zone in reference to CS8 to which does not require specific consultation.

DESIGN, CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

Policies CS14 and CS19 require new development to demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, policy CS19 seeks to ensure that the diversity and landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, taking into consideration the sensitivity of the area to change, and ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale, and design in the context of the settlement form, pattern and character. Policies GD1, GD5 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan also sets out design standards for residential development, also refers to further design advice for new development is contained within the Quality Design SPD.

The proposed development is arranged as two blocks of two semi detached dwellings. The dwellings would be two storey and the ridgeline and eaves height would be similar to that of adjacent buildings to the north and the south. The block plan shows the proposed dwellings accord with the established buildings lines of the adjacent dwellings. The front of the dwellings would serve as car parking which is a similar arrangement to many dwellings along Windmill Road. The design of the facades and proportions are considered high quality design, and the dwellings are considered to be a positive addition to the street scene.

During the course of the application the rear dormers were amended from big flat roofed dormers to smaller dormers with a pitched roof which presents a higher quality of design and a more interesting feature of these dwellings.

The rear gardens are considered to have sufficient length and are of a sufficient size to make them acceptable in accordance with the Councils SPG Quality Design Part 2.

Overall the design is considered to be in keeping with the character of the area and the design of the dwellings are considered acceptable in accordance with CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

The NPPF states that planning should create places with a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. Policy CS14 states that development should make a positive contribution to the quality of life. As such amenity is an important consideration.

The assessment considered the impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of

- Sunlight / daylight
- Overlooking / privacy
- Overbearing impact
- Noise and disturbance

The proposal has been assessed against the above metrics. The rear gardens are approx. 25 meters long meaning there is sufficient space between the rear of the proposed dwellings and dwellings to the west. Whilst the rear extent of the dwellings does extend beyond that of the neighbour's rear wall the proposed developments height would at this point be single storey. The proposed development is not considered to impact the neighbours to the north or south of the development site. Whilst there may be some noise during the construction phase this would be temporary and would stop when construction is finished. Conditions can be utilised to reduce disturbance during the construction period.

It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy with regards to neighbouring amenity.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

All new developments are required to comply with current adopted highway standards. The parking beat survey was taken into account; this included on on-street car parking.

Paragraph 2.5 of the TS references the NPPF Paragraph 107. This was referred to when the parking standards were compiled. West Berkshire Council's Current car parking standards are set out in the Council's Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006-2026) 5 Parking Standards for New Residential Development, Policy P1 (page 98).

Policy P1, along with all of the DPD, was examined by a government appointed Planning Inspector at an Examination In Public during July 2016. The Planning Inspector approved the DPD with Policy P1 with the Policy becoming live from May 2017. Policy P1 is an evidence-based policy, with the evidence base including survey data of parking levels across the district.

- o The Zones were compiled having regard to:
- o Accessibility of the development, including location and availability of and opportunities for public transport/car clubs;
- o Size, type, mix and use of the development.
- o Access to local services, facilities and amenities.
- o Local car ownership levels.
- o Levels of parking provision at existing local developments.

Paragraph 4.10 of the TS identifies the level of existing on-street parking in the vicinity of the site. It states that the two-vehicle shortfall could be accommodated on-street. This is contrary to West Berkshire Council's objective of ensuring that each new development can accommodate its own car parking requirements. If displaced vehicles park opposite this site this will result in insufficient forecourt for manoeuvring which is supported by the swept paths in Appendix B. No reliance should be placed on possible displacement parking on-street.

The application was subject to a number of amended design, but these have produced a scheme that meets the minimum require space numbers of 10 and Highways officer no longer object to the application. The application secures the extension of the footway across the site to access the parking.

The level of car parking proposed complies with WBC current car parking standards for these sizes of dwellings in this location.

The visibility splay crosses third party land; the onus would be on the applicant to obtain agreement with these landowners to ensure the splays can be provided. The splays are accepted given vehicle speeds in this location.

The Highways Officers have raised no objections to the application and the development is considered to comply with CS13 and P1 of the development plan.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

The site is not located in flood zones 2 or 3 or a critical drainage area, the risk of flooding is therefore considered very low.

CS16 however requires on all development sites, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS) in accordance with best practice and the proposed national standards and to provide attenuation to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development and re-development and provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity, and amenity.

Whilst initially the Lead Local Flood Authority raised concern with the proposed development given the application form states surface water will be disposed of via a soakaway, however the BGS geology viewer indicates the site is underlain by clay. SUDS Officers confirmed they would require evidence (i.e. infiltration test results) that a soakaway solution is feasible in this location. The applicant provided infiltration test results that showed infiltration was feasible. The Officers noted that the applicant has undertaken preliminary infiltration testing to a shallow depth (i.e. within the superficial deposits at circa 1.5m BGL).

The SUDS officer would require infiltration testing to be undertaken to a minimum of 1m below the base of any infiltration device to provide as much assurance as possible that the bedrock geology (i.e. London Clay Formation in this case) can absorb the loading. It was noted that the small layer of London Clay uncovered at the site was more sand based on therefore infiltration into this layer may still be feasible.

Given this information they concluded that the details provided would not alter the previous condition recommended. The case officer questioned whether the testing was sufficient and the SUDS officers have confirmed whilst not perfect testing the evidence does show that infiltration may be acceptable and this was sufficient to recommend a condition. Therefore, the SUDS officers conclusion is that the SUDS officer recommended a condition that a full SUDS design be secured.

The development is therefore in accordance with CS16 of the Core Strategy.

ECOLOGY & TREES

The application is accompanied by a preliminary Ecology report that reviewed the site and conducted a desktop study of the site. The report identifies no requirement for further surveys. It does however identify opportunity for biodiversity net gain as outlined in the report. Given CS17 of the core requires Biodiversity and geodiversity assets across West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced the Council will seek to secure these gains via planning condition. The site does not contain any Tree Protection orders and whilst the development may cause the loss of some trees on site to facilitate the development a scheme of landscaping can be secured by planning condition to ensure appropriate landscaping is replaced. The development is therefore considered in accordance with CS17 of the development plan.

ARCHAEOLOGY

This appears to be a previously undeveloped plot within an area of late 19th to early 20th century housing that developed on Mortimer Common. The Council's Archaeologist does not think there are any particular archaeological implications to this proposal.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

According to paragraph 53 of the NPPF, planning conditions should not be used to restrict permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so. It is considered appropriate to restrict development to the roof of the dwellings, further enlargement of the dormers or an additional storey of development would be an inappropriate design and may impact neighbouring amenity. It is also necessary to restrict porch and fences to the front elevation so that parking and visibility is retained as proposed within this application.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

For the reasons given above, the proposal is considered, on balance, to accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS1, CS4, CS5, CS8, CS13, CS14, CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy. Policies: C1 and P1 of Housing Site

Allocations DPD 2006-2026 and Policies RS1, RS3, RS6, GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4, GD5, GD6 and B2 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017

The officer's recommendation is for APPROVAL subject to conditions.