

**LOCATION:** WOODHALL, WOODHALL LANE, SUNNINGDALE, ASCOT, SL5 9QW

**PROPOSAL:** Erection of part two storey, part single storey 6 bedroom dwelling house with basement with associated walled courtyard to include 2 part single, part two storey buildings to provide ramped basement access and 4 self contained apartments following the demolition of existing building. (Amended plan rec'd 11/04/2016), (Additional info recv'd 18/07/16).

**TYPE:** Full Planning Application

**APPLICANT:** Ms Susanna Williams

**OFFICER:** Duncan Carty

**This application is being referred to the Committee because it follows an earlier approval SU/12/0161 for the same development by the Committee (against the officer recommendation).**

**RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE**

**1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application relates to the erection of a part two storey, part single storey six bedroomed dwellinghouse with basement with associated walled courtyard to include 2 no part single, part two storey buildings to provide ramped access and 4 no self-contained apartments following the demolition of existing buildings. The site is located at the end of the short lane, Woodhall Lane, and is located within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The report concludes that whilst there is a planning permission for this proposal, this was granted against officer advice by the Planning Applications Committee. With that permission now expired (and not commenced), and no material change in circumstance since that decision, in the same manner as the earlier officer recommendation, this application is recommended for refusal.

**2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 BGR 3882 – Convert house into five flats. Approved in June 1962 and implemented.
- 2.2 BGR 5112 - Erection of concrete garages following the demolition of wooden garages. Approved in June 1965 and implemented.
- 2.3 SU/12/0161 - Erection of a two storey detached dwelling with associated walled courtyard to contain 4 self-contained flats, following the demolition of Woodhall. this application was recommended for refusal by officers for the following reason:

*"The development proposed would constitute an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt in that it would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and would have a greater impact on openness than the development which is to be replaced. Furthermore the scale and bulk of the proposed building, the increased spread of development through the site, and the loss of trees within the site would be harmful to the rural character of the area and the visual amenity value of the Green Belt..."*

However, the Members of the Planning Applications Committee granted permission, against officer advice, in July 2012. This permission expired in July 2015 and this consent has not been implemented.

### **3.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- |     |                           |                               |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3.1 | County Highway Authority  | No objections.                |
| 3.2 | Surrey Wildlife Trust     | No objections.                |
| 3.3 | Arboricultural Officer    | No objections (verbal).       |
| 3.4 | Windlesham Parish Council | No comments received to date. |

### **4.0 REPRESENTATION**

At the time of preparation of this report no representations have been received.

### **5.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site is located at the southern end of Woodhall Lane, a private drive which serves a number of large detached properties set in spacious well landscaped plots. The application site extends to approximately 1.7ha and currently comprises a detached building in use as 8 self-contained flats and a detached garage block. As such, the site would be defined, under Annex 2 of the NPPF, as a previously developed site. The site also includes a tennis court and contains areas of formal gardens with other areas which are overgrown and semi-natural.
- 5.2 The site is bounded to the north and the west by residential properties while Sunningdale Golf Course adjoins the site to the east and south. The boundaries of the site are generally marked by dense landscaping which screens the site from the adjoining land uses. Access to the site is from Woodhall Lane.

## **6.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 6.1 The current proposal is to erect a part two storey, part single storey six bedroomed dwellinghouse with basement and associated walled courtyard including 2 no. part single storey, part two storey buildings to provide ramped basement access and 4 no. self-contained apartments following the demolition of existing buildings. The main building would have a maximum height of 10.0 metres, with a maximum width of 52.5 metres (33.6 metres at a two storey height) and depth of 20.6 metres.
- 6.2 The proposal is the same as that previously approved under SU/12/0161.

## **7.0 PLANNING ISSUES**

- 7.1 The current proposal follows an earlier planning permission SU/12/0161 for the same development. This application was considered by the Planning Applications Committee in July 2011 to be acceptable, against officer advice, in terms of its impact on the Green Belt.
- 7.2 This application is assessed against:
- Impact on the Green Belt, character and trees;
  - Impact on streetscene;
  - Impact on the loss of residential stock;
  - Impact on residential amenity;
  - Impact on highway safety;
  - Impact on ecology; and
  - Impact on local infrastructure.

### **7.3 Impact on the Green Belt, character and trees**

- 7.3.1 The current proposal would be located in the Green Belt. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF confirms that *"the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green belts are their openness and their permanence."* Paragraph 80 also confirms that one of the purposes of Green Belt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
- 7.3.2 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF indicates that the construction of new buildings would be inappropriate except in a number of circumstances. These circumstances include *"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use..., which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and purposes of including land within it than the existing development"*. The officer report for the previous application indicated that the proposal amounted to an increase in the floorspace on the site from 1,478 to 2,598 square metres which represents a 76% increase in floorspace. The current proposal due to the increased size and

spread of development across the site would have a detrimental impact on openness and would, by association, have an urbanising effect conflicting with one of the purposes of the Green Belt.

- 7.3.3 Area A1 of TPO No. 10/10 relates to the application site. The current proposal would result in the loss of a number of trees on this site. These trees are principally located central to the plot and the tree cover will be maintained to site boundaries and this level of loss is the same as the previously approved scheme SU/12/0161, and no objections have been raised to the proposal by the Arboricultural Officer. However, this loss also forms a part of the urbanisation of the site, and is detrimental to the rural character of the site and local area.
- 7.3.4 There has been no change in policy, and no other considerations presented to change the officer's opinion on this current application. Consistent, therefore, with the 2012 application officer's recommendation, this application is recommended for refusal on Green Belt grounds. In the officer's opinion, the 2012 permission carries very limited weight as this decision has expired and was never implemented. There would, however, appear to be no change in circumstance since the Members of the Planning Applications Committee previously deemed the proposal to be acceptable, despite the officer's recommendations. Members previously considered that the reduction in the number of units (and corresponding traffic movements and general activity), the size of the surrounding properties/plots meant that there were very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

#### **7.4 Impact on streetscene**

- 7.4.1 The application site is located at the end of a private road which serves a number of large detached houses set within large well landscaped plots. The application site reflects this character. The proposed development whilst providing a large principal dwelling on this site, the dwelling would be located broadly within the centre of the site and the mature landscaping on the boundaries of the site would ensure that the development would not be overly visible from the public highway. No objections are raised to the proposal on streetscene grounds.
- 7.4.2 As such, there are no objections on streetscene grounds, with the proposal complying, in this respect, with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

#### **7.5 Impact on the loss of residential stock**

- 7.5.1 Policy CP3 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 indicates that in making provision for additional dwellings within the borough, the Council will resist "*any development that involves a net loss of housing unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the harm.*" In respect of the earlier application SU/12/0161, the officer report indicated that whilst the proposal had been in use as weight flats, the lawful use of the building was as

five units (under BGR 3882) with the three extra units having been converted without the benefit of planning permission. The report concluded that *“in light of this it is considered that no objection could be raised to the loss of these units and it can be concluded that the development would retained the [authorised] stock of residential units on this site.”*

- 7.5.2 As such, no objections are raised to the loss of residential accommodation in this case, with the proposal complying with Policy CP3 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

## **7.6 Impact on residential amenity**

- 7.6.1 The nearest residential properties to the application site, the Pines to the west and Woodhall Grange to the north) are set some distance from the mutual boundaries with the application site. In addition, the development is set in from these boundaries, with heavy landscaping in between. As such, and in the same manner as the approved application SU/12/0161, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity complying, in this respect, with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

## **7.7 Impact on highway safety**

- 7.7.1 The current proposal would provide 11 parking spaces to support this proposal, which would meet parking standards, and would result in reduced traffic movements due to the reduction in the number of units at the site. The County Highway Authority has not raised an objection to this proposal. As such, and in the same manner as the approved application SU/12/0161, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on highway safety complying with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

## **7.8 Impact on ecology**

- 7.8.1 The application site adjoins Sunningdale Golf Course which is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and is identified for its heathland and grassland habitat. The application site itself also contains habitat features capable of supporting protected species including grassland, rough vegetation and mature trees. An ecological assessment has been provided which indicates that bat activity and roosting occurs within the existing building for which mitigation is proposed. This mitigation includes at the stripping/demolition phase; the removal of identified bat roost areas and features by a licensed bat worker (and under licence from Natural England); all external lighting to directed away from trees; and, replacement roosting facilities provided within the replacement building. The Surrey Wildlife Trust has raised no objections to this approach but expressed a need for further surveys of bat activity within the trees to be removed. This report has been provided which recommends that for the seven trees to be lost, with potential to support roosting bats, a precautionary sectional felling approach be adopted. On the basis of this report, the comments of the Trust are awaited. Subject to no objections being raised by the Trust to tis approach, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable on ecological grounds, complying with Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

## **7.9 Impact on local infrastructure**

7.9.1 Surrey Heath's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted by Full Council on the 16th July 2014. As the CIL Charging Schedule came into effect on the 1st December 2014 an assessment of CIL liability has been undertaken. Surrey Heath charges CIL on residential and retail developments where there is a net increase in floor area of 100 square metres or more. This development would be CIL liable and the final figure would need to be agreed following the submission of the necessary forms. For example, the applicant is claiming part exemption due to the provision of affordable housing and at the time of writing the final amount of social housing relief is unknown. However, on the basis of the information submitted to date the amount of CIL payable would be in the region of £48,355. Informatives would be added to the decision advising the applicant of the CIL requirements.

## **8.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER**

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of Paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included 1 or more of the following:-

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.
- c) Have suggested/accepted/negotiated amendments to the scheme to resolve identified problems with the proposal and to seek to foster sustainable development.
- d) Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise progress, timescale or recommendation.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE for the following reason(s):-

1. The proposed development would by reason of its floor area, scale, bulk and spread of development across the site would represent an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt in that it would have a greater impact on openness than the development which is to be replaced and, by association, would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. There are no very special circumstances to outweigh the

inappropriateness and harm of the development and, furthermore, the loss of trees within the site would be harmful to the rural character of the area and the visual amenity value of the Green Belt. The development would therefore be contrary to the policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and would conflict with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

Informative(s)

1. Advise CIL Liable on Appeal CIL3