

Application No: 10/00071/F	Ward: Launton	Date Valid: 19/1/10
Applicant:	Sanctuary Group	
Site Address:	Garage area rear of Buchanan Road, Upper Arncott	

Proposal: Erection of 6 no. Dwellings. Demolition of Garage Blocks (as amended by plans received 12/2/10).

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of six, semi detached, two storey units of affordable housing consisting of three 2 bedroom houses and three 3 bedroom houses. They will occupy the space created by the demolition of 24 garages on land to the rear of 41-57 Buchanan Road. The area around the garages is hard landscaped with concrete. The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor are there any listed buildings in close proximity to the site.
- 1.2 The area surrounding the site consists entirely of housing, the majority of which is two storey terraced or semi detached. Several bungalows lie to the north of the site, within Constable's Croft.
- 1.3 The site is accessed via Buchanan Road, with the proposed dwellings occupying the western end of the site. Each dwelling is to be provided with two dedicated parking spaces and a private rear garden.
- 1.4 The scheme also proposes one new and the formalising of one existing parking area. The new parking area will provide 8 spaces, and the formalised parking area will provide 16 spaces that will be demarcated to maximise the area's functionality and capacity. The applicant's agents have undertaken a parking survey report which provides a quantitative analysis of both garage occupancy and current parking levels on the site. This is discussed in more detail below in the section addressing highway safety.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by site notices, neighbour letter and press notice. The final date for comment was 26 February 2010. At the time of writing the report 15 letters of objection and 3 letters of comment have been received which are summarised below:

2.2 The following material planning considerations have been raised;

- Flooding/drainage issues with regard to the ditch running through the site
- Accessibility and usage with regard to parking and refuse collection
- Loss of trees
- Lack of community facilities to accommodate new development
- Overlooking & loss of privacy
- overshadowing
- Access serving the site is inadequate
- Loss of parking & increase in traffic
- Residents not informed about planning application
- Unclear from plans whether brick wall to rear of no.31 is to be retained

The following non-material considerations have been raised;

- Noise and disturbance created by construction traffic
- Would prefer to see development near the Tally Ho Hotel

3. Consultations

3.1 Arncott Parish Council have yet to comment on the proposal.

3.2 Oxfordshire County Council Highway Authority raise no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.

3.3 Thames Water raises no objection to the proposal.

3.4 Environment Agency has assessed the proposal as having a low environmental risk.

3.5 Head of Planning and Affordable Housing Policy raises no objection to the proposal.

3.6 Natural England raises no objection to the application.

3.7 Head of Building Control and Engineering Services raises no objection to the proposal.

3.8 The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has not commented on the proposal.

4. Relevant Planning Policies

4.1 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

4.2 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

- 4.3 Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport
- 4.4 South East Plan 2009 – Policies CC1, CC6, H2, H3, H5, BE1 and T1
- 4.5 Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 – Saved Policies H6, C28 and C30

5. Appraisal

- 5.1 The key issues to consider are the principle of the development, the design and layout of the development, the impact on neighbouring properties, the impact upon highway safety and flooding/drainage issues.
- 5.2 Principle

PPS3 sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives and states that the specific outcomes that the planning system should deliver including housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure, and a flexible, responsive supply of land managed in a way that makes efficient and effective use of land, including the re-use of previously developed land.

5.3 These objectives should be achieved by making effective use of land, existing infrastructure and include the consideration of the opportunity for housing provision on surplus public sector land to create mixed use developments.

Relevant regional planning policy is to be found in SE Plan Policy H3 that seeks to promote a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing throughout the region. This policy particularly encourages the securing of small scale affordable housing sites within or well related to rural settlements.

5.4 Arncott is included in the list of Category 2 settlements in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. This restricts new housing development to infill sites or conversions. This is not an infill site, and therefore the proposal is contrary to Policy H14 of that plan. However Policy H6 of the same Plan allows the development of 'exception sites' where the site can be guaranteed to meet a specific and identified local housing need, and where secure arrangements can be made to secure this occupancy into the future.

The application proposes the construction of a 100% affordable housing scheme by an RSL, and that aims to meet a need within the village of Arncott that has been identified by the Councils Housing Services Team. The mix of tenure and nomination rights will need to be secured. Discussions are ongoing about whether this needs to be via a Section 106 agreement or can otherwise be achieved via the sale of this Council-owned land. The dwellings will be conditioned to be built to the

HCA Design and Quality Standards, plus Lifetime Homes standards, which are those which can be adapted to enable people to stay in them even when they are afflicted with old age and infirmity.

Consequently, the HDC&MD considers that the principle of the use of this previously developed land within the village of Arncott to provide affordable housing to meet an identified need for affordable housing is acceptable.

5.5 Design, Layout and Landscaping

It is vitally important that the design and the layout of the site is carefully considered to ensure the development respects the existing character of Arncott, whilst providing a high quality built environment which can contribute towards the creation of a sustainable, mixed community as required by PPS1 and PPS3. In particular PPS3 states that development should 'create places, streets and spaces, which meet the needs of people, are visually attractive, safe, functional, inclusive, have their own identity and maintain and improve local character' (para 14).

The layout of the proposed dwellings is considered acceptable and the best option for the site, given its proximity to neighbouring properties and the size and shape of the site. The layout is fairly traditional with three sets of semi-detached dwellings fronting onto each other and making the best use of the space available and providing each dwelling with an adequately sized garden. Car parking spaces are proposed to the front of each of the dwellings, serving each house, which is appropriate and which are also surrounded by some landscaping. Eight additional parking spaces are proposed to the North of the site, providing replacement parking. The location of this additional parking is considered appropriate as it is set away from most dwellings, helping reduce any possible disturbance that could be caused. The pedestrian pavements will connect into the existing pedestrian network, which helps to ensure that the development integrates into the local area, rather than being separate. Bin stores are located to the rear or side of each dwelling, which ensures they are not prominent in the site. One area of consideration has been the appearance when entering the site and approaching the new houses, in particular the side elevation and possible appearance of the boundary treatment to the side of the northern property in block 1. However careful consideration has been given to the boundary treatment for this property, which includes a brick wall and fencing combination and the inclusion of some landscaping which will soften the entrance to the site and forms an acceptable solution. This layout is considered to create a safe and accessible environment.

The design of the proposed dwellings is interesting and modern and are proposed to be render over brick. Although this is different to the majority of the dwellings in the surrounding area, which are predominantly brick, the character of the area is not unduly sensitive and can support a different style of dwelling without significant harm being caused to the visual amenity of the local area. In particular the dwelling on the northern property in block 1 has a canopy area with a front door facing onto the side, which adds further interest to the scheme and provides a feature to

improve the appearance of the development when entering the site. Conditions have been included to require a full schedule of the materials to be used and of boundary treatments, to ensure the Council is satisfied with the details of the scheme.

Landscaping is to be included mainly surrounding the eight additional parking spaces and at the entrance to the site. Full details of all landscaping for the site has been required by a condition to ensure it is appropriate and helps the scheme to blend into the local area and to ensure it is appropriate for the design of the site.

The design and layout of the site is considered acceptable and will help to create a high quality environment, with its own identity, however respecting the character of Arncott. The proposal is considered to comply with PPS1 and PPS3 and Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan in this respect.

5.6 Neighbour Amenity

The impact of the proposed development upon neighbouring properties has been assessed in line with the Council's normal space about buildings standards which require that the minimum distance between habitable room windows and a windowless elevation should be 14 metres and that the distance between habitable room windows that face each other should be 22 metres. When applying this guidance to the proposed development the minimum distances are exceeded in all cases.

Saved Policy C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that design control will be exercised to ensure "*That new housing development...provides standards of amenity and privacy acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.*" The HDC&MD is satisfied that the proposed development would not result in significant detriment to the privacy or amenity of neighbouring properties and that it accords with Policy C30.

5.7 Highway Safety

The Local Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions 10-14 below.

The applicants undertook a quantitative garage & parking survey of the occupancy and use of the existing site, at the request of the Local Highway Authority prior to the submission of the application. The area surveyed included two other garage blocks in the locality. The quantity of vehicles accessing the garage blocks and parked on the site (including their positions) was recorded at ten minute intervals during the survey period. Surveys were carried out on Wednesday 9th December 2009, Friday 11th December 2009 and Saturday 12th December 2009 between 08.00-09.00 and 16.00-18.00 hours. The results of the study has informed what would constitute suitable parking provision on the site, both for the new housing

proposed and to re-provide adequate spaces for other users.

The survey concluded that at present, just under half of the 42 garages across three garage courts are in use. At present there are 12 garages being used on this site by 10 different tenants. The applicants are proposing to provide each of the 10 garage tenants with an alternative garage a short walk from their existing garage.

During the survey period, a maximum of 19 parked vehicles were recorded on the site. The proposed scheme will provide 24 formal parking spaces, which are separate from the 12 on plot parking spaces provided for the 6 dwellings. It is considered that this parking provision will serve the demand from both existing and new users of the site, an assertion which is supported by the findings of the survey and by the Local Highway Authority.

In light of the Local Highway Authority's response and survey conclusions, the proposal is not considered to be detrimental to highway safety, in accordance with advice contained within PPG 13 and Policy T1 of the South East Plan.

5.8 Flooding and Drainage

A number of residents have raised concerns with regard to surface water flooding and drainage problems within the existing site. The area is not located within a flood plain. Furthermore, the Environment Agency considers this proposal as having a low environmental risk and Thames Water raise no objection to the proposal.

The proposal involves the formation of garden areas within the individual plots and soft landscaping along the north eastern boundary of the site, which will reduce the amount of surface water run off from the existing hard surfaced (concrete) areas. Furthermore, the formalised parking areas will be conditioned to be constructed, laid out, surfaced, drained and completed in accordance with appropriate specification details to ensure the proper drainage of the site. Additionally, the access road within the site is proposed to be constructed to adoptable standards, which will require the road to be appropriately surfaced and drained to the County Council's standards.

Notwithstanding the above, following numerous objections received in relation to drainage on the site and flooding, the Head of Building Control and Engineering Services has been consulted on this proposal. He has stated the following in response to the proposal;

The site is currently served by a surface water sewer which outfalls through a piped system at the south west corner of the site. It is proposed to continue to use this outfall though the sewer on the site will have to be re-located to fit into the development layout. Because the impermeable area of the site will reduce, run off to the outfall will in future also reduce.

The large ditch receives run off from the fields to the east of Buchanan Road. Its current condition is poor and it clearly has not received any meaningful attention for a considerable time. It appears to discharge at the north western corner of the development site into a small culvert which passes under private land towards Murcott Road. It is doubtful also that this culvert has received any meaningful attention for a considerable time.

It is proposed that a connection will be made at the downstream end of the ditch into the surface water system that will serve the development site. Therefore, an alternative outfall will be provided to the existing poorly maintained culvert in order to reduce the flood risk in this locality.

It is also proposed as part of this development that the ditch is substantially improved through the removal of brambles and weed growth within it and through the evening out of its invert to increase its hydraulic capacity. Increasing the effective cross section of the ditch will also provide greater attenuation volume in the event that both outfalls are unable to discharge extreme flood flows.

This development offers the opportunity to improve the drainage and reduce the flood risk in this locality by:

- a) reducing the impermeable area of the development site and thus the run off from it.*
- b) improving the ditch along the northern boundary of the site and providing an alternative outfall from it thus placing less reliance on the sub-standard culvert to which it currently discharges.*

As such, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on surface water or drainage within the site and provides an opportunity to improve drainage and reduce flood risk.

5.9 Other matters raised

Objections have been received in relation to the lack of community facilities in Arncott and that this development will exacerbate this problem. The development is below the threshold applied by this Council (10 dwellings or more) which would require financial contributions towards infrastructure improvement. However, the recently constructed Buchanan Road/Greenfields site within close proximity to the site secured significant financial contributions towards the local infrastructure, including provision of a Local Area of Play, off site sports facilities in the locality, contributions towards the provision secondary education facilities etc.

One resident has raised concerns regarding the loss of the red brick wall which forms the north western boundary between the site and no's 31 and 33 Murcott Road. The agents have stated that if the wall is in the applicant's ownership the quality and condition of the wall will need to be established before a decision is made on whether it should be retained or replaced in the new works. However, it is

assumed that this boundary treatment will need to be changed (to a 1.8m close boarded fence) in the current plans, the details of which will be required by condition.

6. Recommendation

Approve, subject to

(i) Confirmation of the need or otherwise of a legal agreement regarding nomination rights and tenure mix.

(ii) the following Conditions

1. 1.4A - Full Permission: Duration Limit (3 years) (RC2)
2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: Drawing no's TR291006/01, SLP02, P05, S02, S01, P01 Rev A, P02 Rev A, P08, P04 Rev A, P06 Rev A and P07 Rev A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009.

3. That the dwellings hereby approved shall remain as affordable dwellings, defined as housing (either for outright sale, rent, shared equity or staircasing to full ownership) within the financial means of households that are otherwise unable to secure private sector housing for purchase or rent in prevailing economic circumstances.

Reason – The site is in an area where permission for development unrelated to a specific and identified local housing need would not normally be granted, and this consent is only granted on the basis of there being demonstrated a specific and identified local housing need, in accordance with Policy H3 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy H5 of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

4. That the dwellings hereby approved shall be constructed to the HCA Design and Quality Standards, and to Lifetime Homes standards.

Reason – To ensure that the development provides high quality and inclusive design principles, functions well and adds to the overall character and quality of the area over the lifetime of the development, in accordance with PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and Policy CC4 of the South East Plan 2009.

5. 2.0A – Details of Materials and External Finishes (RC4A) insert ‘new dwellings’
6. 2.8A – Colouring: Walls etc (RC4A) insert ‘render for the dwellings’
7. 2.10A – Floor levels (RC7A)
8. 3.0A – Submit landscaping scheme (RC10A)

9. 3.7AA – Submit boundary enclosure details (more than one dwelling) (RC12AA)
10. 4.3AA – Access details for approval (RC13BB)
11. 4.4AA – Vision splay details (RC13BB) (first dwelling) (0.5 metre)
12. 4.9AB – New estate roads (RC14AA)
13. 4.10AA – Estate Accesses, Driveways (RC14AA)
14. 4.13CD – Parking and Manoeuvring (RC13BB)
15. 6.2AA – Residential – No extensions (RC32A)
16. 6.6AB – Residential – No conversion of garage (RC35AA)

Planning Notes:

1. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.

REASON FOR THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council, as local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicated otherwise. Incorporating and adhering to the above conditions, the development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposal would provide affordable dwellings to meet an identified local need and are of a design, scale and density that is appropriate in its context and would not cause detriment to highway safety, amenities of neighbouring properties or the visual amenity of the wider locality. As such the proposal is in accordance with Government guidance contained within PPS 1, PPS 3 and PPG 13, Policies CC1, CC6, H2, H3, H5, BE1 and T1 of the South East Plan 2009 and saved Policies H6, C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996, and for the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised including third party representations, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions as set out above.

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