

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council – comments on Planning Application P22/S2363/FUL

Introduction

This application is for the triangle of land which was an integral part of GNP6 in the Neighbourhood Plan. It has a different landowner to the main part of GNP6 which is still the subject of a planning application in its own right which excludes the triangle area. GNP6 as a whole is intended to provide 46 dwellings.

GNP6 in its entirety is covered by Policy 8 of the NP with regard to Site Specific Conditions. With regard to the triangle part of GNP6, Policy 8 states that it is allocated for:

“... a line of no more than 4 houses, set back from the Wallingford Road along the extrapolation of the existing building line on that side of the road, and of similar design to the existing adjacent houses and the houses opposite. Roof lines should be kept as low as practicable and no higher than the height of the adjacent house such that they appear to drop down the topography.”

The principle of development on the triangle has therefore been established although the NP envisaged four smaller houses rather than three 4-bedroom dwellings.

Number of houses and housing mix

Policy.03 of the NP stipulates that development proposals that provide a significant proportion of one, two and three-bedroom properties will be supported. This proposal is for three 4-bedroom properties which is contrary to policy.03. It is also contrary to the SODC SHMA required housing mix as below:

No. of Bedrooms	1	2	3	4
Percentage	5.7%	26.7%	43.4%	24.7%

Policy 08 SSR1 requires that at least 35 of the 46 new dwellings on the whole GNP6 site shall be 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms.

- **GPC objects to the proposed housing mix. If an application for three new dwellings is supported then at least 2 of these houses should be 2 or 3-bedroom.**
- **GPC would prefer the application to be resubmitted for four new dwellings all with 2 or 3-bedroom. There are semi-detached houses on the opposite side of Wallingford Road so 4 semi-detached properties would be appropriate here.**

Affordable houses

Policy H9 of the SOLP2035 requires 40% affordable housing on all sites in the AONB with a net gain of five or more dwellings or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. GNP Policy.03 also requires 40% affordable houses on the allocated site.

SODC states in its pre-application advice that to prevent the artificial subdivision of sites with the same landowner, where land is subdivided to create separate development schemes that cumulatively meet the thresholds of this policy, the council will consider the site as a whole and will seek affordable housing on each part. Although GNP6 has two different landowners, it was proposed to the NP as one site; the policies of the plan treat the triangle area as part of GNP6 and the policies of the plan should apply accordingly.

- **GPC recommends that at least one of the new houses should be an affordable dwelling, or at least be required to contribute proportionally to the provision of affordable dwellings within the overall allocated site.**
- **GPC recommends that the developer also be required to contribute proportionally to other mitigations for the whole site, for example, the play area, public open space, Wallingford Road crossing and regeneration of the orchard.**

Access

This is a sensitive site at the rural, northern entrance to the village and the GNP went to great lengths to ensure that development here would be discrete, low rise with minimal visual impact. The site is elevated above the road and, to reduce the visual impact of the houses, the design should ensure that the buildings are set back from the road, 'sit down' low in the site and are well-landscaped and planted whilst retaining safe visibility (Policy.08 SSR2 and SSR4).

The applicant states that the frontage is intended to reflect the rural environment eg post and rail fences, local species mixed hedges as required by SSR4. However, no plans or sight line diagrams are provided to show the degree of visibility of the dwellings when approaching the site, particularly from the north.

- **GPC requests that contextualised, scaled plans and sight-line drawings be submitted to illustrate the view of the site when approaching from the north and south, to ensure the buildings are as discrete as possible in the rural village edge setting and to assess how they fit into the street scene.**

Two new accesses onto Wallingford Rd are proposed for the new dwellings. Access splays and gradients must be agreed with highway engineers and should be mindful of gradients and the need to minimise the impact of headlights on residents opposite (Policy.08 SSR4).

In addition, Officers need to be aware that a third access point onto Wallingford Rd already exists at the northern edge of the site and this is shown in the plans as continuing to exist after the site is developed. The status of the track leading to the rear of the property should be clarified. Its relationship to the potential new access road into the main GNP6 site immediately to the north also needs to be defined.

- **GPC believes that the applicant must demonstrate that three vehicular accesses to the frontage of this site are acceptable and meet the technical requirements of the Highway Authority.**
- **GPC would like clarification about the status and role of the track leading to the rear of the 'triangle' and its egress and traffic load onto Wallingford Rd.**

Design and Materials

GNP Policy.08 SSR2 requires *"no more than a line of 4 houses set back from the Wallingford Rd along an extrapolation of the existing building line on that side of the road"*

The Design and Access Statement claims that the dwellings are set back by 15m from the road, though this cannot be verified from the site plan. The site plan does show that the dwellings do not line up with the neighbouring property (86 Wallingford Rd) and lie approximately 5m in front of the building line, though again accurate measurement is impossible from the site plan.

Policy.08 SSR 2 requires that roof lines should be kept as low as practicable and no higher than the adjacent house such that they appear to drop down with the topography. The current proposal does not show how the development relates to its neighbours or fits into the street scene. Building elevations and roof heights will determine the degree visual impact and should be significantly lower than those at neighbouring 86 Wallingford Rd, where the house is on higher ground and its roof dominating.

This proposal does not conform to Policy.08 SSR2.

Policy.08 SSR 6 requires that buildings should be no higher than 2 storeys, with rooms in the roof if appropriate. The new dwellings would ideally be 1.5 storeys high, with dormer windows, in keeping with others in this stretch of road and in keeping with a village environment. However, the designs shown in the proposal have an ungainly, top-heavy appearance, mainly because the roof height seems to be unnecessarily tall and out of scale with the rest of the frontage. Proposed elevations do not show how the basements relate to the external appearance of the buildings or how they contribute to the overall height and bulk of the dwellings.

- **GPC would like to see scale drawings to illustrate the relationship of the new dwellings with each other and with 86 Wallingford Rd, in respect of building line, building height and roof height.**
- **GPC believes that more detailed plans are required to determine if the location and building design meet GNP's policy requirements.**

GNP Policy 16 and Policy.08 SSR06 require new buildings to conform to the provisions of SODC's Design Guide (2022) and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. New buildings should respect the local environment, placing importance on preserving the heritage of the village and distinctive local character, for example by using natural materials. The roofs of these buildings will potentially be visible in distant views from the North Wessex Downs AONB so care must be taken to use natural materials and subdued colours where possible, particularly for roof tiles which can be visible from distant points if insensitive colours are chosen.

Landscape and visual impact – mitigation screening

Policy.08 SSR4 (landscape impact) and SSR11 (net gain in biodiversity) require mitigation planting of suitable native species a) to provide screening of oblique views of the new dwellings and their hard landscaping to preserve the character of the rural landscape and b) to ensure new habitat corridors in the form of hedgerows and/or tree belts are provided on the site boundaries. The northern boundary, viewed from AONB countryside, will be sensitive to visual intrusion, will require substantial planting reinforcement and subsequent protection from removal.

- **GPC recommends that, before permission is granted, more detailed planting schemes are provided to guarantee that boundary screening issues are addressed.**
- **If permission is granted, GPC requests a condition to put in place a legal agreement to ensure that residents of properties containing or neighbouring the screening are not able to remove, reduce or materially modify the screening.**