

Planning Application to Build four House at Wakeham Farm

Reviewed at SMPC Meeting on 6 December 2021

Background

Wakeham Farm was shortlisted for consideration as a potential site for additional housing during preparation of the South Milton Neighbourhood Plan. The option was dropped when owners of the site did not respond to requests for further information needed to complete a detailed evaluation.

Wakeham Farm was purchased by the applicant in September 2019. Since then, the applicant has been refurbishing the converted barns and farmhouse that already had planning permission.

This application covers the remainder of the farmyard comprising derelict farm buildings. In reviewing this application, Councillors took account of its setting within the Wakeham Farm landholding including the exiting barn conversions, the existing farmhouse, and the meadow to the East.

Review in relation to SMNP

Parish Councillors expressed gratitude that the applicant had kept them informed about the progress and evolution of the proposed development. Councillors noted that the development proposed in this application differs significantly from the original proposals.

During the review, representatives from the applicant were present and responded to requests from Councillors for clarifications and further details.

This document summarises the discussions and conclusions that led to the Parish Council's decision on this application.

Parish Councillors reviewed this application solely with reference to South Milton Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP). The key questions raised by this planning application are:

1. Is the proposed development considered to be "infill"?
2. Does the proposed development comply with the SMNP policies?
3. Does the proposed development impact (beneficially or adversely) on South Milton "*being an even better place in which to live and work*" and on other matters set out in the SMNP narrative?

Infill

The proposed development comprises four dwellings on land that is currently occupied by derelict barns. Much of the site comprises a wooded hillside which will remain untouched, apart from landscaping works. Councillors concluded that the proposed housing is infill as:

- The proposed dwellings are bordered on three sides by housing (Links Road/Luggers/Shute Lane) as well as the existing barns and farmhouse within the Wakeham Farm landholding. For the record, Councillors also agreed that any housing development on the meadow within the Wakeham Farm landholding to the East of the application site would not be classified as infill; and

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- The proposed dwellings will replace derelict barns (a brownfield site).

Councillors also recorded that if the proposed development had not been classified as infill, it would not be supported by the Parish Council.

SMNP Policies

Environment and Coastal Management

Councillors concluded that the proposed development complies with the specific requirements set out in the sub-clauses a) to e) of Policy E&CM1. The four dwellings are sited in a bowl and screened by trees and the local topography. Though barely visible, the dwellings replace derelict barns and are more in keeping in the setting in this part of the village.

Councillors concluded that the proposed development complies with the specific requirements set out in the sub-clause c) of Policy E&CM2, as the dwellings will not be visible from the coast path.

Councillors concluded that Policy E&CM3 is not applicable, as the four dwellings will occupy an area that was taken up by defunct and now derelict barns.

The planning application is supported by extensive documentation on ecology and landscaping. Councillors concluded that the measures set out would avoid or mitigate any potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and therefore the proposed development complies with Policy E&CM4.

Housing

As Councillors had concluded the proposed development of four dwellings is infill, Policies H1 to H3 do not apply.

As there are less than five dwelling units in the proposed development, Councillors reviewed the application against the policies set out in the first three bullets of Policy H4 only. Councillors expressed concern about incremental development. For the avoidance of doubt, Councillors also recorded that if there were any future applications for new housing on the Wakeham Farm site (including the existing courtyard), the final two bullets of Policy H4 would apply. **Councillors also supported restrictions being imposed on permitted development rights;** the District Councillors present indicated that this would be considered when the application was reviewed by the district planners.

Councillors were very concerned that the new dwellings would all become second homes and were pleased to note the applicant's commitment in the planning statement: *The homes will be designed to provide suitable accommodation to encourage working families to settle in the village to assist with diversification of the population.* This was reaffirmed by the applicant's representatives at the meeting.

Cultural and Environmental Heritage of the Parish

Councillors concluded that the documentation submitted with the planning application demonstrated that the proposed development respected the cultural and environmental heritage of the parish (Policy H4, bullet 1). Reducing or removing the trees, specially the Leylandii, on the Luggers and Shute Lane sides of the site will improve the setting of the conservation area, particularly when viewed from the centre of the village.

Representations were received from neighbours about treatment of the trees bordering the Luggers/Shute Lanes sides of the application site, specifically whether the Leylandii should be cut down or removed and replaced with native species. Councillors agreed that this was

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an important issue and could not be resolved at the meeting; **Councillor's support for the application would be conditional on this matter being resolved.** The applicant's representatives recognised this concern and had left treatment of these trees open in the submission. They undertook to pursue the matter.

Entry Points and Protected Views

Councillors concluded that the documentation submitted with the planning application demonstrated that the proposed development did not adversely affect entry points to the village or protected views (Policy H4, bullet 2).

Design and Construction

Councillors concluded that the layout, design and materials set out in the documentation submitted with the planning application demonstrated that the proposed development reflected the character and appearance of the parish and, would make a positive contribution since the dwellings would replace derelict barns (Policy H4, bullet 3). Representations were made by a neighbour that white render should be avoided but there were differing views on this. Councillors agreed that this was matter of taste and the overall objective of the design should be to blend with the surroundings and that the submission met this objective.

Councillors concluded that the proposed development complied with Policy H4 of the SMNP.

Employment

The proposed development does not include any offices or workplace and therefore Policy EMP1 of the SMNP does not apply.

SMNP Narrative

Councillors concluded that the proposed development does not compromise the vision or the objectives set out in the SMNP.

Councillors recorded that the application had submitted extensive documentation which included commitments to adopt specific designs and practices in completing the project. Councillors were particularly concerned that the requirements set out in respect of landscaping (border treeline), ecology (reptiles) and drainage and flooding (control of erosion during construction) are followed. If the application is approved, it should be conditional on these commitments being met.

Conclusion

The Parish Council resolved to support this planning application on condition that the commitments to specific designs and practices set out in the documentation supporting the application are met. The Parish Council also agreed that restrictions should be imposed on permitted development rights and that these should be set by the district council planners.