

**REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE**

Report No.

Date of Meeting	30th July 2008
Application Number	08/01262/FUL
Site Address	Westwood, Startley, Chippenham SN15 5HE
Proposal	Demolition of Existing dwelling and Erection of Replacement Dwelling and Siting of Residential Caravan
Applicant	Mr and Mrs Haines
Town/Parish Council	Great Somerford
Grid Ref	394521 182022
Type of application	Full Application

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application has been submitted to the Committee for decision under the scheme of delegation in force after the 8th April 2002 because Councillors Sturgis and Scott have requested that the application be considered by committee so that the issue of the demolition of the existing house and replacement dwelling policy can be debated by Members.

Summary of Report

This application proposes the replacement of a bungalow with a two-storey dwelling and detached garage. The site is at Startley where there is no framework boundary and therefore the key points to consider are as follows:

- Implications on DC Core Policy C3
- Implications on Policy H4 which deals with residential development in the countryside
- Affect of the residential amenity of existing properties
- Design and scale of the development

Officer Recommendation

Planning Permission be REFUSED

Contact Officer	Alison Grogan	01249 706671	agrogan@northwilts.gov.uk
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Proposal and Site Description

This application proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling which is a dormer bungalow with an integral garage and its replacement with a two-storey dwelling and detached garage.

The site is within the village of Startley, which has no framework boundary. The village is very linear with the majority of the houses fronting onto the main street with open fields behind. The existing dwelling is at a slight angle to the properties either side. There is a two-storey dwelling, Fairlawne, to the south of the site and a bungalow, The Elms, to the north.

Planning History		
Application number	Proposal	Decision
08/00753/FUL	Replacement Dwelling and Siting of Residential Caravan	Withdrawn

Consultations

Great Somerford Parish Council – no objections

Wiltshire County Council Highways – raise no objection subject to conditions.

Representations

One letter of objection has been received.

Summary of key points raised:

- Acknowledge that the dwelling needs updating but disappointed that demolition is proposed as the bungalow is solidly constructed from finely cut stone and as such is one of the more interesting buildings in the village.
- Unlike other replacement dwellings in the village, Westwood appears far from the end of its useful life and to demolish raises questions about the sustainability issues surrounding the application.
- Choice of red brick is not in keeping with the majority of buildings in Startley which tend to be stone or rendered and painted. The brick built period cottages are of a much smaller scale and constructed of handmade bricks which have weathered to give a mellow appearance. New machine brick would be of visually harsh appearance and would doubtless 'stick out like a sore thumb'. Recommend a visit to the site to ascertain this.
- The application states that the property has been empty for two years, however, the property became vacant in March 2007 and the current owners have been resident on the property for some time now.

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

As the site is outside the framework boundary of any village the application must be considered with regard to Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, and specifically part (ii), which states:

"(ii) It is a replacement for an existing dwelling where:

- a. The residential use has not been abandoned; and
- b. the existing dwelling is incapable of retention in its current state, is unsightly or is out of character with its surroundings and
- c. the replacement dwelling is of a similar size and scale to the existing dwelling within the same curtilage."

It is acknowledged that the residential use of the dwelling has not been abandoned, however, it is considered that the proposal does not comply with the other criteria in Policy H4.

It is stated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanied the application that the dwelling could be retained and reasons have been put forward as to why it should be replaced. The reasons given are from a financial and practical point of view and also that the new dwelling would be more energy efficient as it would have a lower carbon footprint.

Policy H4 does not mention the issue of financial viability only that “the existing dwelling is incapable of retention in its current state”, which is interpreted as being structurally unsound and incapable of repair/renovation. Whilst the existing dwelling may be in a poor state and sited at an angle to the existing properties, which may make it more difficult to renovate and/or extend it is not incapable of having works carried out to improve it.

With regard to replacing the existing dwelling with a more environmentally friendly property, whilst there is a commitment to ensuring new dwellings meet sustainable development principles this would not necessarily mean that older housing stock should be demolished. It would be very difficult to argue that the long term impact of demolishing and re-building a property is more sustainable than up-grading and renovation.

The existing dwelling is neither unsightly or out of character with the area. It is acknowledged that it appears to have been neglected and in need of modernisation and repair but this would not mean that it has to be demolished. There are many bungalows and dormer bungalows in Startley, indeed the neighbouring dwelling, The Elms, is a bungalow and therefore it is not out of character with the surrounding properties.

As with many bungalows the existing dwelling has a reasonably large footprint but it is a single storey dwelling with rooms within the roofspace and incorporates an integral garage. However the replacement dwelling is to be a full two-storey dwelling which is significantly larger in terms of scale and mass and this is in addition to a detached double garage with a room in the roof space. Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been replacement dwellings in the village, including the neighbouring property, Fairlawne, these were determined under Policy RH13 in the old North Wiltshire Local Plan 2001, which was less restrictive than the current policy.

The proposal is contrary to Policy H4, which reflects the strict controls placed on new residential development outside framework boundaries.

Recommendation and Proposed Conditions/Informatives

Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following reason:

1. The Council is not satisfied that the existing dwelling is incapable of retention, in any event, the proposed replacement dwelling is not of a scale or size similar to that of the existing dwelling. Therefore the proposal is considered to be contrary to the provisions of Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local plan 2011.

Informative:

1. This decision relates to documents/plans submitted with the application, listed below.

Plan References

Plans showing Existing Dwelling and 2007-41-02A received by the Local Planning Authority on the 21st May 2008.

Appendices:	NONE.
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	1.20 2.02 4.02 4.03