

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	3 November 2010		
Application Number	10.3586.FUL and 10.3587.LBC		
Site Address	Pinkney Court, Sherston		
Proposal	Alteration and Conversion of Stable Building to Provide New Independent Dwelling		
Applicant	Mrs Silver		
Town/Parish Council	Sherston		
Electoral Division	Sherston	Unitary Member	John Thomson
Grid Ref	386240 187282		
Type of application	Full application//Listed Building Consent		
Case Officer	Judy Enticknap	01249 706 660	Judy.Enticknap @wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application has been submitted to the Committee for decision at the request of Cllr J Thomson in order to consider issues related to the scale of development; Environmental/Highway impact; relationship to adjoining properties; visual impact and design in respect of bulk, height and general appearance.

1. Report Summary

Planning Permission be REFUSED

Listed Building Consent be REFUSED

Sherston Parish Council raises no objection.

1 letter of support received.

2. Main Issues

Pinkney Court Is a Grade 11 listed building. Pinkney Court stable is a former agricultural building which is on the opposite side of the (unclassified) road, but was historically functionally-related to the farm house, and is considered to be curtilage-listed building. The site lies within the AONB, in open countryside. The proposal is to convert the building to form a separate dwelling. It is considered the main issues are:

- Scale of development
- Implications on Housing Policy H3
- Design of the development and its effect on the special character of the listed building
- Impact on the AONB
- Visual impact upon the surrounding area
- Affect of the residential amenity of existing properties
- Impact on traffic and parking in the local area

3. Site Description

Pinkney Court stable is a late C19 former open-fronted farm building, constructed in rubble stone with stone piers and a tiled roof. It is a single storey range divided into 5 bays, approximately 17m long x 6m wide with a c2m eave height with 80.31 sq m floor area. It lies immediately adjacent to the road, and originally the principal elevation faced eastwards. However, at some time in the C20 the openings were enclosed in rendered blockwork, and the orientation effectively reversed when it was converted to form a stable and tackroom, with openings facing westwards into the paddock. The tack room is in the north bay, with external access via a boarded door. The rear stone wall to the other 4 bays has been removed and replaced with timber boarded posts and studding for the 4 looseboxes. There is a projecting slate-covered canopy in front of the loose boxes, supported on posts. To the south there is a timber lean-to used as a hay store. The roof construction is mostly new, although oak purlins survive in the tack room.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
NONE		

5. Proposal

The proposal is to convert the building to form a substantial 3-bedroom house with additional study/guestroom. To achieve this, it is proposed to lower the finished floor level within the building by 500mm, introduce a 1st floor just below wall plate level and substantially extend the building. The lowering of the floor level implies underpinning the whole building. Externally, the elevation to the road will be unchanged (other than removal of a modern door within the infill to the north bay) but the increase in height will be evident on the south and west elevations; there will be a stone facing to the new lower sections of masonry which will be visible externally.

At ground floor level, the tack room becomes an entrance hall. The remainder of the building is widened by an extension which occupies the footprint of the former canopy, and provides a substantial 9.1m x 6.2m (internal dimensions) living room and guest room/study at ground floor level, with 2 bedrooms and bathroom above. A 10m x 6m extension attached to the north gable provides a kitchen/dining room with master bedroom and en-suite above. The extension would be constructed in natural stone, and the whole building would have a natural slate roof covering. The new extension has been set into the ground, and carefully designed to appear subservient in scale from publicly-visible elevations (ie east and north), although to the rear where the ground level has been lowered and terraced, the increased eave height is evident.

It is also proposed to replace the hay store with a lean-to attached to the south gable to serve as a log/oil store. The agent advises that alternative stable facilities will be provided in the buildings adjacent to Pinkney Court. There is an existing field gate to the north west north of the stable, with a manege just beyond. In order to accommodate the extension, it is proposed to reposition the access further to the north, with access and parking parallel to the side elevation of the extension; this implies removal of the manege. The agent advises that the dwelling is needed to provide accommodation for the applicant's daughter and her family.

Apart from the listed building Design and Access Statement and structural report, the application has been supported by a Viability Appraisal, Protected Species Assessment and Bat Emergence Survey.

The Viability Appraisal acknowledges that the current stables are of a size conducive with normal domestic ancillary use. It considers alternative uses from a developer's perspective, and suggests the building is suitable for development for offices, industrial workshops/storage, holiday accommodation or residential use; it discounts community uses in this location. It argues that there is no market for small commercial properties (either office or workshop) in the current economic climate. It suggests it could be converted to a one-bed or small 2-bed holiday let, providing an annual income of £10,000 - £12,500pa; but conversion would cost the same as a residential conversion and provide an investment only c50% the market value of a dwelling (and this would not be considered commercially viable by a developer).

The Protected Species Assessment found evidence of bats, owls and swallows near the site. No bats were recorded emerging from the stable, although 3 species of feeding bats were recorded in the vicinity, with bat droppings found in front of the stables. The report recommends actions to protect any species during construction works, and to achieve biodiversity enhancement; the application takes account of these, including provision of "bat bricks" in the extension to encourage bats.

6. Consultations

Sherston Parish Council: No objections and development looks very tasteful.

County Highways: Recommend refusal on sustainability grounds. If the Council is mindful to approve, they ask for adequate drawings demonstrating the new access and adequate parking provision for two vehicles; with these to be provided prior to first occupation of the dwelling.

County Ecologist: Recommends conditions to provide suitable conditions for bats, owls and swallows.

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

1 letter of support has been received.

Summary of key relevant points raised:

- The current building is in a dilapidated state and some materials are not in keeping.
- Proposal will improve the aesthetics of the building and improve the overall appearance of the hamlet.

8. Planning Considerations

This application has been described as alteration and conversion of a stable building, and as such in the first instance it needs to be considered in the context of Local Plan Policy BD6. This states:

"In the countryside, the re-use of buildings will be permitted provided that:

- i) The proposed use will be contained within the building and does not require extensive alterations, re-building and or extension; and*
- ii) The proposed use respects both the character and setting of the subject building and any distinctive local building styles and materials; and*
- iii) Consideration is given to whether a building by reason of its design and or location would be more appropriately retained in or converted to, in order of preference, employment, community, or residential use; and*
- iv) There being no abuse of the concession given to buildings erected with the benefit of permitted development rights; and*

v) *The proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network.*

Scale of Development: During preliminary discussions your officer advised that a small residential use could be considered if it could be demonstrated that alternative preferred uses would not be appropriate here.; but that there should be no extension other than the proposed store. The agent in his covering letter advises that “it is not possible to significantly reduce the scale of the building’s extension....and provide a reasonable family dwelling”. The proposal is for a substantial extension which increases the footprint of the building by 80% and the lowering of the floor level in order to increase the useable floor area represents a further significant enlargement of the building. Moreover, this intervention could potentially cause structural damage to surviving historic fabric (and as such the proposal is clearly contrary to policy BD6.i).

The viability appraisal has demonstrated that commercial use is unlikely to be viable, but that a small 1 or 2 –bed tourist unit could be feasible. Such a use would be more compliant with policy BD6.iii . Equally, the building could be converted to provide a small dwelling with no or minimal extension.

Even were the building not listed the proposal would fail to comply with Policy BD6.

Implications on Housing Policy H4: Due to the amount of extension and alteration this fails to be considered as a conversion. This proposal is essentially a new dwelling in the countryside. It is not a replacement for an existing dwelling or needed in connection with agriculture or forestry, and is thus clearly contrary to Local Plan Policy H4.

Design and its effect on the special character of the listed building: This is a curtilage-listed building although its significance has been diminished by the C20 interventions. However, it still has an essentially agricultural character, with a subservience to the principal farmhouse and associated range of farm buildings adjacent to Pinkney Court. The alterations to the publicly-visible elevations have been well-considered to minimise the harm to the publicly-visible elevations, and removal of the modern door to the north elevation, with use of natural slate for roofing will enhance the appearance of the listed structure. However, the projecting lean-to “canopy” to the west elevation is an alien feature that compromises its special character as a small-scale farm building; this is exacerbated by the number of roof lights in the rear elevation. The change to internal finished floor level is a major intervention which could cause structural damage to the building.

Visual impact upon the surrounding area: The current use of the site for stables/paddock is low-key and appropriate to the character of this part of the AONB.; and the site is well-integrated by indigenous planting to its boundary. The inevitable domestication of the site following a change to residential use will cause harm to the character of the AONB, although this could be mitigated by conditions re: landscaping and removal of permitted development rights.

Affect of the residential amenity of existing properties: It is not considered that the proposal would cause harm to residential amenity.

Impact on traffic and parking in the local area: Apart from the sustainability argument, it is considered that suitable conditions could be imposed to ensure there is adequate parking and access to the site.

10. Recommendation

Listed Building Consent be REFUSED for the following reason:

1. The proposal would cause harm to the curtilage-listed building by virtue of the alterations associated with reduction of the internal floor level, and introduction of the lean-to extension and 4 no roof lights to the “front” (south west) elevation. The proposed alterations would not

preserve the special historic interest of the listed building. It would therefore not be in accordance with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 or guidance set out in PPS5.

Planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is tantamount to a new dwelling in the open countryside. It is contrary to policy H4 in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
2. The proposal includes a substantial extension and intervention to the building; and moreover it is considered that conversion to tourist accommodation would be a more suitable use for this building. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy BD6.i. ii and iii in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
3. The proposal would cause harm to the curtilage-listed building by virtue of the alterations associated with reduction of the internal floor level, and introduction of the lean-to extension and 4 no roof lights to the "front" (south west) elevation. It is therefore contrary to policy HE4 in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and the advice contained in PPS5.

Appendices:	None
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	Drgs. 10.1115/00. 01, 02A, 03B, 04, all received 17.9.2010 1.03, 1.20, 2.02, 2.37, 4.04, 5.02, 6.02

