

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report No.

Date of Meeting	23 November 2011		
Application Number	N/11/03048/FUL		
Site Address	The Lodge, Oaks Farm, Rode Hill, Colerne SN14 8AR		
Proposal	Replacement Dwelling		
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Gooding		
Town/Parish Council	Colerne		
Electoral Division	Box & Colerne	Unitary Member	Councillor Sheila Parker
Grid Ref	379875 170165		
Type of application	Full		
Case Officer	Lee Burman	01249 706 668	Lee.burman@wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application was called in for committee determination by Councillor Parker in the event of a recommendation for refusal to allow the Committee to assess the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding area and the relationship with adjoining properties.

1. Purpose of report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be REFUSED.

2. Report summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Impact upon the Openness of the Green Belt
- Impact upon visual amenity and landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Relationship with Neighbouring Properties

The application has generated no objections and has received support from Colerne Parish Council.

3. Site Description

The site is located within the open countryside to the south east of the village of Colerne within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt. The property is a large scale working farm that incorporates various fields and built structures in different parcels. This application site relates to the main residential part of the farmholding to the east of Road Hill. The property is a former outbuilding erected to provide temporary ancillary accommodation to the farm dwelling in April 2006.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
N/11/00397/CLE	<p>Certificate of Lawfulness for Use of Building as a Dwelling</p> <p>The supporting information and statutory declaration to this application indicate that the structure dates from the 1940's when it was used for residential accommodation purposes but subsequently became used as a hunting lodge ancillary to the main farmhouse. Work was undertaken on the Lodge to make it usable as simple temporary ancillary residential accommodation in April 2006 whilst a new dwelling permitted for agricultural workers purposes was constructed. However, the altered outbuilding very quickly became used as a wholly independent residential dwelling and was subsequently let to other parties to be used in this way over a period from June 2006 until the date of the application for the Certificate of Lawfulness in February 2011.</p>	Permitted

5. Proposal

The current proposal is for the replacement of the existing dwelling (single storey, two bedroom utilitarian design with basic residential accommodation) permitted under a Certificate of Lawfulness with a new dwelling (Two storey, three bedroom dwelling with extensive residential accommodation including, en suite bathroom, study, boot room two lounges and a complex roofscape).

6. Planning Policy

North Wiltshire Local Plan: policies C3 NE1 NE4 H4

The site lies within the open countryside; an Area of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty and is within the West Wiltshire Green Belt.

Central Government Planning Policy PPS1, PPG2, PPS3, PPS7 as amended by PPS4

7. Consultations

Colerne Parish Council supports the proposal on the grounds of a similar sized footing with acceptable additional increase in scale using traditional materials and the same access.

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

No letters of objection received

9. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

Proposals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside, the AONB and the Green Belt are acceptable in principle subject to the restriction that they should be closely related in scale and location and have no harmful impact on the openness of the green belt or the visual amenity and character of the AONB. Furthermore under North Wiltshire Local Plan Policy H4 the dwelling to be replaced should not be capable of retention in its current form i.e. structurally unsound.

The proposed development involves the demolition of a small single storey outbuilding (variously used for ancillary residential accommodation, a hunting lodge and temporary residential use) and its replacement with a two storey dwelling covering a larger footprint and located on a different part of the landholding. The proposal would also involve the installation of a new vehicular access to the replacement dwelling and the establishment of separate residential curtilage. The increase in the footprint is not accurately represented on the submitted block plan, but the submitted floor plans demonstrate that the increase is approximately 30% from 73.5 sq metres to 105.07 sq metres. Given the increase in the footprint and the increase from a single storey dwelling to a two storey dwelling it is considered that the replacement dwelling would not reflect the scale and proportions of the existing dwelling as is required by local plan policy. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt is addressed under separate heading below.

The applicant has submitted a structural survey by JJ Siga (The report does not specify that the company is a firm of chartered surveyors and they are not known to Officers in the Council's Building Control Team). The report concludes that the building would require significant works of underpinning and alteration to the super structure and roof to meet current building regulations and address some issues associated with building movement arising from poor construction.

In short the original building was not intended as a permanent dwelling and requires significant work to bring it up to current building regulations standards. Given the scale of work involved the report recommends complete replacement of the building is a more cost efficient option. The Council's Building Control Officers have reviewed the report and raise no concerns regarding the contents. However, the report does not demonstrate that the current structure is incapable of retention in its current form and that replacement is the only viable option. It is of concern that this argument could be advanced in many situations and the objectives of the council's adopted planning policies significantly undermined with a consequent harmful impact on the character and appearance of the locality, the visual amenity of the AONB and the openness of the green belt.

Given that the proposed replacement dwelling does not reflect the scale and form of the existing dwelling and is capable of retention in its current form it is considered that the proposal is contrary to policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and is unacceptable in principle. Indeed it is considered that the proposal is so clearly contrary to adopted policies that it would be difficult to refuse other similar proposals if the application was granted. In this context it is important to note that the policy objective regarding replacement dwellings is to secure proposals that are related very closely to the existing dwelling in scale and size where replacement is necessary. The policy does not support applications that merely aim to secure a much larger dwelling in the open countryside. Similarly policies in respect of the Green Belt aim to restrict the scope for significant increases in the scale of built development.

Impact upon the Openness of the Green Belt

Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt are not by definition inappropriate as they fall within the very limited categories of development that are acceptable. However this is subject to the clear prescription set out at paragraph 3.6 of PPG2 that replacement dwellings should not be materially large in size than the original dwelling. If this is the case then the proposed dwelling becomes inappropriate development in the green belt which is by definition harmful and requires special justification by the application. The assessment of the scale of change in size is not solely based on footprint. It has been tested through the appeals process and the assessment is based on the cubic content of the dwelling, including the roof space as all of these affect the openness of the green belt contributing as they do to the bulk and mass of the proposed structure.

We have already seen that the increase in footprint is equivalent to an approximate 30% increase in scale and size over that of the original, which is due to the construction of the original building as a temporary ancillary outbuilding. The proposal also increases the scale of the dwelling by adding a second storey, significantly increasing the scale, bulk and mass of the structure over that of the original. In addition the design of the proposal adds a more complex, varied and bulkier roofscape to the dwelling over that of the original.

In total, the replacement dwelling would measure approx 518 cubic metres, this is an increase of 271.75 cubic metres over the original dwelling which measures approximately 246.25 cubic metres. The increase in cubic content would therefore be approximately 110% over that of the original dwelling. By any assessment this is a significant and material increase in the scale of the dwelling. As such the proposal would constitute inappropriate development and would therefore have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The applicant has offered no exceptional circumstances to justify this level of increase and harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The development proposed is therefore contrary to PPG2 and Policy NE1 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Impact upon visual amenity and landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The proposal involves the repositioning of the dwelling within the larger farmholding area into a location that is away from the existing buildings in a paddock area with existing mature vegetation. The proposal involves the creation of a separate curtilage and will necessarily require boundary treatments (currently not detailed) to achieve this. In addition the applicant proposes the creation of a new vehicular access with substantive driveway to the property. From the submitted site layout plan it would also appear that an extended surfaced area for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles is proposed to the front of the dwelling, although this is also not detailed in the application. As a minimum the new access will require the removal of existing vegetation (including mature trees). Potentially the replacement dwelling will also necessitate removal of vegetation/mature trees at the site. The applicant has not addressed this matter in detail in their submissions but the proposed site layout plan indicates that tree removal is likely to be required. Cumulatively it is considered that this will have a harmful impact on the character and visual amenity of the AONB in this locality with the building and associated development being read as a separate and additional intrusion into the open area largely set away from the existing structures at the site. Given that there is an option to repair the existing dwelling and given the inappropriateness of the development in a green belt context and subsequent impact on the openness of the green belt it is not considered that the additional impact on the AONB is justified or necessary. As such it is considered that the proposal is contrary to guidance contained in PPS7 as amended by PPS4 and Policy NE4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Relationship with Neighbouring Properties

The proposal involves the demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a new dwelling. The new dwelling would be constructed on a different part of the farmholding further away from the other existing property on the site with no other nearby neighbouring properties. The new dwelling would also be separated from the other existing dwelling on site by an existing storage building and would be orientated to face away from the existing dwelling. Given this arrangement it is not considered that the proposal would have any impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

10. Conclusion

The proposal involves the development of a replacement dwelling that is wholly out of scale with that of the existing dwelling. The site is located within the West Wiltshire Green Belt and given the scale of increase in the size of the replacement dwelling over that of the existing the development would be inappropriate in this location and would result in harm to the Green Belt through a loss of openness. Given the relocation of the dwelling to a different more undeveloped and heavily vegetated part of the landholding, the creation of new access, separate residential curtilage and significant increase in scale of built development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The replacement of the dwelling is not required as the repair of the current dwelling is feasible.

11. Recommendation

Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The proposed replacement dwelling by virtue of its scale, bulk and mass would not be of a similar scale and size as the existing dwelling and the existing dwelling is capable of retention subject to repair. The proposal is contrary to Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
2. The proposed replacement dwelling by virtue of its scale, bulk and mass would result in a disproportionate increase in the scale of the building over that of the original resulting in inappropriate development in the Green Belt and resultant loss of openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would be contrary to Policy NE1 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
3. The proposed replacement dwelling by virtue of its location, scale, bulk, mass and ancillary development (access and separate curtilage) would have a harmful impact on the visual amenity and character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal would be contrary to Policy HE4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Brokenboro Wood

Oaklands

183.7m

Abbotsoombe Wood

Brokenboro Wood

Half And Half Wood

Roadhill Wood

