

REPORT TO THE EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	24th November 2011
Application Number	E/2011/1157/FUL
Site Address	23 Stokke Common Great Bedwyn Marlborough Wilts SN8 3LL
Proposal	Demolition of existing covered car parking area. Existing single storey extensions to become double storey with an additional proposal to match existing.
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Charles Bailey
Town/Parish Council	GREAT BEDWYN
Grid Ref	426110 164636
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Rachel Yeomans

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application is brought to committee at the request of Divisional Member, Councillor Wheeler.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation that the application be refused planning permission.

2. Report Summary

It is considered the key issues for consideration are:

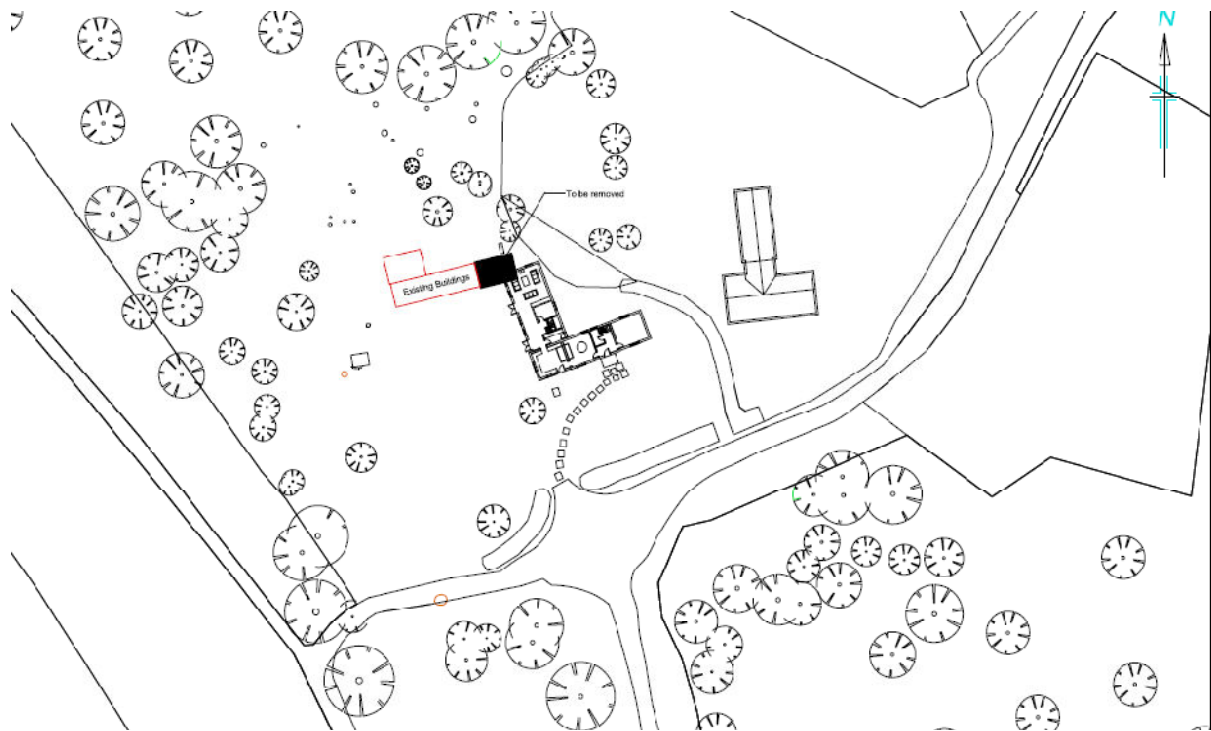
- Design – scale, height, massing, elevational treatment and building details.
- Impact of the proposals on an heritage asset located within a listed Historic Park and Garden and adjacent a listed building.
- Impact on neighbour amenity

3. Site Description

The application site is situated in a remote, rural position within the listed Historic Park and Garden of Tottenham Park and is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. From Marlborough, proceed east on the A4 and take the first main right turning signed Great Bedwyn. Follow the road round to the right and past the left hand turning towards Durley/ St Katherine's. Proceed for about a further ¼ of a mile and as the road bends round to the right, take the right hand turning onto an unmade track. At the farm junction, follow the lane round to the right and keep going. The lane shortly comes to an end after passing a few dwellings on the right hand side and the application site is the final dwelling on the right.

The access track winds its way past a number of former estate cottages/ farm buildings. Each of these is of architectural merit in their own right, many being traditional, modest, thatched cottages, each set within their own 'green' space, characterised by hedging, mature trees and open grassy clearings/ fields. Although a number of bridleways run close to the application site, because of its woodland setting, the application site is not prominent from public rights of way; however public access is permitted across much of the Savernake Forest/ Tottenham Park Estate including many of the tracks. One such track passes along the lane across the front of the application site and then turns left 90 degrees. When proceeding along this track from the south, the cottage is visually prominent above the

beech hedge to the front.



Location of extension

4. Planning History

The current application follows three rounds of pre-application submissions by the applicant. The first was for two storey extensions, similar to those currently proposed but also with an addition of a 'fourth' two-storey wing proceeding in a westerly direction from the back of the proposed rear wing, on a similar footprint to the existing outbuilding. A detailed response was provided which included that the resulting elevations would appear incredibly bulky, and that the proposed extensions appeared tantamount to several cottages with a very large unsympathetic link between the two main runs of buildings, which would be wholly unacceptable. The second set of plans omitted the wing over the footprint of the existing outbuilding however the concerns about the dominance, scale and design of the proposed extensions were reiterated; the scaling down of the extensions had not overcome the concerns previous expressed.

An indication was given that it may be possible to add a two storey rear wing in the order of 4 metres from the rear of the original cottage, without completely dominating the modest proportions of the original dwelling. However, it became clear that the applicant was seeking substantially larger scale additions to the property than was considered could be supported by officers. This application follows on these discussions, since the applicant was advised pre-application discussions had been exhausted.

K/86/0432 Extension – approved

The following applications at the neighbouring, larger listed building, number 21/22 Stokke Common are also of some relevance;

K/59003/F New rear two storey extension - Withdrawn

K/59004/LBC New rear two storey extension – Withdrawn

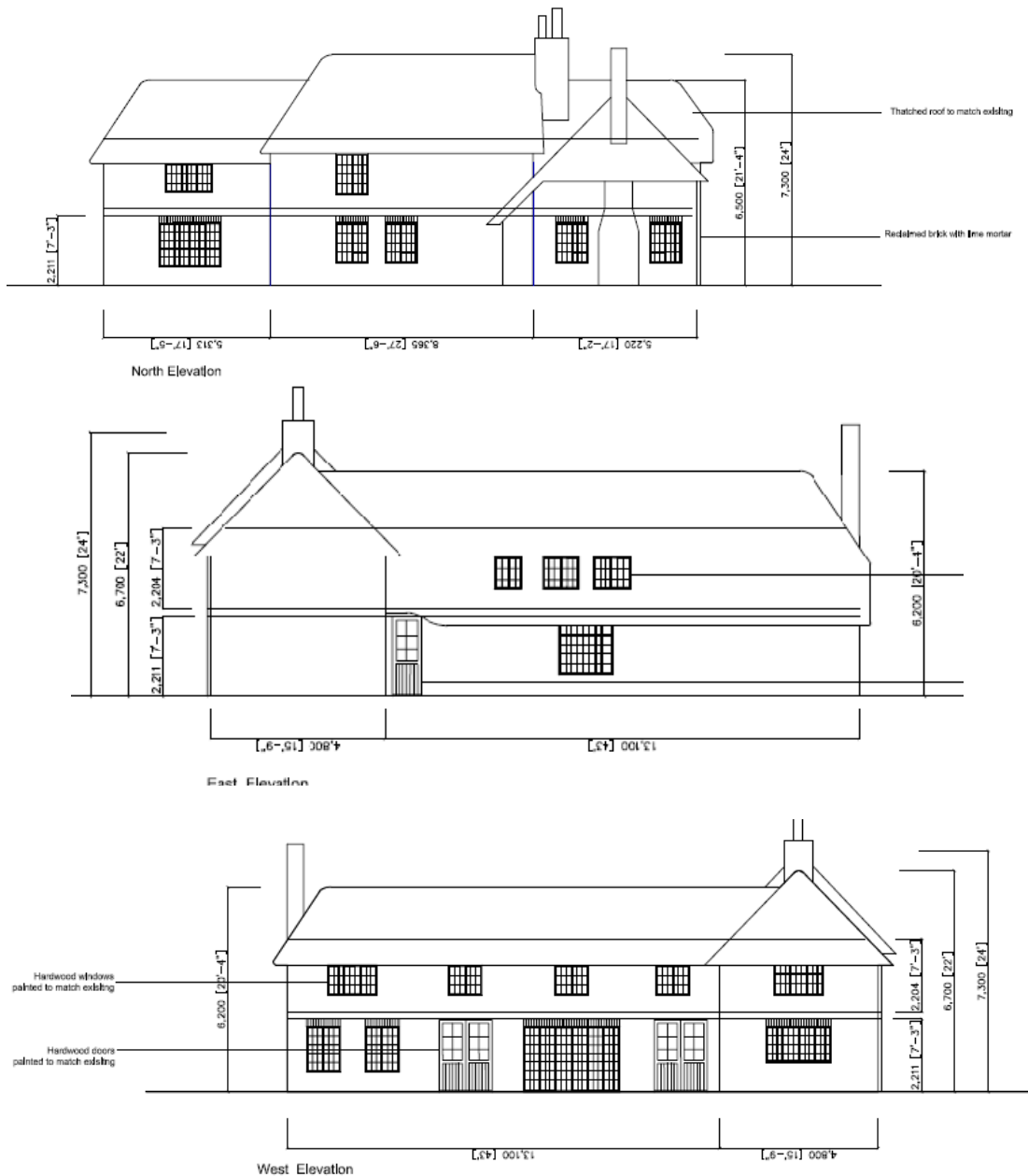
K/59521/F Two storey rear extension – Refused 12th December 2008

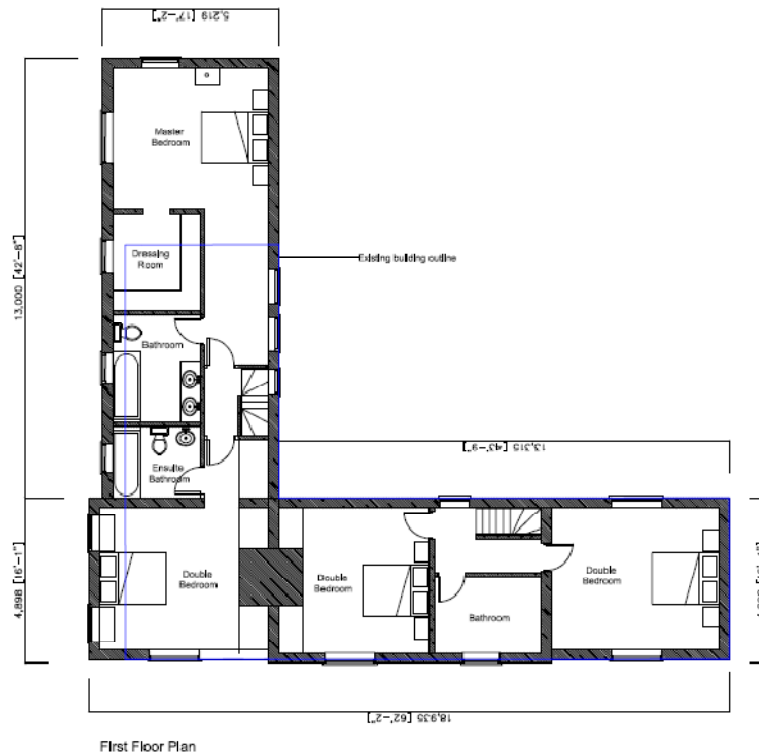
K/59520/LBC Two storey rear extension – Refused 12th December 2008

E/09/0182/FUL & E/09/180/LBC Demolition of outbuildings and erection of two storey extension - Approved with conditions 22nd April 2009.

5. The Proposal

The application proposes the replacement of existing single storey side extensions with two storey side extensions to both ends of the property, resulting in a c.19m frontage and the replacement of the single storey 7.4 metre rear wing with a 13 metre long two storey rear wing. The application also includes the demolition of the low rise stable block/ car port structure.





6. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Policy HE3 of the adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 and Policies PD1 & NR6 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan 2011 are relevant.

7. Consultations

Great Bedwyn Parish Council – No comments received

English Heritage – Do not wish to offer specific comments but application should be determined in accordance with national and local planning policy and in accordance with your own conservation advice.

One letter from nearby neighbours has been received which expresses some concerns about the submitted proposals. These comments can be summarised as follows;

1. The boundary, hedges and tracks shown on the submitted plans are not accurate.
2. The plans do not include details of other associated development such as septic tank or fuel storage
3. The plans do not clearly show how much of the existing fabric and character will be retained and could be improved to allow ease of comparison between existing and proposed schemes, including the labelling of the elevations with the orientation and to illustrate the proposals with the neighbouring dwelling in order to allow assessment of massing. A design and access statement is also suggested.
4. The design could be improved by lowering the eaves line to the first floor north, south and west elevations to the head of the windows, creating a surround or sculpted dormer within the thatch, punctuating the windows or recessing them into the roofline to create a break in the eaves line and adding contouring to the thatched roof. This would be beneficial to the reading of scale and proportion to the principle external facades.
5. Concern is also raised about the impact on the existing forest tracks and trails

including by construction traffic and construction noise.

6. This cottage is a typical example of woodland cottages seen across the Savernake Forest, most of which are listed. The proposed design should be integrated harmoniously and sympathetically incorporating the character traits and maintain the integrity of the original cottage.

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer – has provided advice and background on the existing dwelling as an heritage asset, detailed comments have been incorporated into the response below. Objects to the application on the basis that the proposed development would completely dominate the original building, leading to the loss of much of its historic fabric and fundamental alteration to its scale, proportions and form. The significance of the building and its contribution to the setting of the neighbouring listed building and the wider historic landscape would largely be lost and the requirements government and local policy would therefore not be met.

8. Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and consultations with the neighbours and parish council.

9. Planning Considerations

No. 23 is a modest cottage located in a clearing at the edge of woodland which is today on the boundary of the Tottenham Estate. The land was almost certainly within the once larger medieval royal forest of Savernake and later part of the common lands of Great Bedwyn parish, possibly associated with the documented village of Stock, the precise site of which is unknown. The cottage is of vernacular scale, proportions and materials typical of many in the area and was probably constructed as a modest two cell structure with an outbuilding to the west (later incorporated into the living accommodation) and later extensions to the east and rear. The current core is in brick at a full two storeys and may have been built in this format in the C18 although the substantial external stack (to the main accommodation), and knowledge of the neighbouring property, suggest that the brick may possibly encase an earlier timber framed structure.

The building was probably not included on the statutory List at the time of the area re-survey in 1986 due to significant and intrusive re-fenestration work undertaken during the C20. Otherwise, however, the building would appear to meet many of the criteria for listing. It remains a typical example of vernacular construction in the area which makes a significant contribution to the setting of the neighbouring listed property, to the setting of the registered Tottenham Park and to the wider historic landscape. The relationship between the main core and former outshut to the west is especially characteristic of forms in the area.

PPS 5 Annex 2 defines an heritage asset as “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment.” The PPS advises that assets may include those subject to statutory designation and those identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making (as here). The annex advises that the heritage interest of an asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic – in this case the building can be considered as having significant architectural and historic interest in its reflection of the people, their way of life and the events of the area in the past.

Policy HE7 relates to all heritage assets. HE 7.4 requires that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. HE7.5 requires that local planning authorities should take into account the

desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and that the consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

Policy HE8 advises that the effect of an application on the significance of such a heritage asset or its setting is a material consideration in determining the application. The accompanying practice guide notes in this respect that "Some non-designated assets, such as buildings of good local character or sites of archaeological interest, are of heritage significance but not at a level that would pass the threshold for national designation. Such assets can, singularly and collectively, make an important, positive contribution to the environment. The desirability of conserving them and the contribution their setting may make to their significance is a material consideration, but individually less of a priority than for designated assets or their equivalents (HE8.1)."

In light of the above, it is considered that the 23 Stokke Common is an heritage asset and consequently, assessment against the above criteria in addition to general design criteria set out in policy PD1 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan 2011 is necessary.

Taking first, the proposed replacement of the existing single storey additions with two-storey extensions to each end of the cottage, these would necessitate the demolition of the existing single storey extension to the west including loss of associated historic fabric, and would also likely result in the demolition of the existing single storey extension to the east. Each two storey side extension would measure c.5.3m in width, over half the width of the frontage of the original principle cottage which measures c. 8.3m. Although attempts have been made to make the additions appear subservient to the main dwelling through the reduction in eaves and ridge height and the use of the hipped roofs, the widths and heights of these extensions, when viewed both individually but especially when viewed cumulatively, would completely dominate the modest proportions and character of the host dwelling and would not respect its modest scale, traditional proportions or massing. This is contrary to both the requirements applicable to all development set out in Policy PD1 and would detrimentally affect the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment, contrary to PPS5.

Secondly, the application proposes a substantial two storey rear wing measuring some 13.1m. This is grossly out of proportion with the original cottage and results in very bulky side elevations. The fenestration to the front and west elevations, whilst broadly following the design of that in the existing cottage, is poor and is not of a traditional style, nor is it sympathetic to the design of the original building. In particular, the soldier coursing above the window headers, the proportions of the openings, the two sets of double doors and enlarged window on the west elevation and the dormer windows in the east elevation are considered incongruous with the design of the host dwelling. The lack of fenestration to the east elevation of the rear extension exacerbates the bulk of this bland elevation, which does not benefit from any visual breaks in the design. This is symptomatic of an extension which is simply too large for the original building. Again, the extension is considered contrary to PD1 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan 2011 and PPS5.

Excluding the outbuilding, the footprint of the proposed dwelling would exceed the footprint of the original cottage by more than 2.8 times whilst comparison of floor area reveals that the proposed floor area would represent a 235% increase over the existing floor space, even taking into account the existing floorspace provided in the current extensions.

Furthermore, insufficient and inconsistent details are shown on the submitted plans. The survey is inaccurate and does not reflect the details of the existing building. There are also a number of discrepancies between the elevations, sections and plans such that there can be no certainty as to the intended appearance of the development. These include the lack of details for the form of the roof where the windows are to be inserted in the thatch to the east

elevation, the cross section drawings which show dormer cross sections to the incorrect elevations, the inconsistency of the length of the rear extension between elevation and floorplan, and the inconsistency between the eaves heights shown on the west elevation and the gable end of the rear extension. The agent will be notified of this prior to committee and given the opportunity of rectifying these discrepancies prior to the date of the meeting.

As regards neighbour impact, the proposed extensions are sufficiently distant from the neighbouring property 21/22 Stokke Common, so as not to be overbearing or overshadowing on the enjoyment of their property. The three windows within the thatch at first floor level in the eastern elevation would afford views towards the neighbouring garden above the vegetation however a distance of approximately 29 metres would be maintained between the extension and the neighbouring dwelling. This, together with the positioning of the properties in relation to one another is considered sufficient so as not to cause any significant loss of privacy.

In terms of impact on the wider landscape although a number of bridleways run close to the application site, because of its woodland setting, the application site is not especially prominent from public rights of way and it is not considered that the proposals would result in any particular harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape.

Regard has been given to the recently approved rear extension at the neighbouring dwelling, number 21/22 Stokke Common which is a grade II listed building, however it is not considered that this sets a precedent for permitting this particular scheme. The extension was permitted under references E/09/180/LBC and E/09/182/FUL in April 2009. The original building incorporates both 21 and 21 Stokke Common and therefore started with a 14m two storey frontage, as compared with the original two storey frontage of number 21 which measures c. 9.4m (max) with a 3.2m single storey element. It generally follows that the larger the host dwelling, the larger the scale of extensions can be accommodated without dominating the scale of the original. Although the neighbouring extension comprised of an 11 metre long two-storey element, measuring 5.6m to the ridge, with a 2.8m lower 'link' measuring 4.55m to the ridge, when taken separately from the main house it is a well designed addition, notwithstanding that officers expressed concern about the design and scale of this addition in the context of the host listed building. The link, reduced height and alternative but complimentary materials (clay tiles, glazing and timber boarding) each assist in creating visual breaks in the design and a more subservient appearance than the extension proposed at number 21.

10. Conclusion

The previous consents at the neighbouring dwelling are not considered to warrant the approval of the poorly designed and dominant extensions at number 21, which fail to respect the traditional character and proportions of this vernacular building in this important setting. In this case the history and development of the building as reflected in its fabric and appearance is of considerable interest and makes a significant contribution to the character of the area which would be harmed by the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extensions by virtue of their large scale, cumulative massing, resulting poor proportions and poor design would detract from the traditional historic character of this modest vernacular cottage. They would neither accord with high quality design requirements nor would they sustain or enhance this heritage asset which is located in a sensitive location within a listed Historic Park and Garden and adjacent a grade II listed building. Furthermore, the submitted information includes a number of

discrepancies and inaccuracies which do not allow for any certainty as to the extent of development proposed or for a full and proper assessment of the proposals to be made. Consequently the proposals are considered contrary to central Government Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE3 of the adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 and policy PD1 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan 2011.