

REPORT TO THE EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report No. 3

Date of Meeting	1 st July 2010
Application Number	E/10/0147/FUL
Site Address	Knights Leaze Farm, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts SN10 4RA
Proposal	Demolition of existing farmhouse and erection of replacement farmhouse with new outbuilding range/garaging and farm office.
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Martin Bodman
Town/Parish Council	URCHFONT
Grid Ref	403610 157582
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Rob Parker

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application is before the Committee at the request of the Division Member, Cllr Grundy.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation that the application be refused.

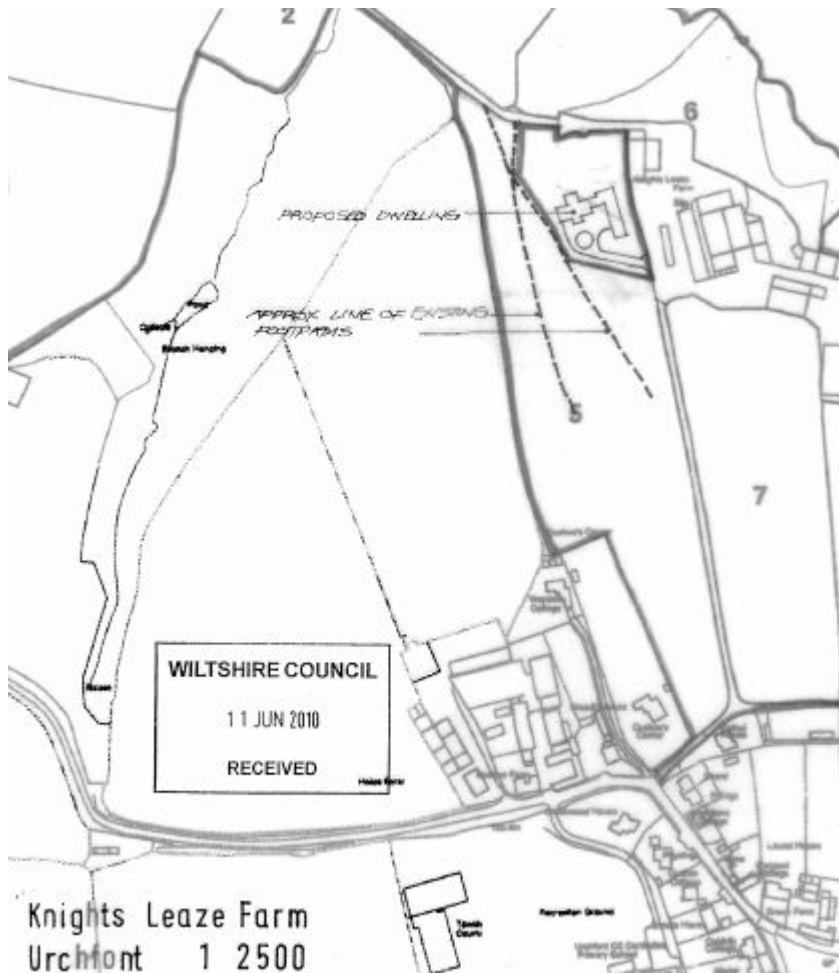
2. Report Summary

The main issues to consider are:

- a) whether the siting of the replacement dwelling would be closely related to the footprint of the original dwelling;
- b) whether the scale of the replacement dwelling would be significantly larger than the original structure; and
- c) whether the proposals would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area.

3. Site Description

This application relates to the existing farmhouse at Knights Leaze Farm which lies on the northern edge of Urchfont. Starting at the village pond, travel past The Lamb Inn and community shop on the left hand side and then bear right at The Green towards Cuckoo Corner. The road bends 90 degree left immediately before the entrance to Urchfont Primary School and the entrance to Knights Leaze Farm lies on the outside radius of this bend. Take the farm entrance and after approximately 70 metres bear left into a straight section of access drive. The existing farmhouse lies on the left hand side at the far end of this drive.



4. Planning History

K/52916/F - Erection of car port with study/playroom over, granted planning permission in October 2005.

K/45231 - Erection of extension to dwelling, granted planning permission in May 2003.

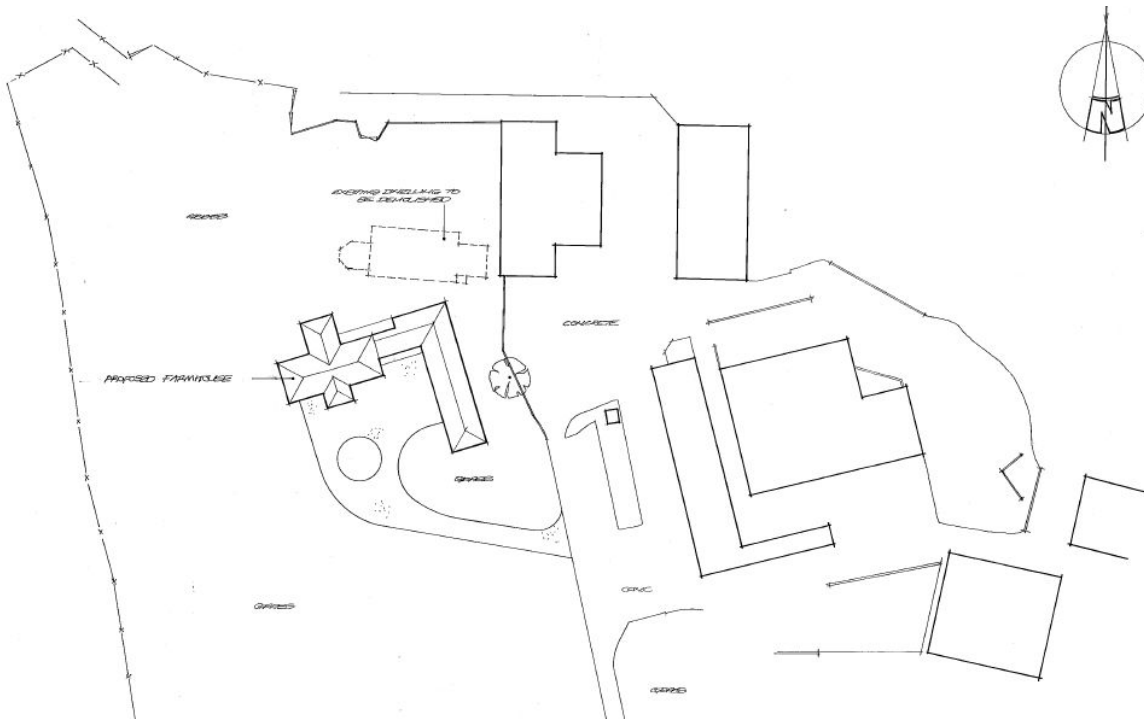
K/35113 - Erection of two storey extension, granted planning permission in December 1997.

K/20592 - Erection of extension, granted planning permission in September 1993.

The original permission for the farmhouse was granted in the early 1970's and is subject to an agricultural occupancy condition.

5. The Proposal

The proposal is to demolish the existing farmhouse and erect a replacement dwelling with an attached single storey wing containing garaging, a porch, outbuildings and a farm office.



Site Plan – existing farmhouse shown with dotted outline above the position of proposed dwelling – note the size of the attached outbuildings extending in an inverted ‘L’ shape from the new house



South Elevation 1: 100

Front elevation of proposed replacement dwelling

6. Planning Policy

Policies HC25, NR7 and PD1 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 are relevant to the consideration of this planning application. Supplementary Planning Guidance contained in the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy is also a material consideration, as is government guidance contained in PPS7: *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*.

Policy HC25 is the primary policy consideration. This policy states that in the countryside the replacement of an existing dwelling which has not been abandoned will be permitted where:

- a) The siting is closely related to the footprint of the dwelling it replaces, unless the re-siting of the dwelling would remove a road safety hazard; *and*
- b) The scale of the replacement dwelling is not significantly larger than the original structure.

The policy states that in cases where a dwelling is re-sited to remove a road safety hazard careful attention will be given to the potential impact of the proposed development on the wider

landscape.

7. Consultations

Urchfont Parish Council – no objections.

Wiltshire Council Agricultural Consultant – “The guidance set out in Annex A to PPS7 does not expressly deal with replacement agricultural dwellings. If, however, the guidance concerning the size and cost of new dwellings is applied to the proposal then it is my opinion that the proposed dwelling is certainly unusually large in relation to the previously recognised functional need at the holding and significantly beyond the means of many of most who would qualify to meet the agricultural occupancy condition.”

Wiltshire Council Landscape Consultant – objects on the grounds that the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon landscape character and visual amenity, particularly for users of the adjacent Public Rights of Way. The proposal is contrary to the SPG contained in the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy and policy NR7 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011.

Wiltshire Council Public Rights of Way Officer – no objection. The original proposals showed two public footpaths crossing the site; these would have required diversion following any grant of planning permission. Amended plans were submitted during the course of the application which reduce the size of the new dwelling’s curtilage; the footpaths are now unaffected by the proposals.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service – A developer contribution may be required towards additional or enhanced Fire & Rescue Service infrastructure needed in response to the development proposed.

8. Publicity

The application has been advertised with a site notice and press advertisement.

9. Planning Considerations

The application site lies outside of the Limits of Development defined for Urchfont in the Kennet Local Plan 2011 and as such it lies within the countryside for the purposes of interpreting planning policy.

Policy HC25 states that replacement dwellings in the countryside are acceptable, providing that: (i) the siting is closely related to the footprint of the dwelling it replaces and (ii) the scale of the replacement dwelling is not significantly larger than the original structure.

The existing farmhouse is a standard 1970s red brick and concrete tile house. The dwelling is well related to the existing complex of farm buildings and it has a properly defined domestic curtilage. It is evident that the property has already had several extensions that have already increased its size from its original size (around 200 square metres and 4 bedrooms) to 370 square metres. Notwithstanding this, there is no objection in principle to the demolition of the house and its replacement with one of a similar size but improved design.

The proposal is to construct a replacement dwelling further south in the adjacent pony paddock. The dwelling would be positioned at an angle to the existing farmhouse and its siting would be approximately 30 metres from the centre of the existing house. This distance is considered acceptable in this location

However, what is clearly unacceptable and in clear conflict with the planning policy is the scale of the proposed replacement dwelling and its consequent impact on the landscape. The proposed replacement dwelling alone has a floorspace 70% larger than the already extended existing house, and this is before the floorspace of the attached range of outbuildings is added. These outbuildings by themselves have a floorspace larger than the original farmhouse built in

the 1970s. The bulk of the replacement dwelling is also much larger – the eaves are 25% higher than the existing building and the ridgeline 30% higher. Instead of a two storey farmhouse, the proposed replacement has a third storey in the roof and the appearance of a country house. The result will be an imposing building with an extensive range of outbuildings that will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.

As noted above, there is no objection to the principle of a replacement dwelling, as a suitable designed one could enhance the landscape. However, this needs to be of a maximum two storey height and of a size far closer to that of the existing dwelling

The plans originally submitted showed a sizeable domestic curtilage. This has been considerably reduced during the course of the application, as a result of negotiations with officers. The curtilage is now a more realistic size and the level of harm that could have resulted from the spread of domestic activity (and related domestic paraphernalia) has been reduced accordingly.

The existing farmhouse is the subject of an agricultural occupancy restriction. This stems from the unit's original dairy enterprise which would have given rise to a functional need for a worker to be on site at most times. The site is now used as a base for the applicant's hay and straw business, beef enterprise and a building and groundworks business. The size of the proposed new dwelling is far larger than most agricultural workers dwellings and consequently, if the new dwelling is permitted it will not be within the financial reach of most agricultural workers or retired farmers, making it difficult to justify the normal occupancy condition.

Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would conflict with policy HC25 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 by virtue of the fact that its scale is very significantly larger than the existing farmhouse.

Furthermore, the excessive scale of the dwelling, its formal (and rather imposing) design and siting in an existing paddock would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies PD1 and NR7 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 and Supplementary Planning Guidance contained in the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission for the following reason:

1. The proposed dwelling would conflict with policy HC25 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 by virtue of the fact that its scale is significantly larger than the existing farmhouse.

Furthermore, the excessive scale of the dwelling, its formal (and rather imposing) design and siting in an existing paddock would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies PD1 and NR7 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 and Supplementary Planning Guidance contained in the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy.

Appendices:

None

Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:

Kennet Local Plan 2011, Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy & PPS7.