

REPORT TO THE AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	4 th June 2014
Application Number	14/03701/FUL
Site Address	Beckett House Nettleton Green Nettleton Chippenham SN14 7NU
Proposal	Proposed New Vehicular Access & Change of Use of Land for Parking
Applicant	Mr & Mrs B Holt
Town/Parish Council	NETTLETON
Ward	BY BROOK (Cllr Scott OBE)
Grid Ref	381797 178523
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Alison Grogan

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Called in By Cllr Scott for the committee to consider the parking issues in the village.

1. Purpose of Report

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

Nettleton Parish Council supports the application. The application has attracted two letters of objection and one letter raising some concerns.

2. Main Issues

- Principle of development Policies C3, NE4 and NE15 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework
- Impact on the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Highway Safety and Parking Provision

3. Site Description

Beckett House is a semi-detached property located off a narrow lane. The dwelling is L shaped with enclave parking in front of the property. The residential curtilage is to the north of the dwelling and is the width of the dwelling, forming a triangular shape along the boundary with the lane. An area of land approximately 38m by 13m to the rear of the

property is enclosed with a post and rail fence. A section of wall along the rear boundary of the residential curtilage appears to have been removed and opened up into this land.

The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Planning History

N/96/01047/FUL Alterations to Dwelling

5. The Proposal

The proposal is to create a new vehicular access from the lane and change of use of an area of agricultural land to parking. Whilst the access will be formed within the established curtilage, the driveway and parking will measure approximately 13m by 11m on agricultural land.

6. Consultations

Nettleton Parish Council – Support the application as it will provide an improvement in safety for both the applicant's family and for other users of the narrow road alongside the property.

Highways – The proposal will provide an improved arrangement on that which is currently provided. No objection subject to condition.

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

One letter, whilst not objecting to the application itself, raised concerns regarding possible access difficulties and disruption whilst the works take place and requesting that the applicant takes responsibility for any damages if they are incurred.

Two letters of objection have been received, a summary of the key issues raised are detailed below:

- Proposal results in a clear change of character and form of the land which acts as a buffer between the residential development in the locality and the established agricultural land;
- The site is within the AONB and the change of use would not preserve that established and protected characteristic;
- Regardless of any conditions, the change would inevitably result in a proliferation of residential clutter and related landscaping that is not a feature of the landscape or AONB at present and would further detract from the rural setting ;
- The car parking should be relocated adjacent to the oil tank and shed in front of the removed stone wall, reversing directly onto the land does not pose a hazard as vehicular movements are minimal in the adjacent land, being served by only three other properties;
- Application is part retrospective and contentious;
- The site can be viewed from both public footpaths and roads to the North, East, West and South;
- It is a site of significant heritage and comprises surviving Saxon settlement earthworks and medieval archaeology;

- Object to the unauthorised demolition and removal of the historic, stone boundary walls to the East of Beckett House, would want to see this remediated to ensure the heritage of the entire setting;
- Refer to the refusal of application 13/04291/FUL at the Granary – much of the deliberation of that application at committee is relevant to this application;
- The legal parking requirements already exist at the site

9. Planning Considerations

The key consideration in respect of the proposed development is the visual impact on the character and appearance of the locality and the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area of land this change of use relates to is significant as it incorporates a turning area in addition to the vehicular parking.

Visual Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The site provides a buffer between the existing residential development in the area and it is visible from public vantage points. The proposal will extend the residential activities at this dwelling into the agricultural land and given the scale of the proposed works it is considered that the proposal will introduce an intrusive form of development within the open rural character of the area

There is also a concern regarding the area of land to the south of the site and to the rear of Beckett House which has been fenced off, particularly as part of the garden wall has been removed and opened up into this land. The area appears more as lawn rather than rough pasture and the agent was contacted to provide further information regarding the use of this land and has responded as follows:

“The owners of Beckett House have purchased an area of former agricultural land abutting the rear wall of their dwellinghouse but with the exception of the land the subject of the current application they have no present intention of seeking planning permission to change the use of the land to residential curtilage. As the land became available, Ben and Clare Holt purchased the portion abutting their property with the primary purpose of securing their boundaries and to create the opportunity for improved parking/turning clear of the highway to serve their property.

Since the completion of the purchase, the land has been used on an occasional basis for family events hence the mowing. The total of the periods of use has been less than 28 days annually.

The removal of the section of wall was necessary to allow access of plant while work was being undertaken to the sewage treatment plant serving the dwelling.”

The government advice given in the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy NE4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan, also reinforces the requirement that proposals should conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and be sited or designed so as to minimise its impact.

It is acknowledged that conditions can be used to restrict ancillary residential structures, but inevitably the land will change in form and appearance with hardsurfacing and vehicular parking. Whilst the agent has indicated that landscaping can be used to mitigate visual impact, unfortunately this would further introduce features in the landscape that currently do not exist.

It is not considered that there are any material considerations including defined public benefit that would mitigate or justify this level of impact on the natural beauty of this rural landscape.

Highway Safety and Parking Provision

Highways have raised no objection to the proposal in this respect subject to a condition relating to a consolidated access.

It is acknowledged that the proposal would not create a highway safety issue. However, parking already exists at this site and additional parking could be created within the established residential curtilage without the need to encroach into the agricultural land.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal would have a significant impact on the surrounding natural environment that is harmful in visual terms to the character and appearance of the landscape and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is not considered that there are any material considerations including defined public benefit that would mitigate or justify this level of impact. The proposal is considered contrary to Policies C3, NE4 and NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and conflicts with the advice given in Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

The application be REFUSED for the following reason:-

1. The proposed development results in a significant change to the open rural nature of the area and does not preserve the character or appearance of the landscape and defined Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is harmful and not justified by any overriding material considerations. The proposal is in conflict with policies C3(ii), NE4 and NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

