

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>Application Number</b>	15/01683/VAR
<b>Site Address</b>	Crookwood House, Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont, Wiltshire SN10 4RA
<b>Proposal</b>	Variation of condition 5 of planning permission 14/07886/FUL 'Two storey extensions to existing 3 bedroomed house' - to enable an external staircase to allow access to first floor office
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Philip Whitehead
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	URCHFONT
<b>Division</b>	URCHFONT AND THE CANNINGS
<b>Grid Ref</b>	403624 157194
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning
<b>Case Officer</b>	Lucy Rutter

### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, this application has been brought to Committee as the applicant is an elected member and a letter of objection has been received raising material planning considerations.

#### 1. Purpose of Report

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

#### 2. Report Summary

The key issues for consideration are:

- Whether the scale, design and materials of the proposed external staircase are acceptable;
- Whether the proposed external staircase would adversely impact upon the setting of the nearby conservation area;
- Whether the proposed external staircase would have an adverse impact on neighbour amenity.

#### 3. Site Description

The application property is Crookwood House, which is located on Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont. The property consists of a detached 1960's red brick dwelling with plain tiles to the roof and white PVCu windows and doors throughout. The house is of an awkward design with the main central portion being of a square footprint with a utility room jutting off the rear elevation, a large lean-to living room extending from the front elevation and a lean-to garage on the east side elevation. This results in a mix of roof levels and elevations.



The dwelling does not lie within the Urchfont Conservation Area, however, the boundary of the conservation area does extend into part of the garden. As a consequence, many of the trees that run around the boundary of the property are protected. There is an existing post and wire fence enclosing the gardens of the dwelling measuring approximately 1.2m in height.

The front elevation of the property faces away from the main highway and the dwelling is adjoined by one neighbour to the south-east. It has views over the playing fields in Urchfont to the south-west.

#### **4. Planning History**

- Planning Application reference E/2012/1023/FUL - Proposed Change of Use from Urchfont Manor College Staff Accommodation to Residential Use (C3) - 19 September, 2012 (Approve with Conditions)
- Planning Application reference 14/07886/FUL - Two storey extension to existing 3 bedroomed house - 14 October, 2014 (Approve with Conditions)

The building works approved under planning application 14/07886/FUL are currently being carried out at the property. These include a two storey side extension to the north-west elevation of the dwelling, the enlargement of the original single garage to a double garage with accommodation within the roof on the east elevation, a first floor extension to the existing lean-to living room to the south-west elevation and works to generally improve the appearance of the dwelling through the use of appropriate new materials and landscaping. The new garage and extensions have been constructed and the associated machinery has been removed from the site. The construction phase is therefore approaching its final stages.

## 5. The Proposal

This application seeks permission to amend planning permission 14/07886/FUL through the construction of an external staircase on the east elevation of the double garage, as shown on the proposed block plan below, in order to allow external access to the private office space within the roofspace of the garage. The external staircase would be enclosed with vertical boarding to match the remainder of the house. The second plan below shows the relationship between the application property and the neighbouring dwelling.



*Proposed Block Plan & Plan showing position of neighbouring dwellings*

The proposed amendment can be clearly viewed when comparing the approved plans with the ones currently proposed:



**Approved North Front Elevation**

**Proposed North Front Elevation**



**Proposed side elevation, showing proposed external staircase**

## **6. Planning Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework with particular regard to Chapters 7: 'Requiring Good Design' and 12: 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'.

Wiltshire Core Strategy, in particular Core Policy 57: 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' and Core Policy 58 'Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment'.

## **7. Consultations**

Urchfont Parish Council – Supports the application.

## **8. Publicity**

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and consultations with the neighbours. As a result of the publicity, one letter has been received objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- The approved development is overbearing to the neighbouring property; the proposed variation will make the development even more overbearing.
- Concerns about security.
- Concerns about noise and loss of privacy.
- Concerns that the office will be for a commercial use.
- Cannot see why an internal staircase would not be possible.
- The property shares a driveway with the primary school; there will be issues regarding parking and the health and safety of the pupils and parents attending the school.
- Concerns that the inappropriate design will negatively affect the nearby conservation area and that it is in contrast to the surrounding rural character.
- The proposal is not sensitive to the historic environment and therefore contrary to the aims and objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **9. Planning Considerations**

### **9.1 Scale, Design & Materials**

The application seeks an amendment to the design of the previously approved scheme to include an external staircase to the east elevation of the attached double garage. The staircase would measure approximately 1m in width and 4m in length. The door opening sits at approximately 2.5m above ground floor level. The staircase would be enclosed with vertical weather boarding to tie in with the materials used in the renovation of the host dwelling. The staircase itself will be constructed of stained timber to match the boarding on the remainder of the property.

Core Policy 57 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy states that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality. Development should also respond positively to the existing townscape through built form, height and mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting, taking account of the needs of potential occupants.

Whilst it is acknowledged that an internal staircase would be more desirable, it is not considered that the proposed external staircase would be visually harmful. The size of the staircase has been kept to a minimum and consequently the increase to bulk, scale and footprint for the development would not be significant. The materials have also been carefully selected to tie in with the approved scheme, with the use of stained timber boarding which would also help to conceal the staircase. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would comply with the design objectives of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

## **9.2 Impact on Setting of Conservation Area**

Core Policy 58 states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. The designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development and the Council is committed to working pragmatically with owners to find positive solutions which will allow adaptation of such buildings to reflect modern living aspirations. As already stated, the size of the staircase has been kept to a minimum and materials have been specified which would tie in with those used elsewhere on the property. It is also noted that the site will be screened to a certain extent by the house itself and the trees, shrubs and large garden shed within the curtilage of the property. It is not considered that the proposed alteration would harm the setting, character or appearance of the nearby conservation area.

## **9.3 Impact on Neighbour Amenity**

The main issue to consider here is the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring property to the east. Core Policy 57 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy states that all developments should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and should also ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, taking into account privacy and overshadowing.

The occupiers of the adjoining property have objected to the application as they consider that the whole development has an overbearing effect and that the addition of a staircase would exacerbate this impact. Careful consideration has been given to the potential impact of the proposed staircase on the amenities of the neighbouring residents. It is evident that the applicant has attempted to minimise the potential for overlooking of the neighbouring property as the staircase would be enclosed by vertical timber boarding. This would eliminate any prospect of overlooking. Consequently, it is considered that although the development as a whole has brought the footprint of the extended building closer to the neighbouring property, this would not result in an invasion of privacy as a result of overlooking.

There would be a separation distance of approximately 15m between the proposed staircase and the neighbouring house, with a separation distance of approximately 9m between the proposed staircase and the neighbouring garage. It appears that the neighbouring garage has habitable accommodation in the roof, however, due to the proposed staircase sitting north of the neighbouring property, and the orientation of both houses there will be no loss of light to the neighbouring dwelling or garage or any overbearing impact.

As previously advised,, Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect neighbour amenity and it is considered that the scheme complies with this objective. Therefore, a refusal of planning permission on this ground is not warranted.

The property would remain within a residential use therefore any concerns in relation to security, noise and increased vehicle movements are unfounded. Should the applicant wish to use the office for purposes other than as an ancillary use to the main dwelling house, then planning permission would be required for a change of use.

## 10. Conclusion

The proposed external staircase would be acceptable in terms of its scale, design and materials and would not have an adverse impact on the setting, character or appearance of the conservation area or on neighbour amenity. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is in accordance with the general criteria set out in the policies of the local development plan.

## RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **granted** subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted (excluding the timber cladding, and the windows in the west elevation as shown on the 'Proposed Elevations' plan, drawing number: CH003/2014, received on the 18/08/2014, which will be powder coated grey aluminium) shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

- 2 All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the extensions or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner; All hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any hedges which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Title: Confirmation of materials for the staircase. Received: Via email dated: 17/04/2015

Drg Title: Location Plan. Received: 20/02/2015

Drg Title: Proposed Elevations (north, south and east elevations). Drg No: CH003/2014. Received: 20/02/2015

Drg Title: Proposed Elevations (west elevation only). Drg No: CH003/2014. Received: 18/08/2014

Drg Title: Proposed Plans. Drg No: CH001/2014. Received: 20/02/2015

Drg No: Proposed Landscape Plan & Tree Protection Plan. Received: 14/10/2014.

Drg Title: Existing Elevations. Drg No: CH\_003\_2014\_exist\_elev. Received:

18/08/2014

Drg Title: Existing Layout. Drg No: CH001/2014. Received: 18/08/2014.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.