

**REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE**

Report No.

Date of Meeting	30th July 2008
Application Number	08/01116/FUL
Site Address	Seagry & Startley Village Hall, Upper Seagry, Chippenham, Wiltshire
Proposal	Demolition of village hall and replacement with dwelling.
Applicant	Seagry and Startley Village Hall Management Trustees
Town/Parish Council	Seagry
Grid Ref	394606 180997
Type of application	Full application

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

- This application has been submitted to the Committee for decision under the scheme of delegation in force after the 8th April 2002 because Cllrs Sturgis and Henning have requested it so that local and policy issues can be debated in public.

Summary of Report

This application proposes the demolition of a building currently used as a village hall, and its replacement with a new dwelling. The current village hall has reached the end of its economic life and its replacement with a new dwelling could help fund the construction of a new dwelling on the edge of the village (05/02201/FUL). The issues to be considered are:

- Compliance with policies C3 and H3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
- Loss of existing facility.
- New house in the countryside.
- Parking and highways issues.

Officer Recommendation

Planning Permission be REFUSED

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Proposal and Site Description

The proposal is to demolish the current village hall which is pre-1945 and wooden. The main wooden structure has been over-clad in green corrugated profile sheeting, apart from on the rear elevation. A timber framed extension has been added to give a kitchen and toilets. A further extension has been built on adjacent land, apparently in separate ownership.

The building is not architecturally attractive and does not comply with many regulations eg building control, disabled access and fire regulations. Car parking is also very inadequate.

Planning permission exists for a new village hall some 200m closer to the village (05/02201/FUL). The proposal is to demolish the existing hall, build a dwelling and use the proceeds to help fund the new village hall.

Planning History		
Application number	Proposal	Decision
95/2100/F	Extension to village hall.	Permission
00/2199/FUL	Demolish existing store, toilets and kitchen and new extension.	Permission
02/2092/FUL	Installation of bio disc sewage treatment plant.	Permission

Consultations

Seagry Parish Council – 2 Members declared an interest. Those remaining voted unanimously to support the application as an exception to policy as any monies would be for a replacement village hall.

Wiltshire County Council has no objections subject to conditions.

Representations

1 local resident objects on the grounds that there is split land ownership and lack of low cost housing in the area. They would like all low cost housing. They do not give permission to demolish any parts of the building on their land or for the removal of their existing boundary fence/hedge.

33 local residents support the application for the following reasons:

1. The existing hall is unsightly and has serious parking problems.
2. Brownfield site.
3. Design is attractive and in keeping with lodge next door.
4. The new hall is badly needed and funds from this application are essential.
5. Startley has no facilities and people rely on the hall for community facilities.

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

The principle of demolishing the village hall, which is of no architectural merit, is acceptable. However, its replacement with a dwelling in open countryside is contrary to policy H3 of the North Wiltshire Local

Plan 2011. Only dwellings essential for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or other rural based enterprise are permissible. Unfortunately the need to fund another project (even with such community benefit and obvious local support) does not fall within the parameters of this policy.

The principle of replacing the old hall with a new dwelling in open countryside is therefore not acceptable.

Loss of existing facility.

The demolition of the existing hall, whilst temporarily removing the community facility would be replaced by the new hall, which already has planning permission (05/02201/FUL). Any funds from the sale of the plot could be legally tied to fund the new hall, but this does not justify the granting of permission for residential use. In planning terms, alternative uses are somewhat limited due to its countryside location.

Design and scale of development

The proposed replacement dwelling is a 3 bedroom cottage with low eaves and ridge. Parking would be at the front for 2 spaces with a turning area in what is currently a lay-by.

Land not owned by the applicant will revert back to its original owner, so the plot is smaller than that of the current village hall. The design takes from the nearby lodge building and the dwelling will be constructed from natural stone with double roman clay tiles. The dwelling will have very little amenity space with a rear garden of approx. 4.5m. It is considered that it will appear rather cramped on the plot contrary to policy C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Impact on amenity

The construction of a new dwelling in the countryside and the use of its immediate surroundings for domestic paraphernalia, would be detrimental to the openness of the countryside and be contrary to policy NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011. The proposed dwelling would be higher than the existing hall and therefore the impact on the countryside would be increased.

Highways and Access

Wiltshire County Highways has no objections subject to conditions.

Conclusion

The principle of replacing the existing village hall with a dwelling is contrary to policy H3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 in that funding a community project does not fall within any of the acceptable exceptions for new dwellings in the countryside. This would set an unfortunate precedent. In addition to this, the dwelling would appear rather cramped on the plot and the domestic paraphernalia associated with domestic living would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the open countryside, contrary to policies C3 and NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Recommendation

Planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposal would be a new dwelling in the countryside, without special justification, contrary to policy H3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
- 2) The proposed dwelling would be cramped on the plot and lead to an incongruous development, which would be harmful to the amenity of the open countryside contrary to policies C3 and NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NONE.
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.20, 2.04, 2.07, 4.02, 4.04, 4.06, 4.07.