

Planning application 17/06709/FUL Construction of a new house and vehicular access

I believe that it is very important for the committee to understand the lack of support for this proposal.

Teffont is a beautiful small village within a Conservation area and part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs area of outstanding natural beauty. The Teffont Village Design Statement was adopted by Salisbury City council in 2015.

- This is an overly tall building squeezed into one of the last remaining green gaps on the street.
- The Teffont Village Design Statement insists on sensitive scale and proportions to not overwhelm neighbouring dwellings; enclosure by natural boundaries and building heights limited to single or two storeys - the proposed building has four levels!
- It does not meet housing needs as referenced by the AONB and the conservation officer.
- Teffont Parish council have been elected to represent the views of the village and have objected twice to this proposal.
- A previous application was refused. This is just a piecemeal version of the same thing with fewer trees.
- Despite minor adjustments this proposal still sits forward of neighbouring houses obscuring Reads cottage from view in the street scene.
- Wiltshire Core Strategy (Core policy 2) states “Teffont is identified as a small village and is therefore considered to be open countryside where there is a general presumption against development.”
- Core Policy 2 also states that “at small villages such as Teffont, development will be limited to infill within the existing built area where it seeks to meet the housing needs provided that the development: 1) Respects the existing character and form of the settlement. 3) Does not consolidate an existing sporadic loose knit area of development related to the settlement.” This application fails to meet either of these criteria.
- The NPPF states that “Development should respond to local character and history... make a positive contribution to their setting.”

What greatly concerns me is that the VDS, AONB, Conservation officer, Parish Council and local residents have largely been disregarded. There is no support for this application within Teffont other than the applicant and her immediate family.

I do appreciate that there is an enormous pressure on planning officers to approve new housing applications. I am not insisting that there should be no development in Teffont but what is permitted should fit in harmoniously with the conservation area in terms of scale so that they do not overwhelm the old houses in the village. Overly Large houses are continuing to be built on smaller and smaller plots in Teffont as it has proven to be very lucrative in the second homes market. There are more and more houses that are occupied only part time. Right now, there are at least four houses stood completely empty even of furniture. I have counted at least 15 new builds since 2000 and there are always several on the market at any one time. If this particular trend continues there will be nothing left of the conservation area to conserve.

Comments from the AONB Partnership include:

- It should be recognised that ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ does not automatically apply within AONBs.
- Local government (including planning authorities), individual councillors and holders of public office have a statutory duty to have regard to purposes of AONB designation, namely conserving and enhancing natural beauty.
- This proposal appears to be a single property being squeezed in between existing properties. As you know, the AONB Management plan identifies affordable housing as a primary need within the AONB. There is no indication that the current proposal would fall into that category.
- It appears that the architect has not taken account of AONB guidance.

Relevant comments from the Conservation officer include:

- I expressed concerns at preapp about the scale and design of this proposed new dwelling. A previous refusal (S/2002/2436) is relevant, as of course is the VDS, and we should be mindful that the CA is not one of continuous built form, there are several green or treed gaps, of which this is one, that contribute to its rural character
- There is a level of concern at the loss of the undeveloped treed section from the street scene, and the coalescence of the eastern side of the village. This is certainly reasonable in CA terms and could be defended if necessary.
- Perhaps the strangest element of the design is the integral car port, as this pushes the ‘ground’ floor upward and creates internal level changes.
- The integral garage forces the building to be wider and taller than otherwise necessary.
- There would be no public benefit outweighing the harm (NPPF 134)

Planning history

A previous refused scheme (S/2002/2436) was for demolition of Reads Close (now Reads Cottage) and redevelopment with 3 dwellings on the site along with outbuildings. That application was refused for the following reason:

‘The proposed development by reason of its number, massing and scale of dwellings would adversely impact upon the character of the conservation area and housing restraint area.

Extract of street scene elevation of refused scheme positioned for a correct comparison with the new scheme below.



Note how if the new scheme were to go ahead it would fulfil the applicant's original intention of having three houses on the same piece of land. Only this time there would be fewer green open spaces and trees.

Despite this the planning officer has the view that:

"It is not considered that this automatically means the current scheme should be refused, as can be seen from the extract taken from the street scene elevation of the refused scheme; the issue was the overall number, massing and scale of dwellings proposed."

For further comparison: a view of the layout of both schemes



Another attempt was made to demolish Reads Close by the applicant (s/2003/0084). This too was refused as ***Reads Close was "considered to represent a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the Teffont Conservation Area." And was an "important element of the Teffont street scene and Conservation Area"***

Reads Cottage (originally Reads Close) has stood on this site for about 200 years and was considered one of the historically important buildings in Teffont Magna. The house is the birth place, home and work place of the painter Harry Fidler and his brother Gideon, who were born here in the mid-19th century. Harry Fidler is now internationally renowned for his impressionistic paintings depicting village and farm life. Many of his paintings included local characters who lived in Teffont at the time. Both Harry and Gideon exhibited at many prestigious institutions including the Royal Academy. Their sisters Fanny and Lucy were also celebrated painters. Gideon and Lucy are buried in the garden of Reads Close (now part of Corrindale, the graves are expected to remain in the garden of the new building). They had no descendants and the house was left to the applicant's family.

The present view northwards of the historic street scene. The orange shows the patch of garden where the new build is proposed directly in front of Reads Cottage

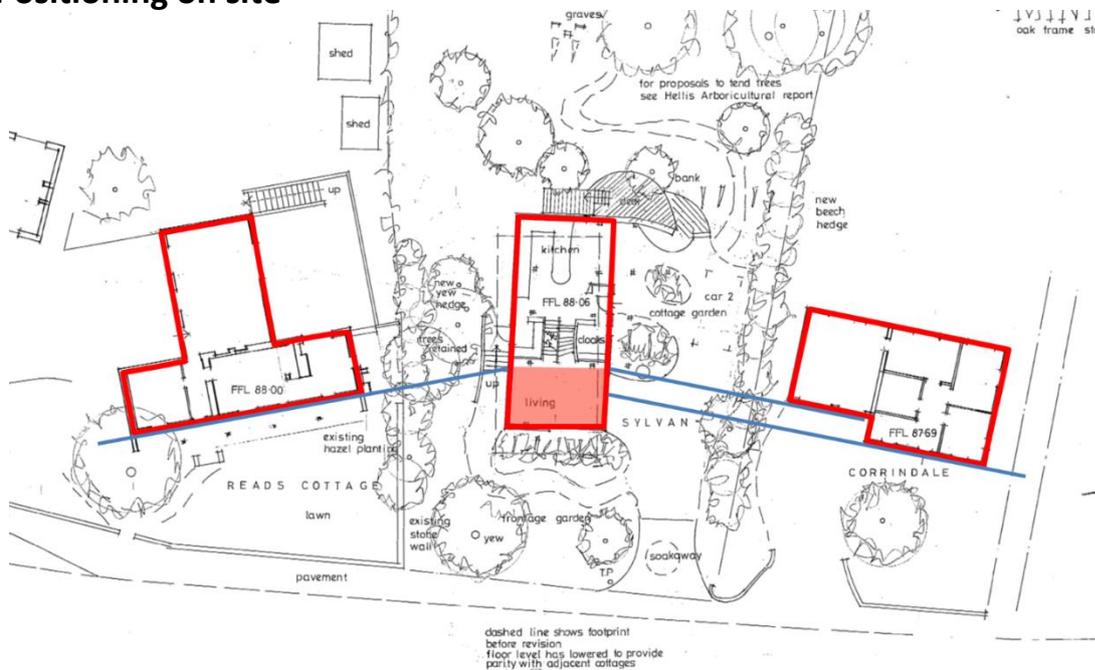


The proposal for this application sites Sylvan several feet forward of both Reads cottage and Corrindale this was criticised by the conservation officer:

“both of the neighbouring properties are angled as if part of a crescent, yet the proposed building juts forward of the middle, giving it more prominence than desirable”

With the revised plans this was pushed back slightly but a quarter of the bulk of Sylvan would still protrude forwards of Reads Cottage. Travelling northwards through the village any view of Reads Cottage will be lost to the street scene forever if Sylvan were to be built in its present form.

Positioning on site



In conclusion

The VDS, AONB, Conservation officer, Parish Council and local residents have largely been ignored.

I understand that there is an enormous pressure on planning officers to approve new housing applications and the NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption does not automatically apply within the AONB however and the greater emphasis must be to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty.

The AONB identifies affordable housing as a primary need but this proposal does not fall into this category. (a 3 bed. architect designed house in Teffont would be in excess of £400,000). There are already many second homes in the village, at least four houses stood completely empty at the moment and four up for sale.

The report states that there are 13 letters of support for this application and 14 objecting. This gives a very misleading picture. All the support letters come from those living in the applicant's house or close family members & friends, none of whom live anywhere near the proposed house and most not even in the village. Those objecting have a genuine stake as residents of the village and most are immediate neighbours who will have to live with the results of this decision.

The house is proposed to be significantly forward of neighbouring houses obliterating Reads Cottage from view as one travels northwards up the street.

It is unfairly positioned closer to Reads Cottage than the applicants house blocking much of the sunlight to the southern side which is at its most critical during the winter months.

It has four levels: an under-croft; a living space, a bedroom level and an enormously tall attic space. This makes it significantly taller than Reads Cottage exacerbating the overshadowing.

This is the last opportunity to revisit the design of this proposal. If approved, it will change our historic street scene forever. If refused, the applicant could propose a shorter building that would sit better within its space, be less dominating of the street scene, be more considerate to neighbouring properties and still bring the desired profit that the applicant is aiming for when it is sold as a building plot along with Corrindale.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rowena Taylor

Reads Cottage, Teffont