

REPORT OUTLINE FOR AREA PLANNING COMMITTEES**Report No.**

Date of Meeting	18 th August 2021
Application Number	20/10382/FUL
Site Address	Woodlands, The Street, Grittleton, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6AP
Proposal	Retrospective Erection of summerhouse in rear garden
Applicant	Mr John Pickford
Town/Parish Council	Grittleton Parish Council
Electoral Division	Councillor Whitehead
Type of application	Householder Development
Case Officer	James Webster

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called to the Northern Area Planning Committee by Councillor Whitehead so as to allow consideration of the proposal in the context of the objections raised by Grittleton Parish Council and neighbours, in terms of visual impact upon the surrounding area, relationship to neighbouring properties and design (bulk, height and general appearance).

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the planning permission be granted.

2. Report Summary

This report will examine the proposed development and explore the process by which the appropriate conclusion has been reached. It will set out the public benefits which will be obtained as a result of the application and the various impacts which may occur.

The key issues in considering the applications are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Impact upon heritage assets
- Design and scale
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact upon landscape

The Parish Council have raised an objection to the proposal as they have concerns over the potential impacts on neighbouring properties.

Three (3) representations have been received.

3. Site Description

The residential property to which the proposed development relates is known as "Woodlands" and is a Grade II listed building. Originally a pair of C18th cottages but now configured as a single dwellinghouse with later C19th extensions to rear. The building is of a historic form and natural stone construction with a direct presentation to the street. The listing description is set out below:

"Pair of houses now one, dated I S 1789, altered in mid C19 for Neeld estate, rubble stone with stone slate roof, coped gables and centre ridge stack. Two-storey, 2-window range of leaded casement pairs, originally with doors each side in C19 coped gabled porches with depressed-arched doorways. Right porch and door have been removed. East end stone-slate roofed extension, with C19 shop- window. Included for group value."

The property is surrounded by a number of other listed properties of varying designations and is within the Grittleton Conservation Area. Of particular importance is the Grade II* listed chapel to the immediate South of the application site, the listing is given below:

"Baptist Chapel, c1720, rubble stone with ashlar dressings and hipped Bridgwater tile roof. Rectangular plan with flush segmental-headed windows, 2 tall cross-windows to west side with dripcourse over, four smaller cross-windows to ground floor of east side, dripcourse above and four 2-light upper windows. South end segmental-headed doorway with keystone and short moulded cornice over. A south east cornerstone has scratched 1722 and possibly 1705 dates. Elevations appear to reflect a gallery on east and pulpit central on west wall but interior now has galleries at north and south ends, that to south probably C18, on two turned posts, has fielded panelled front, that to north, possibly C19, is over a glazed-fronted vestry. Original octagonal timber pulpit with fielded panels and turned balusters is reset in front of vestry. At rear south east corner three C18 oak box pews, the rest of the pews are mid C19 deal. Licensed 11.1.1721. The chapel was promoted and supported by the Houlton family of the Manor House. (J.E. Jackson, A History of the Parish of Grittleton, 1843, 21)."

The grounds of the Chapel immediately adjoin that of the residential curtilage to Woodlands, albeit the graveyard providing a degree of separation between the chapel building and the proposed development itself. The Chapel is accessed via a lane leading South from The Street.

The application site is also part of the Cotswold AONB.

4. The Proposal

The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for the erection of a "summerhouse" in the rear garden.

The summer house is some 5.2m x 3.62m footprint with an approximate height of 3.12m, with projecting roof canopy and flagstone terrace.

Currently the summerhouse is constructed of reconstituted stone, with a concrete tile roof. Revised plans were submitted during the course of the application which propose to add timber cladding to the external face of the walls and to replace the concrete tiles with natural slate.

A Listed Building Consent application was initially submitted alongside this planning application. However, since the development is freestanding and does not touch any listed building, such an application was not required and has been subsequently withdrawn.

5. Local Planning Policy

CP51, 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy

6. Summary of consultation responses

Grittleton Parish Council – Objection.

First Response:

“Visual Impact on the Surrounding Area. Relationship to adjoining properties and the design. Height & general appearance. The Summerhouse has been built in the curtilage of a Grade II listed building in the Grittleton Conservation Area, the site adjoins a Grade II building (Baptist Chapel) using inappropriate materials and of a design & size not in keeping with the Conservation Area.”*

Second Response:

“The addition of wooden cladding and change of roof material has not changed the opinion of the Parish Council, that this construction is inappropriate in the Grittleton Conservation area.”

Council Conservation Officer – No objection to revised scheme

First Response:

“The Retrospective nature of the application allow an easier assessment of the impact of the scheme on the Historic Environment.

There is no need for an LBC in this case at the structure is freestanding and no additional works are detailed to existing curtilage listed fabric.

In this case the Parish Council are correct the building has an unfortunate appearance mainly due to the use materials which are inappropriate in this sensitive context.

The issues in this case are due to the buff yellow coloured reconstituted stone bricks, the choice of colour, block size and coursing are inappropriate in this context, choice of building pallet completely fails to draw any inspiration from either that of the host Grade II listed building or its neighbours in the conservation area. The proposal also

fails to demonstrate any public benefits being purely driven from desire or delivering the goals of the current owners of the site.

- *The scheme is considered to fail to preserve the special interest of the Conservation Area – via its use of alien and incongruous materials and design.*

- *The scheme fails to preserve the garden setting of Woodlands a Grade II listed building, the proposed development would erode the garden via the introduction a prominent garden building with synthetic materials that fail to respond sensitive to the vernacular language of the area.*

- *The scheme would fail to preserve the wider setting of the Grade II* Grittleton Baptist Chapel, the proximity of the development to the south edge of the garden of Woodlands allows the site to be perceived from the curtilage of the Chapel. The alien materials of the structure make the development more prominent in the wider green setting of the Chapel.*

The scheme is considered contrary to the requirements of the BS7913 in that there has been no apparent assessment of the context in which the building has been placed, and no attempt to mitigate the impact of visual appearance on the structure to conform to the dominant local building characteristics.

The scheme is contrary to 196 of the NPPF in that there is an impact on significance three distinct heritage assets the degrees of harm in each case is considered to less than substantial harm and towards the lower end of the scale, in this case there are no public benefits in offered by the scheme which would solely personally benefit the owners of Woodlands.”

Second Response:

“On the basis of the revised plans we are now able to support this scheme.”

Historic England – Support comment of the Conservation Officer.

“Given that you have decided an LBC is not required for this application, and Historic England was not consulted on the Planning application we will not provide further formal comments, however we do support your comments regarding the impact that the materials have on the character and setting of the Conservation Area, Grade II and Grade II listed assets. If you require anything further from us please let me know.”*

REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbour letters were used as part of the revised working practices in response to COVID-19. Responses were received to the original consultation. A further re-consult was carried out as a result of revised plans, which amend the materials proposed.

A total of three (3) representations have been received, two (2) in response to the initial consultation and one (1) in response to the revised plans consultation. Photographs of the site were also supplied by the neighbour in response to the first consultation.

The representations are available in full on the Council website and have been summarised below:

First Consultation

- States the building resembles a large bungalow
- Dominates the surroundings, fields of vision
- States it has spoilt the tranquil setting with the introduction of noise, sound and light pollution
- States it is not suitable for a conservation village (sic)
- States the new building has destroyed the area to the detriment of wildlife
- States a number of trees, hedge and shrubs have been removed
- Object to the proximity to the Grade II* Chapel and the impact upon the historic setting of adjacent listed buildings
- States the outbuilding is out of character and spoils the village ambience, beauty and badly affects neighbouring listed buildings
- States the Grittleton Strict Baptist Chapel is Grade II* listed and of major historic significance and the building should not have been constructed

Revised plans were submitted which amended the materials. A further consultation was carried out, the representations received are detailed below:

- States that the proposed changes to the materials are cosmetic and do not make a difference and do not alter the fundamental problems with the building
- States the proposal is harmful to listed buildings and the conservation area

7. Planning Considerations

Principle of development

The proposal occurs within the built area of Grittleton which is defined as a small village under CP1, which does not have a settlement boundary.

The proposal is for a retrospective “summer house” ancillary to an existing dwellinghouse, within the confines of its well-established residential curtilage. Such development is considered to be acceptable in principle, but the details of which must be considered against national and local policy. Those details are considered in the sub-sections below.

Impact upon heritage assets

Woodlands is a Grade II listed building situated wholly within the Grittleton Conservation Area. Due consideration must be given to CP58 of the WCS, the NPPF 2021 and The

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990). As required by the NPPF, consideration must be given to whether the proposal causes harm to the heritage assets and if so, whether that harm is outweighed by the public benefits of development taking place, including securing its optimum viable use.

The proposal will see the retrospective approval of a detached summerhouse. The revised plans show the materials to be used timber cladding and a slate roof.

Significance of Listed Buildings

“Woodlands” is an attractive, traditionally proportioned and constructed property, typical of others of similar vintage in the village. The significance of the property as a heritage asset appears to lie in its attractive form and overall appearance which is typical of the tradition vernacular and is considered to be an attractive example, albeit now converted into a single dwelling where once it was two cottages. Critically, the listed description does not reference the property’s grounds or rear garden, within which the “summerhouse” sits.

The Chapel is an C18th stone built ecclesiastical building. It is largely unaltered externally and retains its small graveyard. Similarly, the building also retains many of its internal features such as pulpit, gallery and panelling. For this reason, the significance of the chapel as a heritage asset is indeed evidentiary, historical, aesthetic and communal. Its listing as grade II* reflects its value.

Harm to listed buildings

There are a number of listed buildings which are located in the locality of the application site, but only two are considered to be within sufficient proximity where potential impacts from the development taking place are possible. Those two listed buildings are the Grade II cottage of “Woodlands” itself and the Grade II* listed Baptist Chapel, which is to the rear of the summerhouse on a separate parcel of land. The summerhouse is currently in situ which enables a reasonably accurate assessment of those potential impacts.

The proposed development is an outbuilding and is entirely detached from any other building or structure. Accordingly, it cannot be said that the development will result in any harm to the historic fabric of any listed building or indeed any boundary wall to the curtilage of those listed buildings. Further, since the building is positioned entirely within an established domestic curtilage which is separated by a dry-stone wall from that of the Chapel, neither is there considered to be an impact or any harm caused to the setting of the Chapel from the principle of such an outbuilding within the curtilage of Woodlands. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that the garden to Woodlands was somehow once part of the grounds or graveyard to the Baptist Chapel.

Nevertheless, in their initial commentary, the Council’s Conservation Officer describes the appearance and construction of the “summerhouse” to cause harm to the setting of both Woodlands and the Baptist Chapel (an objection which is shared by the Parish Council and within received representations). Such criticism is thought reasonable, since the undeniably suburban appearance of the summerhouse as constructed does demonstrably provide for a rather alien intrusion into the relatively unblemished historic character of its surroundings

and for this reason. Indeed, since the proposed building of its current appearance and construction is directly within the setting of Woodlands and does have intervisibility with the Baptist Chapel, especially when viewed from the lane running alongside the Western flank of both properties, that impact and harm is considered to be caused to the setting of both listed buildings.

However, the impacts are judged to be as a result of the external appearance and use of materials only and not the principle of a domestic outbuilding in such a location, since it is considered only reasonable for such structures of appropriate appearance – even fairly substantial ones, such as that now proposed - to exist within residential gardens, even when those gardens relate to a listed building. For this reason, the harm caused to the setting of both listed building is considered to be less than substantial and at the lower end of the spectrum.

During the life of the application and presumably in response to the initial criticism, revised plans were submitted by the applicant. Those revised plans propose the application of a treated timber cladding to the external walls and the use of natural slate for the roof (as opposed to concrete tiles at present). Whilst the overall scale and basic shape of the building would not be altered, this revised proposal is considered to transform the appearance of the development in a positive way. The use of natural materials will reduce the visual prominence of the building and will reflect materials are often seen in historic settings. Indeed, the Council's Conservation Officer is prepared to support the revised proposal.

While the resulting structure will continue to be visible, particularly from the lane, provided the external materials are altered as per the revised proposals, it is considered that the previously identified impacts and harm will be successfully ameliorated. The application of those new external materials can be controlled through the imposition of a particularly worded planning condition.

Therefore, and subject to the addition of a timber cladding to the exterior of the walls and a replacement of the concrete tiled roof with natural slate, the proposed development is considered to cause no harm to the significance of both "Woodlands" or the Baptist Chapel to the rear and would therefore meet with the requirements of policies CP57 and CP58 to the Wiltshire Core Strategy as well as section 16 to the NPPF.

Conservation Area

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Consideration has also been given to paragraphs 190, 192 and 200 of the NPPF, which refers to avoiding or minimising conflict with conservation and any aspects of the proposal.

Due to the location of the summerhouse, largely screened from the character and wider appearance of the Conservation Area the development is considered to only have limited visibility in the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, the appearance and materials used in the construction of the summerhouse as built is undeniably out of character with the historic

nature of the Conservation Area. Therefore, whilst its visibility is limited, an impact from the summerhouses current appearance is nonetheless considered to occur and therefore harm caused to its significance. For the aforementioned reasons, that harm is regarded as being less than substantial and at the lower end of the spectrum.

Revised plans have been submitted which propose to clad the walls with treated timber and to use natural slate in construction of the roof. This is considered to transform the appearance of the building from rather suburban to a more traditional and therefore remove the impacts and harm described above.

The now proposed development is considered to not impact upon the character and setting of the Conservation Area or to cause harm to its significance as a heritage asset. For this reason, and subject to the imposition of planning conditions which compel the change to the external materials, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of policy CP58 to the Wiltshire Core Strategy as well as section 16 to the NPPF.

Scale and design

The summerhouse, while perhaps of a larger size when compared to the average garden structure, is nonetheless considered to be appropriate in the context of "Woodlands" which does benefit from a reasonably sized garden.

The design and construction of the summerhouse as built is perhaps best described as being of a suburban appearance and therefore somewhat divergent from its traditional, historic surroundings. However, the replacement of external facing materials with a more sympathetic finish (timber cladding to walls and natural slate to the roof) is considered to deliver a building which is of a more sympathetic appearance. The use of appropriately worded planning conditions on any planning permission can adequately ensure the change to materials takes place.

Subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposal has complied with the requirements of CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy in terms of scale and design and is acceptable.

Impact upon amenity

Due to the location of the summerhouse, it is not considered that the building will result in an unacceptable impact upon the amenity or living conditions of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and privacy impacts.

While views into and out of the summerhouse and surrounds are possible it is not considered that this would be harmful or unacceptable, as the relationship is largely typical of an ancillary structure in a residential area.

The comments made in the representation regarding noise, sound and light pollution are noted. However, the use of the summerhouse would be entirely ancillary to the dwelling it relates and therefore any activities carried out therein would be analogous to the normal use of domestic garden.

For the avoidance of doubt, however, it is considered reasonable to make use of a planning condition so as to ensure the summerhouse remains ancillary to the dwellinghouse to which it relates.

The summerhouse is not considered to result in any unacceptable impacts and as such complies with CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy in terms of amenity.

Landscape

The application site is located entirely within the Cotswold AONB. As required by CP51 of the WCS due consideration must be given to the potential impacts upon the character and setting of the AONB.

In this instance, the summerhouse is located within the built-up form of the village of Grittleton which contextualises the appearance of the summerhouse. As such it is not considered that the summerhouse is detrimental to the special character of the AONB and is therefore acceptable when assessed against policy CP51 to the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

8. Conclusion

The proposed development is a domestic outbuilding within an established domestic curtilage. Whilst perhaps more substantial than a typical garden structure, its scale and position is not exceptional and does not present an unacceptable impact upon and residential amenity of living conditions.

Whilst some limited harm has been identified to the Conservation Area and the setting of surrounding listed buildings from the appearance and materials used in the construction of the summerhouse as built, subject to the switch to more appropriate materials set out within the application, that harm is considered to be entirely ameliorated. The change to the materials can be adequately controlled through the imposition of planning conditions.

Accordingly, and subject to the imposition of particularly worded planning conditions, the proposed development and works are considered to meet with the requirements of policies CP51, CP57 and CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and relevant provisions of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission and be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:

1. Within 3 months of the date of this planning permission, the walls shall be clad with treated timber and the existing concrete tiles removed and replaced with natural slate, in complete accordance with the plans hereby approved.

REASON: So as to ensure the development is of an appearance appropriate to its sensitive setting.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Revised plans and elevations 2430/14 (revision A – material amended)
Received 19th March 2021

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

3. The summerhouse hereby permitted shall not be use or occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling, known as “Woodlands”.

REASON: The additional accommodation is sited in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit uses which are not ancillary to the existing dwellinghouse.

INFORMATIVES:

The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

The applicant is advised that the development hereby approved may represent chargeable development under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and Wiltshire Council's CIL Charging Schedule. If the development is determined to be liable for CIL, a Liability Notice will be issued notifying you of the amount of CIL payment due. If an Additional Information Form has not already been submitted, please submit it now so that we can determine the CIL liability. In addition, you may be able to claim exemption or relief, in which case, please submit the relevant form so that we can determine your eligibility. The CIL Commencement Notice and Assumption of Liability must be submitted to Wiltshire Council prior to commencement of development. Should development commence prior to the CIL Liability Notice being issued by the local planning authority, any CIL exemption or relief will not apply and full payment will be required in full and with immediate effect. Should you require further information or to download the CIL forms please refer to the Council's Website <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dmcommunityinfrastructurelevy>.