

REPORT TO THE AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	17 September 2014
Application Number	14/06724/FUL & 14/06854/LBC
Site Address	The Stable Barn Westfield Farm Nettleton Chippenham SN14 7PA
Proposal	Erection of Building to Provide Domestic Garaging and Store, Re-routing of Access Drive and Alterations to Existing Residential Ancillary Accommodation (Resubmission of 14/02952/LBC)
Applicant	Mr & Mrs A Dow
Town/Parish Council	NETTLETON
Division	BY BROOK
Grid Ref	380238 178819
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Charmian Burkey

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called in by Cllr Scott as the development will have no harmful effect on the character and the setting of the listed building and believes that this application will have a positive effect on controlling the noise from the M4 motorway.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above applications and to recommend that planning permission and Listed Building Consent be REFUSED.

2. Report Summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

- The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area of outstanding natural beauty
- Impact on the setting of the listed building and historic farmstead
- Impact of the development on the wider countryside.
- Residential amenities of future occupants of the property.

The application has generated a letter of support from the Parish Council and 6 letters of support from local residents.

3. Site Description

Westfield Farm was a traditional farmstead, located in open countryside to the west of

Nettleton and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site originally comprised of a Grade II listed farmhouse, a large former corn barn, a two storey cattle building, an open fronted implement shed/animal shelter and 2 other traditional out buildings.

These structures are set in a semi formal arrangement around all four sides of a farmyard except for barn 3 which is somewhat separate to the south east. The farmyard is partially sub-divided with traditional dry stone walls. These building have now been converted or are in the process of being converted into three dwellings and ancillary out buildings.

The importance of this group of building lies in its representation of a complete Wiltshire farmstead with a farmhouse, large barn and a range of other farm buildings designed for specific uses around a large fully enclosed farmyard split up with historic stone walls. Individually, the farmhouse is statutorily listed (grade II).

Barn 2, know known as 'The Stable Barn', was identified as a property of architectural and historic interest, of similar date and is a curtilage listed building. Its significance lies in its original layout and substantially original historic fabric. It is considered to be a heritage asset.

The site is located in a prominent location and is visible from public highways and footpaths.

4. Planning History

10/00258/FUL- granted planning permission for alterations associated with conversion of 3 redundant farm buildings to residential use & 2 No. redundant farm buildings to residential ancillary accommodation (garage & store).

13/02848/PREAPP- Pre-application request for a detached garage (officer objection).

14/02621/FUL- Erection of Building to Provide Domestic Garaging & Store; Erection of Porch; Re-routing of Access Drive & Alterations to Existing Residential Ancillary Accommodation- This application was accompanied by a listed building application, both were refused.

5. The Proposal

The application is largely same as the previously refused scheme but now does not include the porch. Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for a building to provide domestic garaging & store, re-routing of access drive & alterations to existing residential ancillary accommodation.

6. Planning Policy

NPPF:

Section 7- Requiring good design

Section 11- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 12- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

North Wilts Local Plan:

C1: Sustainability

C3: Development Control Policy

NE4: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NE15: The Landscape Character of the Countryside

HE4: Development, Demolition or Alterations involving Listed Buildings
NE15: The Landscape Character of the Countryside

T3: Parking

H4: Residential Development in the Open Countryside

H8: Residential Extensions

Wiltshire Pre Submission Core Strategy:

Core Policy 51: Landscape

Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

Core Policy 62: Development impacts on the transport network

7. Consultations

Nettleton Parish Council- Support for the following reasons:

1. The form and design of the alterations to the existing building maintains the character of the building and of the nearby listed buildings.
2. The proposal to erect a garage to the North of the residential buildings will provide a justified improvement to the current residential use without harm to the listed buildings or to the countryside beyond. We note that there are large modern agricultural buildings to the North / North-East of the proposed garage.
3. The garage will provide some much needed shielding to the use of the garden from the noise of the M4 motorway which is located to the North East.

Conservation- Object, namely that this is a contrived building of inaccurate detail that has been located outside the historic farmstead complex. Furthermore, the submitted proposals seem to include conversion of the existing open fronted byre used for parking and storage, to residential use.

There is no justification provided for the conversion of the existing byre to residential use, other than that it does not give enough room for a large four wheel drive vehicle. Conversion of this building will mean that the barn no longer has any storage area but that does not justify building a large new mock byre on a field outside the farm complex.

Erection of any new building in the field beyond the historic farmstead will harm the setting of the listed building and the character of the AONB. The proposals would be contrary to the NPPF (2012) section 12, paragraphs 131 and 134 as they would not sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage assts, they are already in a viable use and the proposals would have no public benefit.

Highways- No objection

ROW Officer- No objection

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

The application generated a total of 6 letters of support.

Summary of points raised;

- Design will improve the aesthetics of the area
- Sympathetic to site and AONB
- Natural evolution of the barns and outhouse
- Rerouted drive will improve residential amenities
- Existing cart sheds are not big enough for vehicles
- No adverse impact on listed farm house
- Improve the outlook from our property
- Will remove traffic from the face of the building

9. Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a statutory duty on decision makers in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 16(2) of the same Act imposes a similar duty in respect of applications for listed building consent.

Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of listed buildings, great weight should be given to their conservation, and that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Previously refused application

The planning application under consideration is a resubmission of a previously refused application. The planning application proposed a similar form of development and was refused for the following reasons:

The proposed garage & store, by reason of its overall height, bulk and scale, would result in a prominent and overbearing development in visual terms, which would have an adverse impact on the character and setting of the nearby curtilage listed building, open countryside and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to Policies C3, NE4, HE4, H8 & NE15 of the North Wilts Local Plan and the NPPF.

The proposed porch and new access to the garage, by virtue of scale, design, form and positioning would result in inappropriate and harmful alterations that do not preserve or enhance a curtilage Listed Building and are contrary to Policy C3, H8, NE4, NE15 & HE4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and the NPPF.

Impact on the character and setting of the Heritage Assets

Great care was taken in the conversion of these buildings to residential dwellings and ancillary storage ensuring that the final design respected both the historic layout and character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As part of the scheme three modern C20th farm buildings were removed completely and thereby improving the openness, character and appearance of the area and thereby sympathetically preserving the historic lay out of this farmstead.

Domestic conversions usually lead to the enclosure of open countryside to create gardens, which in turn tend to be unsympathetic to the setting of rural buildings due to the domestic and ornamental paraphernalia which accrues. To avoid this, officers used the existing division walls within the farmyard to enclose and screen the domestic paraphernalia such as car parking and domestic storage areas. Furthermore, revisions to the original plans were requested resulting in a reduction of enclosed garden area to the perimeters of the site. Withdrawal of permitted development rights to control domestic paraphernalia was also applied to the original planning permission.

It is appreciated that the proposed building would be constructed from high quality materials. However, due to it being located in isolation on rising ground away from the existing built development within the farmstead and due to the proportions/massing of the garage it would be particularly prominent when seen from the public footpath and other vantage points. It is considered that that the proposal would materially increase the actual and perceived intensity of development on the site and partially fill the 'open gap' between the dwelling and the open countryside. This is further compounded by the new access and significant area of hardstanding.

It is also considered that the design and visual appearance of the building and hard standing would compete and dominate the original, historic buildings rather than complement the existing design and character of this development. This is considered to have an adverse impact on this heritage asset.

Furthermore, it would result in large areas of hard standing and reduction in outdoor amenity space resulting in poor amenity for future occupants and development that harms the open character of the area.

Policy C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 indicate, amongst other things, that applications for extensions and development should be in keeping with the host building and character of the area in terms of scale, form, materials, design and detailing. In addition policy NE15 and Core Policy 51 of the Draft Core Strategy indicates that proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have an unacceptable impact upon landscape character within the immediate area and over long distance views. For the reasons set out above the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable.

Whilst the Council is sympathetic with the appellants' desire to provide additional family accommodation and parking in a more practical layout, It is considered that this objective does not outweigh the material harm that would be caused, particularly as personal circumstances and the ownership of property change over time.

Paragraph 132 of the Framework says when considering the impact of new development on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation, and adds that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration.

Furthermore, Core Policy 58 of the Draft Core Strategy states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment, and should not have an unacceptable impact on the historic environment, particularly where this could be avoided or mitigated. It goes onto say that development will be required to conserve and seek opportunities to enhance structures and areas of heritage significance.

The Farmhouse is Grade II listed and the out buildings curtilage listed. As set out above this is considered to be a heritage asset. A large part of the building's special architectural and historic interest derives from its origins as a modest farm outbuilding redolent of the local vernacular style, the use of traditional local materials, and its group setting within the former farmstead.

The building's significance has been eroded slightly by the insertion of some new window openings during the conversion process. However it is still considered that its essential qualities have been retained.

In this context, and although fairly plain in appearance, it is considered that the new garage and large area of hard standing would appear as a somewhat alien and contrived addition that would markedly alter the simple, robust plan form of this curtilage listed building, and detract from its distinctive vernacular qualities and character.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are only limited views in to this part of the site, it is considered that the hard surfacing would appear as a dominant feature and be at odds with the rural and agricultural form of this building, where this are of land would historically been in agricultural use. The hard standing would dilute and confuse the building's historic origins, and this would further detract from its special architectural and historic interest of this heritage asset.

The NPPF makes it clear that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset or development within its setting. For the reasons given above, it is considered that the proposal would result in harm being caused to the significance of this cartilage listed building and to the setting of the group of buildings as a whole.

There is no justification provided for the conversion of the existing byre to residential use, other than that it does not give enough room for a large four wheel drive vehicle. Conversion of this building will mean that the barn no longer have any storage area but that does not justify building a large new mock byre on a field outside the farm complex.

Impact on the privacy and amenity of existing neighbours

Neighbours and members of the development control committee raised concerns relating to loss of sunlight, daylight, privacy and its overbearing nature. As a result of concerns raised at committee the property no longer fronts Barons Mead and now fronts Hungerdown Lane. It is considered that the proposed layout will not result in any loss of sunlight, daylight, privacy or perceived overlooking for local residents. It is considered that the privacy implications arising from the proposed development are no worse than the overlooking already experienced from existing properties within the street scene.

Having taken into consideration the size, design, scale and the location of the proposed garage, access and cart store conversion it is considered that the development will not result in any significant adverse impact to the residential amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

Conversion of existing building

The conversion of outbuildings to ancillary residential accommodation is supported in principle by the North Wilts Local and Draft Core Strategy. However, in this case the conversion of the existing store and car port results in the need for alternative accommodation elsewhere within the site and the request for large detached buildings within the garden, precisely what officers wanted to avoid when granting the original permission. That being said, it is considered that the level of glazing and fenestration detailing is not appropriate in the context of the wider barn conversion and, in its current form, does not relate well to the character and appearance of the adjoining listed building and cartilage listed buildings. This could be overcome with more appropriate and sympathetic detailing to the building

Other Benefits

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

Furthermore, the NPPF requires the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. The NPPF requires local authorities, in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, to have a balanced judgement with having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. It is considered that the use of the garage as a noise barrier is not considered to be a substantial benefit that would outweigh the harm.

RECOMMENDATION:

Planning permission should be REFUSED for the following reasons:

The proposed garage & store, by reason of its overall height, bulk and scale, would result in a prominent and overbearing development in visual terms, which would have an adverse impact on the character and setting of the nearby curtilage listed building and heritage asset that it forms part of, open countryside and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to Policies C3, NE4, HE4, H8 & NE15 of the North Wilts Local Plan, CP57 & CP58 of the Emerging WCS Submission Draft and the NPPF.

The new access to the garage, by virtue of scale, design, form and positioning would result in inappropriate and harmful alterations that do not preserve or enhance a curtilage Listed Building and heritage asset and is contrary to Policy C3, H8 & HE4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, CP57 & CP58 of the Emerging WCS Submission Draft and the NPPF

Listed Building Consent should be REFUSED for the following reason:

It is considered that the siting and design of the proposed garage and its access and associated hard standing would have an adverse visual impact on the setting and character of curtilage listed building and heritage asset, and therefore the application conflicts with North Wiltshire Local Plan Policy HE4, CP57 & CP58 of the Emerging WCS Submission Draft, Paragraphs 131 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and S.16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.