

APPLICATION NO.	P17/S4235/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	1.12.2017
PARISH	ASTON ROWANT
WARD MEMBERS	Lynn Lloyd Ian White
APPLICANT	Greyswood
SITE	Buildings adjoining Hill Cottage, High Street, Kingston Blount, OX39 4SJ
PROPOSAL	Proposed conversion of existing buildings via adaptation and partial demolition to create new dwelling. Provision of new garage.(landscaping plan received 29th March 2018).
OFFICER	Simon Kitson

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to the planning committee as the officers' recommendation of approval conflicts with the views of Aston Rowant Parish Council. The application has been deferred from the 11th July meeting.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** at Appendix A) comprises a range of traditional, unlisted barn buildings currently associated with the dwelling at Hill Cottage and accessed via a shared entrance onto the B4009. The site falls wholly within the Kingston Blount Conservation Area.

1.3 Earlier in 2018, the planning committee granted full planning permission for the demolition of the existing 1970s dwelling at Hill Cottage and its replacement with a larger agricultural-style dwelling. That consent included the provision of a new access to the rear of the site. A copy of the approved site plan for that scheme is **attached** at Appendix B.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 As detailed in the application submission, consent is now sought for the conversion of the buildings attached to Hill Cottage, in order to create an independent dwelling. In order to facilitate the residential conversion, a number of alterations are proposed. These would include an increase in the ridge height by approximately 40cm, fenestration alterations and additions and the removal of a front lean-to structure. A two-bay garage with first floor office accommodation is also proposed to the north-east of the site.

2.2 The proposed site plans, elevations and floor plans are **attached** as Appendix C. All associated documents and consultation responses can be viewed on the council's website: www.southoxon.gov.uk

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Aston Rowant Parish Council – Objection

- The proposal to split the site into two determines that access from the new development referred to in application P17/S4288/FUL crosses the Saxon enclosure to the north of the site.
- The increase in the size of the property (from 2 bedrooms to 3) will result in an increase in traffic joining the B4009 at what is already a dangerous junction.

- The tree to be removed is subject to a tree protection order and contributes to the appearance of the site and the local environment in general.
- 3.2 Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – Objection removed
- Whilst the Highway Authority originally had concerns regarding the existing access arrangements onto the B4009, application P17/S4288/FUL has now been granted.
 - The proposed condition requiring closure of the existing vehicular access to Hill Cottage is acceptable.
- 3.3 County Archaeological Services (SODC) - No strong views
- 3.4 Conservation Officer (South) - No strong views
- The proposed scheme retains the overall character of the buildings and preserves the existing frontage wall. The scheme would not harm the significance of the conservation area.
 - No objection to the proposed garage structure
- 3.5 Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No objection, subject to conditions
- 3.6 Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) - No objection, subject to condition.
- 3.7 Neighbour comments and objections (6)
- Loss of privacy and other impacts upon Hill House
 - Additional traffic movements on the the B4009 would have a harmful impact upon highway safety. This needs to be assessed in conjunction with P17/S4288/FUL and P17/S4443/FUL (Cherry Tree PH)
 - The proposal would restrict access to the rear paddock, necessitating the approval of an alternative access arrangement.
 - Approval of these applications would create a precedent for further residential development to the rear, to the detriment of the local environment and the historic interest of the conservation area
- 3.8 Neighbour comments (1)
- No objection to conversion of the barns. Issues associated with the access across the rear paddock, proposed under P17/S4235/FUL.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P17/S4288/FUL](#) – Approved (15/06/2018)

Demolition of Hill Cottage and stable. Erection of new detached dwelling. Provision of new approach drive. Landscaping, fencing and other related works (as amended by revised plans received 28th March 2018, amending the building and driveway design)

[P14/S0835/HH](#) - Approved (13/05/2014)

Two storey rear/side extension, new front door to side and external alterations to facing walls.

[P04/E0752](#) - Approved (13/08/2004)

Replacement of garden wall.

[P96/N0121](#) - Approved (30/05/1996)

Single storey extension. (As amended by Drawing No.DON/001B accompanying Agents letter dated 17 April 1996).

[P83/N0354](#) - Approved (17/08/1983)

Double garage/ access widening; alterations to walls.

[P71/M0376](#) - Approved (15/06/1971)

Detached bungalow.

[P71/M0059](#) - Approved (17/02/1971)

Two-bedroomed detached bungalow.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Policies;

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSQ3 - Design

CSR1 - Housing in villages

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;

CON6 – Demolition in a conservation area

CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area

C4 – Landscape setting of settlements

D1 - Principles of good design

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

D10 – Waste management

G2 – Protect District from adverse development

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are:

- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable
- Whether the design, height, scale and materials would impact adversely upon the character of the site, the street scene and the wider conservation area;
- Whether there would be a harmful impact upon neighbouring amenity, in terms of light, outlook and privacy
- Whether the proposal would be prejudicial to highway safety
- Whether the ecological and landscape impact is unacceptable;

Principle of development

6.2 Whilst parts of the existing range of buildings are of a traditional design and have some historic interest, none of them has performed an agricultural function for a considerable

period of time. They are not worthy of listing. As the structures are attached to the 1970s dwelling at Hill Cottage and appear to be within its current domestic curtilage, they could arguably be converted into ancillary residential accommodation without the need for planning permission from the council. Officers are in agreement what the principle of the proposed conversion to an independent residential dwelling complies with SOCS Policy CSR1, subject to compliance with other Development Plan policies.

- 6.3 The visual impact upon the site and its surroundings would need to be assessed against the housing and design objectives of the Development Plan, as expressed by SOCS Policy CSQ3 and SOLP Policies H4 and D1. SOCS Policy CSEN3 and SOLP Policy CON7 are also particularly relevant as they reinforce the council's statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, as per Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. For the avoidance of doubt, the Neighbourhood Plan carries no weight in this assessment as it is at a very early stage of preparation, with a draft yet to be submitted for consultation.

Scale, design and heritage impact

- 6.4 It is noted that the council's specialist conservation and design team do not raise objection to any aspect of the current proposal. Officers welcome the removal of the lean-to structure to the front of the barn and consider that the proposed fenestration and other alterations would not materially alter the traditional agricultural character and appearance of the buildings. Furthermore, the proposed garage building would be of a similar scale to the neighbouring development and it would have a relatively low-key, functional appearance consistent with the council's adopted design guidance. Officers therefore accept that the scheme as proposed would not have an adverse visual impact upon the site or the street scene and it would not harm the significance of the conservation area. It would not be at variance with Policy CSEN3 of the SOCS or CON7 of the SOLP.

Highway impact

- 6.5 It is noted that the Local Highways Authority (LHA) originally raised objection to the scheme. This was on the basis that the increase in the number of dwellings using the existing substandard access onto the B4009 would increase the risk to highway safety. However, full planning permission has subsequently been granted for the replacement of Hill Cottage, together with an alternative access arrangement to the rear of the site (P17/S4288/FUL). Officers also note that Permitted Development (PD) rights do allow for the formation of the alternative rear access to the existing cottage without the need for planning permission from the council, even if the approved replacement scheme were not implemented.
- 6.6 The LHA accept that it is now within the council's control to ensure that the existing access to Hill Cottage is permanently closed, prior to any residential occupation of the new converted barn. This would help ensure that the number of dwellings using the existing access onto the B4009 does not increase. As the proposed dwelling is of a comparable scale to the existing dwelling which would cease to use the existing access, officers are satisfied that there would not be a material increase in vehicular movements onto the B4009. As the proposal would also continue to provide 2 parking spaces as per the SOLP recommendations for 2-3 bed dwellings, officers are satisfied that the scheme would not warrant a refusal of planning permission on the basis of highway safety. The LHA endorse the suggested access closure condition.

Neighbouring amenity

- 6.7 Whilst there are objections to the scheme based on the relationship with the surrounding residential properties, officers do not consider that there would be an overriding impact upon neighbouring amenity.
- 6.8 The proposal would involve the conversion of an existing ancillary building, with a very modest increase in height and the proposed garage would be nearly 12m from the nearest windows at Hill House. This scheme would not result in a material loss of daylight or sunlight to the neighbouring gardens or living accommodation. Although privacy has been raised as an area of concern, the existing windows at the south-west elevation would be retained as obscure glazed and the rooflights would be high-level openings above 1.7m from the finished floor level. The north-east facing window openings would be more than double the 10m recommended minimum separating distance for a ‘front to front’ relationship as specified under Section 7 of the SODG.

Ecological and arboricultural impacts

- 6.9 As noted by the council’s ecologist, all of the existing buildings on the site have been subject to a series of bat surveys. Bat roosting sites for low numbers of common pipistrelle bats have been confirmed within the barns subject of this application. As a result of the confirmed presence of bat roosting sites the proposed works would have to be conducted under a European Protected Species (EPS) licence. The Bat Survey Report contains details of mitigation measures designed to ensure that there is no harm to the local bat population. Provided the mitigation measures are carefully implemented under an EPS licence then there should be no harm to the conservation status of the local bat population.
- 6.10 The trees within this site are protected under conservation area legislation. The Forestry Officer accepts that the Sycamore (T1) is too close to the barn and therefore would have to be removed as conflict will occur over time, irrespective of any development. The submitted landscaping scheme is considered acceptable on the basis that it will help to soften the built form. Provided that the remaining trees are protected and the planting measures undertaken, officers are satisfied that there would not be an adverse landscape impact.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies and national planning policy. Officers are satisfied that the proposed residential conversion would not materially harm the rural character of the site as a whole, or the special historic interest of the wider Kingston Blount Conservation Area. The proposal is also considered acceptable in terms of the impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring properties and, strictly on the basis of the attached conditions, it would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement within three years - full planning permission.**
- 2. Development to be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved plans.**
- 3. Prior to the first occupation of the new dwelling hereby approved, the existing access to Hill Cottage must be permanently closed in accordance with a scheme first approved in writing by the local planning authority and retained as such thereafter.**

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, no extensions, outbuildings or alterations to the roof shall be undertaken without planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.
5. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, all existing windows shown at the south-west (rear) elevation shall be glazed in obscure glass and fixed shut. They shall be retained as such thereafter.
6. No development shall commence until either:
 - a) a bat licence has been issued by Natural England pursuant to the Regulation 53 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the specified activity to go ahead; or
 - b) proof of registration of the site for a bat low impact class licence, has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved measures shall be carried out and retained in accordance with the approved details.
7. Prior to the commencement of any works on site, the trees shown to be retained shall be protected in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the council.
8. Landscaping to be implemented in accordance with the approved plan (160.2 March 2017) prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved.

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