

6. FULL APPLICATION – EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS, RE-ORGANISATION OF DRIVE AND GARDEN AREA, NEW DOUBLE GARAGE AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION AT GATEHOUSE FARM COTTAGE, GATEHOUSE LANE, HATHERSAGE (NP/DDD/0817/0892, P.9810, 422385 / 383340, 29/08/2017/AM)

NB. This application was considered by committee at the December meeting where it was resolved to defer the application to allow amendments to the design of the extensions to be discussed.

APPLICANT: MR JOHN MORFFIT

Site and Surroundings

Gatehouse Farm Cottage (the cottage) is located in open countryside, approximately 2km to the north of Hathersage. The property is located on Gatehouse Lane and forms part of a cluster of four dwellings.

The existing building is a detached two bedroom dwelling constructed from natural gritstone under a pitched roof clad with concrete tiles. Windows and doors are white and a mixture of timber and uPVC. There is a projecting bay window at first floor on the west facing elevation.

The property was formerly a barn or outbuilding and part of Gatehouse Farm, altered and converted to form a dwelling which is now in separate ownership to the farmhouse. Access to the property is via driveway shared with the farmhouse.

The existing building backs directly onto the boundary of Gatehouse Farm, with the domestic garden extending to the front and side of the property. An existing outbuilding to the front of the property is also in the applicant's ownership.

The nearest neighbouring property is Gatehouse Farm which is adjacent to the north of the rear wall of the cottage. Little Gate House is located on lower ground to the south and Gatehouse is located further south east beyond.

Proposal

Extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling, re-organisation of drive and garden, erection of double garage and ancillary accommodation.

The submitted plans show a two storey side extension which would have a two storey rear extension, resulting in an 'L' shape plan form following the boundary with Gatehouse Farm. The side extension would match the eaves and ridge height of the existing building and have a width of 5.3m. The rear projecting element would be two storey but with eaves and ridge height reduced by 0.5m. The extension would be built from natural gritstone with concrete tile roof.

As part of the proposal the fenestration of the existing building would be altered. New timber windows and doors would be installed, together with roof lights on the front and rear elevation. The existing windows to the rear elevation would be blocked with matching stonework. The fenestration to the front of the extension would be a large cart-type opening, with glazed doors on the west side and rear elevation.

Amended plans have been submitted following discussions between Officers, the agent and applicant. The amended plans show the three light door reduced to double and the glazed door and Juliette balcony amended to a single window on the west elevation. The size of the window on the rear elevation has also been reduced. The number of roof lights to the front and rear of the building has also been reduced.

The existing outbuilding would be demolished and a new double garage erected. The garage would be built from gritstone with concrete tile roof. Two timber garage doors would be positioned in the west elevation, with roof lights in the east elevation.

A new building is also proposed to the rear of the dwelling to provide ancillary accommodation. The building would have a flat roof with a parapet formed by its walls which would have half round gritstone toppers. The outbuilding would be in the corner of the garden and its rear walls would be formed by the boundary wall which would be raised up to the height of the parapet.

The plans also show that a sliding door would be provided into the drive, the existing curved drystone wall within the garden is proposed to be removed and the boundary of the curtilage defined with a new drystone wall. The amended plans include the whole of the curtilage, along with proposed walling and planting details.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- 1. By virtue of its form it is considered that the proposed extension would result in a form of development that does not reflect the local building tradition so it would not contribute to the enhancement of the site and its setting. The resulting development, whilst offering some enhancement, would nonetheless result in a much larger building with inappropriate massing, contrary to Core Strategy policy GSP2, GSP3 and Local Plan policy LC4 and LH4, the Authority's adopted design guide and detailed design guide, and the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 2. By virtue of its position and proximity to the neighbouring property known as Gatehouse Farm, it is considered that the proposed extension would be overbearing and oppressive and create additional over-shadowing which cumulatively would harm the residential amenity of occupants of that property contrary to Core Strategy policy GSP3, saved Local Plan policy LC4 and LH4, the Authority's adopted design guide and detailed design guide and the National Planning Policy Framework.**

Key Issues

- Impact of the proposed development upon the character, appearance and amenity of the existing building and its setting, the local building tradition, and on the amenity of the neighbouring property.

Relevant Planning History

2017 – Pre-application enquiry in regard to proposed extensions. Officers gave the following advice.

“The property is a modest two bedroom dwelling. It appears that there have been a number of unfortunate alterations to the property over the years and I agree that the bay window and unresolved fenestration generally does not reflect the local vernacular. I do think there is scope in principle for extensions / alterations geared around providing additional living space and enhancing the character and appearance of the building.

The proposed two storey side extension would not be read as subordinate instead the proposal is essentially to change the fenestration of the building so that it reads as a cottage with shippon. Normally my view would be that this extension is too large and that this was falsifying the history of the building and harming character (as it was formerly a barn) - however it appears that there is little left of the original character of the building which neither reads as a vernacular barn or

cottage at the moment.

In this circumstance I do think that a two storey side extension along the lines you are proposing would be acceptable in principle, however the key would be that the development results in enhancement.

However I do have concerns about the single storey rear element and the detailing proposed in the extension. My view is that the rear element should be reduced to a single storey 'cat-slide' element reflecting the shippon design. I also feel that the balcony and large glazed opening on the west facing gable are inappropriate and act to counter the overall aim of enhancement. Note: Officers provided a sketch plan to the agent with suggested amendments.

No details of garage or ancillary accommodation provided and therefore not possible to give detailed comments on these at the pre-application stage."

Consultations

Highway Authority – No objections subject to ancillary use.

District Council – No response to date.

Parish Council – Support the application for the following reasons.

The Councillors fully support this application on the grounds that: the building is currently not very attractive due to the changes in recent years; windows that are currently uPVC will be replaced with wooden ones; a window that is currently overlooking the neighbour will be removed; the design is in keeping with others in the vicinity; the overall appearance of the building will be greatly improved.

Representations

Three representations have been received to date, all three letters support the application. The reasons given are summarised below.

- The proposed development will be a visual improvement and improve the environment of the area.
- The development is sensitive to neighbours.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC20, LH4, LT11 and LT18

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. Paragraph 115 within the framework says that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Park which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage should be given great weight in the National Park.

Paragraph 60 of the Framework says Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 63 and 64 of the Framework say In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Development Plan

GSP3 and LC4 together say that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings subject to the development proposal. Particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of development, design in accordance with the design guide and the impact upon living conditions of communities.

L1 says that all development must conserve the landscape character of the National Park. LH4 allows for extensions and alterations to dwellings in principle provided that the development does not detract from the character, appearance and amenity of the existing building, its setting or that of neighboring properties. LC20 requires planning applications to provide sufficient information to enable their impact upon trees, woodlands and other landscape features to be properly considered.

LT11 and LT18 require development to be served by a safe access and have adequate parking and turning space.

The Authority's adopted design guide and alterations and extensions detailed design guide are material considerations in the determination of this application.

Assessment

The application was considered by Planning Committee in December and a site visit was carried out by Members. Notwithstanding the officer recommendation for refusal, Members did not consider that the proposal would be unduly overbearing to the neighbouring property. Members gave a steer regarding the proposed fenestration, which they considered needed further amendment. The application was therefore deferred. It was suggested at that Committee meeting that if these matters could be resolved, the amended application could be determined by Officers under delegated powers. Whilst design amendments have been made as set out below, Officers continue to have concerns about the design and amenity impacts of the proposal and do not consider that the proposal is acceptable in policy terms and therefore do not consider it appropriate to approve the application under delegated powers. However, Officers recognise that the Planning Committee made a different assessment in December and therefore the application is returned to Committee to make a decision.

Design

The application building is a former barn previously associated with Gatehouse Farm but now in separate ownership. The building was, some time ago, converted to a dwelling and a number of unfortunate alterations have taken place including the introduction of a projecting bay window at first floor, unresolved window fenestration and a prominent flue. Officers therefore advised at the pre-application stage that there is an opportunity for a development to enhance the character of the building (see planning history section).

The proposed two storey side element would match the eaves and ridge height of the existing building and be fenestrated with a cart opening to the front elevation. The existing window openings would be altered and provided with more traditional openings. The resultant building would appear superficially as a traditional cottage with attached shippon. This would fundamentally change the character of the building and add a relatively large extension to the original building, well in excess of that normally permitted under adopted policy and design guidance, but in principle this approach is considered to have merit given that any character that the former barn possessed has been lost through alterations.

Officers have discussed amended plans with the applicant and agent. These discussions have focused on the window and door details of the design, in line with the steer from Committee. The amount of glazing to the west elevations of the extensions has been reduced on the amended plans and the Juliette balcony omitted. Officers consider that whilst these openings would still introduce more glazing than would be expected on an agricultural building, given the context of the existing building, they are acceptable in this case. The proposed alterations to reduce the overall impact of the roof lights are welcomed. The alterations to the proposed windows and doors have resolved Officer concerns in this regard.

However, Officers still have significant concerns about the proposed rear extension. The rear projecting element would further change the character of the building by changing the form to an 'L' shape plan and the form would be a gable, which would introduce a domestic element to the rear of what is otherwise detailed as an agricultural shippon/barn.

Officers consider that the benefits of improvements to fenestration would be outweighed by the impact of the rear extension. The improvements to the window and door details could be achieved without this element of the scheme. The Authority's policies and design guide seek enhancements to reinforce local distinctiveness and paragraph 64 of the Framework states clearly that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

The design of the proposed garage reflects a traditional building with the openings beneath the eaves in accordance with adopted design guidance. There are also no objections in principle to the approach to the proposed ancillary accommodation which is to the rear of the site and would not be prominent, subject to a reduction in the amount of glazing and detailing the walls to appear as a continuation of the boundary walls.

Amended plans have been received and Officers acknowledge that these overcome concerns in regard to window and door detail. However, Officers remain of the view that the two storey rear element is not acceptable in design terms and therefore taken as a whole it is considered that the development would result in a form of development that does not reflect the local building tradition so it would not contribute to the enhancement of the site and its setting, and that the opportunity to make that contribution would then be lost. The resulting development, whilst offering some enhancement, would nonetheless result in a much larger building with inappropriate massing, contrary to Core Strategy policy GSP2, GSP3 and Local Plan policy LC4 and LH4.

Amenity

Officers still have significant concerns with regard to the impact of the proposed development upon the amenity of occupants of Gatehouse Farm. Officers acknowledge that Planning Committee members did not share these concerns at the meeting in December, but given the strength of these concerns and the experience of the Authority in other cases where the impact on neighbour's amenity was not given appropriate consideration, Officers feel obliged to bring this application back to Committee.

The rear wall of the cottage effectively forms part of the southern boundary to Gatehouse Farm and the curtilage of the cottage follows northwards along the western boundary where there is a Yew tree within the boundary of Gatehouse Farm. There is an existing conservatory extension on the west side of Gatehouse Farm located approximately 4m from the rear wall of the cottage subject to the proposal. The very small distance between the properties is unusual and potentially reflective of the fact that until recently the properties were within a single ownership.

Due to the close distance of the two buildings and the orientation of the cottage which is on the southern boundary, the cottage currently over-shadows the conservatory and has an overbearing and oppressive impact. The conservatory is also currently overlooked by the two existing windows to the rear of the cottage which serve the staircase and bathroom. The existing windows currently represent a clear overlooking issue and potential loss of privacy to occupants of both properties.

The application proposes to block the rear windows of the cottage which would resolve the existing overlooking situation and this is welcomed. However, Officers do have significant concerns with regard to the impact of the proposed extensions upon what is already an over-bearing relationship.

The proposed extension would effectively wrap around the south western corner of the boundary to Gatehouse Farm. This would increase the length of two storey walling along the boundary, which in the opinion of Officers would exacerbate the existing overshadowing and overbearing impact to the detriment of the amenity of occupants of Gatehouse Farm. This relationship would fall well below the standards set out in the Authority's adopted SPD on alterations and extensions. The fact that the neighbour has not objected is not, in itself, sufficient reason to disregard this guidance.

It is recognised that there is existing tree planting along the boundary on the Gatehouse Farm side and that these trees currently result in overshadowing. However, given the close proximity of the trees to the position of the proposed extension it is considered inevitable that these trees would need to be removed (this is confirmed by the submitted tree survey). The existing trees and their impact is under the control of the occupants of Gatehouse Farm, whereas this proposal would result in the permanent impact of the proposed extension.

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension would result in additional over-shadowing and exacerbate what is already an oppressive and overbearing impact to the occupants of Gatehouse Farm which would harm their residential amenity contrary to Core Strategy policy DS1, Local Plan policy LC4 and the Authority's adopted detailed design guidance.

Given the distance from the proposed ancillary accommodation to Gatehouse Farm and the relative positions it is considered that this part of the development would not have a harmful impact upon amenity. The proposed garage would be positioned close to the southern boundary of the site which is shared with Little Gate House to the south. Little Gate House sits at a lower level to the site of the garage but has a predominately blank facing elevation with a pathway between the boundary and therefore it is concluded that the proposed garage would not be overbearing or result any significant loss of light to that property.

Other Issues

The submitted application form states that there are no trees that are in falling distance of the development or that will need to be removed or pruned. However following the officer's site visit it became apparent that there are the coniferous trees along the neighbouring boundary mentioned earlier but also a mature sycamore within the curtilage of the garden. The approximate position of this tree was included on the initial plans, but it became clear having visited the site that the position of the tree is incorrect on the plan and diameter of overhanging branches greater than indicated.

The proposed ancillary accommodation appeared to be positioned within the root protection area of the sycamore and it was considered that the construction of footings and the building would have the potential to negatively impact upon the tree. In accordance with Local Plan policy LC20 Officers therefore requested a Tree Survey from the agent and was submitted.

The tree survey identifies the affected trees. The report states that two trees would need to be removed including the yew tree on the neighbours land. These trees are not significant in conservation terms and therefore there is no objection to their removal. The report also concludes that the mature sycamore trees on site can be safeguarded by a combination of specialist foundation design and tree protection fencing. Officers are therefore satisfied that the development would not adversely affect important trees on site subject to a planning condition to secure compliance with the recommendations of the tree survey.

The proposed development would not impact upon existing access arrangements and would retain sufficient parking for the proposed four bedroom dwelling. Therefore Officers agree with the Highway Authority that in principle there is no objection to the proposals on highway safety grounds.

Conclusion

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would result in a form of development that does not reflect the local building tradition so it would not contribute to the enhancement of the site and its setting, and that the opportunity to make that contribution would then be lost. The resulting development, whilst offering some enhancement, would nonetheless result in a much larger building with inappropriate massing, contrary to Core Strategy policy GSP2, GSP3 and Local Plan policy LC4 and LH4. Moreover, it would severely harm the residential amenity of occupants of Gatehouse Farm, contrary to Local Plan policy LC4 and LH4 and adopted design guidance in the Alterations and extensions SPD.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development is contrary to the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. In the absence of any further material considerations the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil