



Report to South Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	PL/21/1785/FA
Proposal:	Demolition of single storey rear projection (unlisted building within a Conservation Area) and erection of single storey rear extension, alterations to roof including insertion of 2 rear rooflights, rendering of walls and adjustments to the existing parking arrangements.
Site location:	Victoria Cottage High Street Taplow Buckinghamshire SL6 0EX
Applicant:	Ms Emily Tam
Case Officer:	Alex Armour
Ward affected:	Cliveden
Parish-Town Council:	Taplow Parish Council
Valid date:	20 May 2021
Determination date:	2 September 2021
Recommendation:	Refuse permission

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 Permission is sought for the demolition of the existing single storey rear extension, new single storey rear extension, alterations to the roof including new chimneys, new roof design and rooflights.
- 1.2 The application has been called in by Taplow Parish Council and by Councillor Chokar.
- 1.3 The Parish raised concerns with regards to loss of hedging and the impact upon the conservation area, green belt and the amenities of a neighbouring resident.
- 1.4 The above concerns were also raised during the committee meeting with particular attention paid to the impact upon the Green Belt with reference to the original floor space of the dwelling which was disputed.
- 1.5 The application was previously considered by the South Bucks Area Planning Committee on 31/08/21 and resolved to defer the item to allow for a site visit and the submission of additional information. A copy of the previous Planning Committee report is attached as Appendix C.

- 1.6 Since the first Committee date, additional information in the form of two statutory declarations have been submitted by a previous occupier of the site and a local resident. Two historic OS Maps have also been submitted by the agent. The additional information has provided more clarity with regard to when extensions to the property were constructed. Consequently, as a result of the additional information received the floor space of dwelling as existing in 1948 is now treated as being lower than previously considered. As such, taking the new information received into account, the proposed extensions are now treated as exceeding that permissible under Local Plan Policy GB10.
- 1.7 The recommendation for the application is that permission is refused.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The application site relates to a dwelling located within the Taplow Village Conservation Area, adjacent to a pair of listed buildings and within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The street scene and wider area is characterised by dwellings of traditional appearance and modest scale reflective of the area's designation as a Conservation Area. The dwelling presently benefits from a flat roofed rear element at first floor and a small protruding ground floor element.
- 2.2 The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Heritage and Design Statement,
 - b) Ecology Report,
 - c) Product Data Sheet for K Rend, LW1, Lightweight Render,
 - d) Location and Site Plan.
- 2.3 Amended Plans
 - a) 20A059/PL04 C – Proposed Floor and Roof Plans,
 - b) 20A059/PL05 D – Proposed Elevations.
- 2.4 Amended plans were received over the course of the application proposing the introduction of two internal chimneys following a request by the Council's Heritage Officer.
- 2.5 Following the initial Committee meeting, the plans were further amended to show the retention of hedging to the front of the site.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 ER/1038/65 – Two storey rear extension. – Refused Permission.
- 3.2 1213/72 – First floor rear extension. – Conditional Permission.

4.0 Summary of Representations

4.1 Four letters of objection have been received. The main points are summarised as follows:

- Proposal would overshadow Wee Cottage and Rose Cottage as a result of roof alterations
- Significant visual impact on Conservation Area as a result of increasing density
- Considers that the dwelling has already been significantly extended past that permissible under Green Belt policy
- Loss of hedge
- Noise, disturbance and safety issues caused by construction. Requesting a condition restricting hours of delivery.

4.2 No further representations have been received since.

5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019.
- Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guidance, October 2019
- South Bucks Core Strategy Development Plan Document - Adopted February 2011
- South Bucks District Local Plan - Adopted March 1999 Consolidated September 2007 and February 2011;
- South Bucks District Local Plan Appendix 5 (Conservation Areas)
- South Bucks District Local Plan Appendix 6 (Parking standards)
- South Bucks District Council Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Adopted October 2008
- Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study 2017
- Chiltern and South Bucks Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule

Background

5.1 The application was previously brought to the South Bucks Area planning committee on 31/08/21 and the officer's recommendation was originally for conditional permission.

5.2 Over the course of the committee meeting there was discussion with regard to the impact upon the Green Belt, residential amenities and the Taplow Village Conservation Area. Concern was also raised regarding the proposed loss of a hedge to the front of a site. The application was deferred to allow for a site visit.

5.3 The Council's report When the application was first taken to committee, the original floor space of the dwelling was calculated as being approx. 100sqm. This floor space was based upon historical planning records held by the Council and took into account the form and appearance of the dwelling as constructed. Though comments were received disputing this calculation, it was not considered that significant weight could be given to this.

5.4 Since the original committee date additional information has also been received in the form of two signed statutory declarations from a previous occupier of the site and a historic resident of Taplow Village. In addition, an annotated plan of the areas of the site believed to have existed as of 1948 has been submitted by a historic occupier of the site. Following discussion with the Council's legal team, significant weight has been given to these matters.

5.5 A pair of historic OS Maps have also been submitted by the applicant.

Principle and Location of Development

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GB1 (Green Belt boundaries and the control over development in the Green Belt)

GB10 (Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt)

- 5.6 Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF sets out that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Furthermore, guidance for Policy GB10 of the Council's Local Plan (adopted March 1999) states that "Extensions, which together with all previous extensions, are not of a small scale in relation to the original dwelling will be considered unacceptable in the Green Belt. In this connection, extensions or alterations which would result in the original dwelling having increased its floor space by more than half will not be regarded as small scale".
- 5.7 In this instance it is noted that objections from the Parish and neighbouring residents have been received with regards to the dwelling's impact upon the Green Belt noting that the dwelling had previously been extended. For the purposes of this assessment, the original dwelling is considered to be the dwelling as existing in 1948.
- 5.8 The report presented to South Bucks Area Planning Committee on 31 August 2021 was based on the evidence available at the time. Whilst it was acknowledged that the building had likely been previously extended, the Council's records were not definitive in terms of when any such extensions had been built and it was not possible to conclude with certainty that extensions had been added after 1948. A number of representations were made prior to the report being drafted which sought to show that extensions had been constructed after 1948. However, the information submitted was not sufficient in detail to demonstrate precisely when the extensions had been constructed. As such, on the basis of the evidence available at the time, the Green Belt assessment set out in the report was based on the original dwelling (as existing in 1948) having a floor space of approx. 100sqm.
- 5.9 At the Planning Committee on 31 August 2021, Members agreed to defer determination to allow for Committee members to make a site visit. During the intervening period two statutory declarations have been submitted from a previous occupier of the site and a previous resident of Taplow. In addition, the previous occupier of the site has provided an indicative drawing outlining the original dwelling as existing in 1948. As this evidence has been set out in sworn statutory declarations, on the balance of probability this evidence is accepted and therefore the proposal need to be assessed having regard to this new information.
- 5.10 Two statutory declarations (SD) have been provided. The first is from the previous occupier of Victoria Cottage. The SD indicates that Victoria Cottage, was in 1957, at the time the occupier moved in, was a two up, two down house, the original back door step leading to the middle of a lean-to breakfast room, hall kitchen and bathroom with a small hall leading to the back door. It is stated that in 1960 the upper floor was extended to

create a third bedroom. This upper floor was supported by 2 pillars. At the time the ground floor remained of the same depth. By 1975 a second and final extension was added whereby the downstairs was increased in depth up to and including the 2 pillars. The previous occupier has also submitted an annotated plan to support the above. A second SD from a previous resident of the High Street in Taplow has also been submitted which supports the above.

- 5.11 The applicant's agent has also submitted historic OS Maps which they consider support the assessment made to approve the proposal set out in the previous Planning Committee Report. However, these maps are not sufficiently detailed to show precisely what and when the extensions to the property were constructed. As such, it is considered that these do not provide sufficient detail to contradict the evidence provided in the statutory declarations and other information referred to above.
- 5.12 Based on the information provided in the submitted Statutory Declarations and annotated plan, the floor space of the dwelling as existing as of 1948 would be approx. 89.4sqm. The ground floor would have had a floor space of 56.9sqm. There is no evidence to suggest that ground floor lean to was not in place prior to 1948 and as such this has been included in the above calculation.
- 5.13 Since then the ground floor lean-to has been demolished and replaced with a part single, part two storey extension of greater depth. The evidence provided indicates that these additions were constructed after 1948 and have increased the floorspace of the building to approx. 136.6sqm. This constitutes a 52.7% increase above the original dwelling as existing in 1948.
- 5.14 The extensions proposed as part of this application, include a single storey rear extension and a roof enlargement. These additions would result in a total floor space of 149sqm. This would result in a total increase of 66.6% above the original dwelling as existing in 1948. This is above 50% that would normally be considered acceptable under Policy GB10. As such the proposed development is considered to be a commutatively disproportionate addition to the original dwelling and would constitute inappropriate development which is by definition harmful to the of the Green Belt. The increase in built form would also result in a loss of openness, although given the size of the extension, this harm would be limited. No very special circumstances have been submitted in this instance sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.
- 5.15 Given the above the proposal would be contrary to Local Plan policy GB10, and would also fail to comply with paragraph 149 of the revised NPPF.

Transport matters and parking

Core Strategy Policies:

CP7 (Accessibility and transport)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

TR5 (Access, highways work and traffic generation)

- 5.16 Parking standards are taken from the following document: Buckinghamshire Parking Guidance September 2015. Taplow is within zone B (Mid-range population) where guidance requires 2 parking spaces within the curtilage of the application site, which is optimal for a property with 3 bedrooms as proposed.

5.17 The existing dwelling presently benefits from one parking bay which is below the two bays required for a three bedroom dwelling. Since the previous Committee, the application has since been amended to omit the removal of the hedge and consequently the additional proposed bay. As the application proposes no additional bedrooms, it is not considered necessary for an additional bay to be proposed as this would not worsen the existing parking deficit.

Raising the quality of place making and design/ Historic environment (or Conservation Area or Listed Building Issues)

Core Strategy Policies:

CP8 (Built and historic environment)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

C1 (Development within a Conservation Order)

C6 (Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings)

EP3 (The Use, Design and Layout of Development)

EP4 (Landscaping)

H10 (Residential areas of exceptional design)

H11 (Alterations and extensions to dwellings)

5.18 Other than for the proposed retention of the hedge, the design and appearance of the proposed development remains materially similar to that previously assessed. Though concern was raised by neighbours and the parish with regards to the development's impact upon the Conservation Area. No objection was raised by the Heritage Officer with regards to this impact, and no circumstances warrant a change in this view.

5.19 Objection was previously received with regards to the loss of hedging. The application has since been amended to retain the hedging and these concerns are considered to have been overcome. Were the application recommended favourably this could be secured by condition.

Amenity of existing and future residents

Local Plan Saved Policies:

EP3 (The use, design and layout of development)

EP5 (Sunlight and daylight)

H11 (Alterations and extensions to dwellings)

5.20 The proposed development was previously considered as acceptable with regards to residential amenities. No changes to the scheme have been made since the previous Committee meeting which would warrant a change in this assessment.

Ecology

Core Strategy Policies:

CP9 (Natural environment)

CP13 (Environmental and resource management).

5.21 Over the course of the application, bat roost assessments and surveys were completed which found no evidence of bat roosting activity. Bat presence was not found, as such were the application recommended favourably this would be acceptable subject to a condition requiring compliance with the requirements of the bat roost assessment.

6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 6.1 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
 - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
 - c. Any other material considerations
- 6.2 It is considered that a fair and reasonable balance would be struck between the interests of the community and the human rights of the individuals concerned in the event planning permission being refused in this instance.

7.0 Working with the applicant / agent

- 7.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2021) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.
- 7.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 7.3 In this instance amended plans were submitted during the course of the application which introduced chimneys and proposed the retention of hedgerow.

8.0 Recommendation

Refuse Permission – for the following reason:

1. The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted March 1999) and within the Green Belt there is a presumption against development other than for a limited number of specified exceptions or in very special circumstances. The proposed extensions, taken in conjunction with existing extensions on site, would result in a cumulatively disproportionate addition to the existing dwelling. Consequently, the proposal would be considered as inappropriate development, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt. Given the increase in built form the proposal would also result in a loss of Green Belt openness. No very special circumstances exist in this case sufficient to warrant an exception to Green Belt policy. As such the proposal is contrary to policies GB1, GB10 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted March 1999, Consolidated September 2007 and February 2011) and Section 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land) of the NPPF (2021).

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Parish Council Comments:

(28/06/21) - Taplow Parish Council makes further comment on this application. Our earlier objection identified the scale of extension relative to the permitted 1948 baseline as being of concern but we did not have any specific reference data. The information submitted by previous owners of the house now supports our concern. However, we are not aware of what earlier planning data the council may hold or what level of credence is normally attached to single individual submissions. We also raised concerns over the impact within the Taplow Village Conservation Area, in particular that of loss of hedging but also the potentially overbearing nature of an extension in this very densely packed corner of the road. Much recent government policy has been dismissive of the significance of CAs allowing many other policies to overrule CA criteria (the recent changes to Permitted Development Rights for example) and we are unclear as to the general views of Bucks Planning in support of CAs. For both of the above reasons Taplow Parish Council think that the application should be considered by the Planning Committee and we accordingly request its call in.

(10/06/21) - The application refers rather coyly to "adjustments to the front hedge". This presumably means its removal to allow an additional car onto the property. We are well aware of the narrow nature of the High Street and concerns for parking but it can be seen from the supplied photos that the front elevation of the property is very materially enhanced by the hedging in its Conservation Area setting and its removal would be a loss to the visual amenity of the CA. Extracts from the Taplow Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal Chapter 5 p10 "...properties are shielded from view by trees and hedges, contributing to the feeling of privacy and seclusion" "The slopes and curves of all the roads lead the eye to provide views within the conservation area which are stopped by buildings, boundary walls, trees or hedges" P11 "Trees, walls and hedges, the narrowness of the street, and the closeness of the buildings, all contribute to the feeling of intimacy and enclosure." P18 "Other cottages which make a positive contribution to character include Victoria Cottage..." Additionally we request that the total size of the proposed works are checked against the 1948 reference base used to assess permitted expansion areas.

Heritage Officer:

Thank you for consulting the heritage team in respect of the above application.

The application building is adjacent to two listed buildings (LB), Wee Cott & Rose Cott and The Porches, which are both Grade II Listed. The site is also within the Taplow Conservation Area (CA). Therefore the heritage assessment is the impact on the setting of the listed building, along with any impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The current application has been submitted subsequent to a request for pre-application advice where a heritage response was provided by the council's former principal heritage officer Matthew Crook.

Due to the time restraints of this consultation request the site has not been visited.

However, from the information available on the files the proposal has included the recommendations made by Mr Crook at the pre-app stage.

Overall, the scale of the proposed single storey extension is considered acceptable and the design approach is in keeping with the two storey element.

In regards to the alterations to the existing two storey additions, whilst the increased extent of the flat roof is not ideal there are overall improvements to the appearance of this part of the building. This includes the use of a leaded effect Sarnafil seamed roof covering across all flat roof sections. Also the fenestration detail will be significantly improved, with sash windows proposed for the first floor and simplified openings on the ground floor.

Ideally details of any new fenestration, including rooflights should be approved, however this could be agreed via a condition to any approved scheme.