CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/07461
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Consultation ends:	24th October 2023
Case officer:	Stefan Galyas

Site Address:	BROCK COTTAGE, 4 HORSE FAIR LANE, CRICKLADE, SWINDON, SN6 6BN
Proposal:	Conversion of integral garage to utility room and store room.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Site Description

The application site comprises a two-storey semi-detached property which fronts onto Horse Fair Lane. Set on the eastern side of the highway, the property benefits from a front elevation driveway and integral garage. The existing dwelling is comprised of breeze block walls with a rendered finish, uPVC windows and an up-and-over metal garage door.

The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Cricklade, identified as a Local Service Centre by the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

In regard to policy constraints, the site is located within the Cricklade Conservation Area.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of an existing, integral garage for the benefit of a utility and store room. The physical changes comprise the removal of the garage door and the insertion of a composite door and accompanying uPVC windows. The remaining opening would be bricked up and rendered to match the host dwelling.

Policies

Local Context:
Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) Adopted 2015
Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 19 – Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Areas
Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
Core Policy 58 – Historic Environment
Core Policy 61 – Transport and New Development
Core Policy 62 – Development Impacts on the Transport Network

Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan (Made March 2018)
Policy H3 – Design of New Housing

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy

National Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023
Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, 47, 110-112, 126, 130, 194, 195, 197, 199-202, 206 & 207

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Section 66(1) – Special regard to be had to the preservation of a listed building or its setting.

Section 72(1) – Special attention to be paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

National Design Guide 2021

Assessment

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states within Section 66(1) that 'special regard' be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building, it setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority, in considering whether to grant planning permission to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In having 'special regard' in regard to listed buildings and paying special attention to conservation areas, the NPPF states that the assessment must identify whether the proposal causes substantial harm, less than substantial harm or no harm to the heritage asset.

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, Including Heritage Assets
Impact on Residential Amenity
Highways and Access

Relevant Planning History

PL/2022/04500 - Conversion of an existing integral garage into a utility room and a storeroom. Approved with conditions 15/08/22.

Consultation Responses

Cricklade Town Council: No objection

Wiltshire Council's Highways Engineer: Objection.

> It was considered that the proposal would present the loss of a garage without replacement. As a result, the site would fail to meet the minimum parking standards as set out in the Local Wiltshire Transport Plan.

Representations

There were no letters of representation received in response to the proposal.

Principle of Development

The principle of extending or altering an existing dwellinghouse located within the defined settlement framework is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Core Policies 1, 2, 19 and 57 of the WCS.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, Including Heritage Assets

Core Policy 57 of the WCS seeks to secure a high standard of design in all new developments, including extensions, alterations and changing the use of existing buildings. Among other matters, it requires proposals to be sympathetic to and conserve historic buildings and historic landscapes (iv). Core Policy 58 (iii) states that designated heritage assets, including buildings and structures of special architectural or

historic interest, and their settings, will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.
Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected. Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”. The applicant does not describe the Conservation Area’s significance within the submitted Design and Access Statement and only provides a basic description of the proposals perceived impact on the Conservation Area.
Paragraph 195 of the NPPF requires the local planning authority to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal.

The National Design Guide (2021) states that “to communicate the benefits of a scheme, it is important to explain how the design of a development relates to context and local character” (Paragraph 44). It adds that “well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- The history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;
- The significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;
- The local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of facades, characteristic materials and details”. (Paragraph 46)

The conservation area by virtue of its designation is significant in heritage terms and this significance is likely to arise from its aesthetic (fortuitous) value and historical (illustrative) value.
The proposal is located within the Cricklade Conservation Area and must have regard to the Cricklade Conservation Area Statement. The guidelines within that document contain recommendations for control of development that are specific to each character area and also medium and long-term schemes for enhancement that aim to make a positive impact on the quality and interest of the character area.

The application site is located within Character Area 6: Horse Fair and Thames Lane. Horse Fair Lane is described as being tightly developed and as a quiet residential area. The row of semi-detached dwellings that the site forms part of is considered to be of a modern appearance according to the Statement.

In this case, the proposed development for a modest elevational change is considered to result in a neutral impact to the Conservation Area. Whilst highly visible within the street scene and the Conservation Area, the proposed materials are considered to assimilate the development into the site and the locality.

In this instance, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area, including the identified heritage assets. Thus, the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of Core Policy 57 and 58 of the WCS, Policy H3 of the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan and Paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenities

Core Policy 57vii of the WCS requires consideration to be given to the compatibility of proposals with adjoining buildings and uses, their impact on the amenities of existing occupants and to ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.
The conversion of the garage to a habitable room is not considered to result in loss of outlook, privacy, overshadowing or increase in any noise impact over that which can currently take place to the adjacent and adjoining residential gardens. It is noted that there were no letters of representation received in response to the proposed development.

Access and Parking

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Additionally, Core Policy 62 of the WCS states that developments should provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages.

Core Policy 64 requires that the provision of car parking associated with well-designed new residential development will be based on minimum parking standards. These standards are set out within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP). It is noted within the transport plan that garages are not included as part of the parking provision, except for in exceptional circumstances.

The Councils Highways Engineer raised an objection to the proposed development, commenting that the scheme would result in the loss of a parking space without replacement. Subsequently, it was considered that this would encourage parking on the roadside, leading to an additional highway hazard. The current garage measures at 2.4m wide and 5m in length which is considered to be small when compared with the standard 3m wide, 6m deep garage dimensions. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the garage is currently used for parking and more likely storage purposes. The garage cannot be considered a parking space in this instance as it does not meet the standard dimensions as highlighted above. Accordingly, the proposed alterations would not present the removal of an existing off-road parking space.

Horse Fair Lane is a one-way street with unrestricted parking to the south-western side of the road, along which the dwelling abuts. Thus, on street parking is considered to be commonplace and normal in a location of this kind.

It is noted that no Highways objection was raised in response to the proposed garage conversion at the adjoining property under PL/2022/04500. Therefore, it not considered reasonable to refuse the proposal on Highways grounds in this instance.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and in design and amenity terms, in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 1, 2, 19, 51, 57, 58, 61 and 62 Policy H3 of the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.
The proposal accords with the adopted development plan and as such, should be granted permission.

Recommendation

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

Existing and Proposed Side Elevations
Existing and Proposed Rear Elevation
Proposed Front Elevation
All received 11/09/23

Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Received 25/09/23

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

3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those detailed on the application form and approved plans.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

Informatives: (3)

4 Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

5 The applicant should note that the grant of planning permission does not include any separate permission which may be needed to erect a structure in the vicinity of a public sewer. Such permission should be sought direct from Thames Water Utilities Ltd / Wessex Water Services Ltd. Buildings are not normally allowed within 3.0 metres of a Public Sewer although this may vary depending on the size, depth, strategic importance, available access and the ground conditions appertaining to the sewer in question.

6 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.