CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference	**PL/2023/09341**
Proposal	**Addition of single storey double garage.**
Site address	**Mere Down House, Mere, Warminster, BA12 6AT**
Consultation expiry	**6/12/23**

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and NPPG

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 17: Spatial Strategy: Mere Community Area
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
Core Policy 61 Transport and Development
Saved Policy C24 and H31 Extensions in the countryside (Annex D of WCS)

Neighbourhood Plan status – Designated

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan – Car Parking Strategy:
Chapter 7: Parking Standards

Creating Places, Supplementary Design Guidance, adopted April 2006.

RELEVANT HISTORY

S/2003/1083 SINGLE STOREY GARAGE AC
S/1998/1717 REFURBISHMENT AND EXTENSION OF DWELLING INCLUDING 3 STOREY LINK TO GARAGE TO BE CONVERTED TO RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION AC
S/2003/2115 ALTERATION OF EXISTING PLANNING APPROVAL FOR NEW SINGLE STOREY GARAGE WITH ADDITIONAL DORMER WINDOWS AC



CONSTRAINTS

- Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB
- River Avon catchment SAC and SPA
- Warminster Hollow is an adopted Class B highway
- Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) to south boundary, MERE11, WKNO1

REPRESENTATIONS

Archaeology No objection

Mere Down House is an unlisted, 1920s, faux Georgian, country house. It was preceded by a 19th-century farmstead notated, unusually, as 'The Hut' on historic mapping. The farm is also shown on the Mere Tithe Map and so may originate earlier than the 19th-century. This application proposes a new garage, appended to an existing block of outbuildings. The proposed footprint of the new garage is modest in area. On this basis and given the site's limited archaeological potential, I am satisfied that it would not be proportionate in this instance to recommend an archaeological response should this application be permitted. No further action is therefore required in relation to this application as regards the buried archaeological heritage.

Mere Town Council: Support

Neighbour/third parties: None

PROPOSAL

The applicant is seeking to provide a single storey double garage within an existing courtyard of buildings adjacent to the main house. The proposed materials would be matching lime render, oak posts, stone plinths for the walls with timber doors, natural slates, lead ridges and hips for the roof.

Existing *Proposed*



The applicant stated:

The existing house has evolved over time from the original 1920s core with a service yard to the north west of this. On the west side of the yard is an existing outbuilding. To the north of this is a rendered block wall with a beech hedge to the north of it. Further accommodation is now required to provide a secure stable environment for housing cars whilst also providing a space for their maintenance.

It is proposed to add a new double garage to the north of the existing outbuilding to complete the service courtyard in place of the existing rendered block wall. On the east side this is stopped short of the circular existing dovecot that encloses the oil tank. The new roof would engage with the existing conical roof with a double valley and a short length of ridge. On the west side the new wall would be flush with the existing west wall of the outbuilding. The junction between the two would be masked by a downpipe collecting water from the lead valley between the two roofs.

The existing beech hedges on the north and west side of the building and courtyard would be relocated so that they continue to screen the buildings.

The new building would have lime rendered walls to match the existing. The roofs would be hipped at either end and would be finished in the same small slates with lead ridge and hips to match the existing. The new ridge would be approximately 600 mm below the outbuilding's ridge so that it is subservient to it, but also so that it completes the overall building mass' hierarchical composition from the top of the tower descending through a cascade of roofs down to the new building and thence to the ground.

On the south side of the roof would be two roof lights, providing natural light and ventilation to the garage. The west one is concealed from the ground, set in the valley between the two roofs. The south elevation of the new building will be formed in oak posts and lintels with stone plinths. The new doors will be timber boarded. These details would match the existing outbuilding. A new short lean-to on the west side of the existing outbuilding would be added in the two central bays. The roof of this would be a continuation of the splayed existing pitch above the roof and would bring the scale of the outbuilding down to that of the adjacent lower garden wall. The lean-to would allow the necessary internal dimensions for cars to be locked up whilst providing covered shelter at the entrance to the existing external door, and also allow sufficient space for the new doors to be held open without interfering with the existing circular oak central column.

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

1. Principle of development
2. Scale, siting, design and impact on the character of the area and AONB
3. Impact on amenity
4. Highway safety

ASSESSMENT

The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004). The NPPF confirms in para 11 that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Given the location within the AONB, the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not automatically apply under footnote 7 of para 11.

1. **Principle of development**

The proposed garage development is within the countryside and beyond any settlement boundary. However, it affects an existing courtyard of outbuildings attached to a period residential property. New ancillary development within a residential curtilage is acceptable under saved Policy H31 and C24, which permit residential alterations and outbuildings subject to criteria:

H31 In the countryside extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that:

(i) the extension is subservient in size to the existing dwelling and house plot and does not substantially alter the character of the dwelling;
(ii) the design of the extension is in keeping with that of the existing dwelling and uses complementary materials; and
(iii) the extension would not create, or be capable of creating, a separate dwelling.

Extensions to Buildings

C24 Extensions and additions to buildings in the countryside will only be permitted if they are sympathetic in scale and character with the existing building and surroundings, and fall within the existing curtilage.

Other matters including residential amenity and highway safety are addressed under the relevant policies of the WCS below.

2. **Scale, siting, design and impact on the character of the area and AONB**

Core Policy CP51 states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Great weight is placed upon the importance of landscape conservation within the AONB under CP51 and para 176 of the NPPF.

Core Policy CP57 states a high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality.

The scale, siting, design and materials for the development proposal are considered to be entirely suitable for the existing character and appearance of the site and by using suitable matching materials, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the area and the wider character and setting of the AONB. The existing beech hedge is to be replanted to maintain a level of screening for the buildings. Therefore, no objection is raised under CP57, CP51, H31 and C24 of the WCS and the NPPF.

<u>Impact on amenity</u>

Core Policy CP57 requires that development should ensure appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development. The NPPF states that planning decisions should ‘create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.’

The building is considered an entirely appropriate form of development which would not be unacceptably tall or dominant and would blend well into its setting. Therefore, the proposed garage would not result in any undue overlooking, loss of light or dominance to any neighbouring properties, in accordance with CP57.

Highway safety

Core policy CP57 ix. states that proposals should ensure that the public realm, including new roads and other rights of way, are designed to create places of character which are legible, safe and accessible. There are no proposed changes to the existing access arrangements for the site. Additional garage spaces would be created and the proposal is considered to comply with CP61 and CP57.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is a sympathetic form of development within the courtyard for a period house in the countryside of the AONB. The design, scale and materials for the scheme conform to the design and amenity objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the aims of the NPPF. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority considers that planning permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVE with conditions**

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.

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

Location Plan dated 30th Oct 2023
Proposed Floor Plan ref 4325 7A dated Sept 2023
Proposed Block & Roof Plan ref 4325 6A dated Sept 2023
Proposed North and West Elevations ref 4325 8 dated Oct 2023
Proposed South and East Elevations ref 4325 9 dated Oct 2023
Design and Access Statement ref 4325

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

The materials to be used for the walls and roof of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing outbuildings on the site.

Reason To ensure a harmonious form of development.