SFPLANNING

4th January 2024

Development Services
Wiltshire Council
Country Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

Dear Sir / Madam

Foxleigh, Stonehill, Charlton SN16 9DX

Extensions and alterations to existing property and change of use of adjacent land to residential garden.

This planning cover letter has been provided in support of an application for the development as described and recently submitted by the applicants (planning portal ref: PP-12678566) and sets out the applicant's understanding of the present local planning policy situation and the proposal's compliance with the key relevant policy tests.

Site overview

The site is located on the northern side of the B4040, circa 3.5km to the east of the village of Charlton. As illustrated in the satellite image below, the site comprises of a detached residential dwelling with an L shaped parcel of land to the east and north boundaries which is understood to have a lawful agricultural use. The submitted block plan drawing identifies the four different parcels of registered within the site which was purchased as one by the applicants.

As figure 1 below illustrates, the site is bounded by residential properties to the east and west, with woodland to the north. The B4040 highway forms the southern boundary and access to the site is provided directly from the road. The site and dwellinghouse are at a lower level than the highway and are partially screened by a combination of fencing and hedging.

The dwelling itself is a predominantly two storey dwelling with traditional stone walls and tiled roof and benefits from an existing two storey rear extension. A selection of site photographs can be found appended to this letter.



Figure 1: Satellite image identifying site and immediate context (Source: Google Maps)

There are no listed buildings within the immediate surroundings, and the entirety of the site is located outside of a conservation area and has a low risk of flooding (flood zone 1). There are also no landscape designations to note with the site being outside of the AONB or any Special Landscape Area.

Planning History

According to the Council's online records, planning permission was granted in 1998 for extensions to the dwellinghouse (ref: N/98/00529/FUL) and, as noted above, these works have been implemented. In 2014 planning permission was refused (ref: 13/05460/FUL) and appeal dismissed for the erection of a dwelling on the adjacent land to Foxleigh due to the loss of an open space in the countryside, a reliance on the private car and adverse impact on existing trees.

Proposed Development

The proposal is for single storey extensions to the front, side and rear of the dwelling together with a change of use of the adjacent land in order to amalgamate the land into the residential curtilage of the property. The proposed works are set out in full on the various architectural drawings that have been submitted as part of this planning application.

Planning considerations

The proposal should be considered against the relevant planning policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (adopted January 2015) as well as any other material considerations such as the policies within the NPPF.

Extensions to dwellinghouse

As set illustrated on the proposed elevation and floor plan drawings, the application proposes extensions to the front (south), rear (north) and side (east) of the dwellinghouse.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".* Paragraph 135(a) requires developments to function well and add to the overall quality of the area whilst point (b) requires developments to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

The importance of design is recognised at a local level through Core Policy 57, which requires a high standard of design to be adopted across all new development. This policy sets out the following 'criteria' which are considered to be relevant to this application:

- Relate positively to the landscape setting and existing pattern of development (criterion i);
- Retain and enhance existing landscaping and natural features (criterion ii);
- Ensure building layouts, form, height, mass, scale and materials effectively integrate the development into its setting (criterion iii);
- Maximise the opportunities for sustainable construction techniques (criterion v);
- Have regard to the impact on neighbouring properties (criterion vii);
- Incorporate measures to reduce actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour (criterion viii);
- Use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping (criterion xii).

The application proposes single storey extensions which will increase the size of the footprint of the building as per figure 2 below. The proposed works have been carefully considered to consolidate the built form and avoid any excessive encroachment into open countryside. The proposed development is considered to accord with the criteria within Core Policy 57, being of a design and scale that complement both the existing dwelling and surrounding development. The proposal will sit comfortably within the curtilage of the site and will read as subservient additions.

The proposed materials will be consistent with the original part of the cottage and comprise of matching reclaimed stone walling, matching reclaimed double roman roof tiles and green oak timber framed windows. The materials will enable the extensions to integrate effectively into the setting and be of a high standard.

The primary character of the building is derived from its south and west facing elevations which are of a traditional stone cottage appearance. Aside from the small conservatory style addition to the west, these elevations are unaffected by the proposal, and the presiding characteristic of the building will be retained.



Figure 2: Comparison of existing ground floor plan (left hand image) with the proposed ground floor plan (right hand image).

A fabric first approach has been undertaken in order to reduce the energy demand of the building and to minimise its carbon footprint. Given the distances to neighbouring properties and the single storey nature of the proposed works, it is not considered the proposal would result in any unacceptable loss of light, privacy or outlook.

The extended property would continue to sit comfortably in its surroundings and not result in a visually dominant or incongruous development. Ultimately the proposed development is for a high-quality design which would enhance the appearance of the existing building.

Extension of residential curtilage

As identified on the submitted block plan drawings, to the east and north of the property is a parcel of agricultural land and this application seeks to amalgamate the land into the host dwelling's residential curtilage.

The existing agricultural land is bounded by residential land to the east and west whilst to the north is dense private woodland with limited views from the public realm. These factors would help to ensure that the extension of the garden would not appear as an encroachment into open countryside or as an incongruous form of development. The area to the rear of the property also aligns with the rear of the residential curtilage of the neighbouring property (Upper Stonehill Cottage) and the land would be read in the context of the existing dwellinghouse and the adjacent residential uses. The open space between Foxleigh and Upper Stonehill Cottage will be retained.

It is not considered therefore that any harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding landscape would arise and the applicant's intention to plant native trees, fruit trees, natural flower beds, vegetable patch and a wildflower meadow, as well as new native boundary hedging. These factors will further help assimilate the land into the landscape.

Conclusion

This covering letter has demonstrated that the proposal represents a sustainable form of development that accords with the relevant Core Strategy policies, as well as national policy and guidance contained within the NPPF.

There is no material harm arising from the proposed development, which is of a high quality design and will ensure the property will continue to sit comfortably within the site and its surroundings. There is also no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties which arises from this proposal, whilst the existing access and parking arrangements will be unaffected.

Given these points, it is our conclusion that this application can be met with officer's approval and a positive decision can be issued under delegated authority accordingly and without delay, in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Please let us know if it is intended to do anything other than grant permission under delegated authority.

Yours sincerely

Gary Dickens
SF Planning Ltd

Appendix one – Selection of site photographs



View of the property from the roadside



Photograph of the western side of property



Photograph of the western side of property



Photograph of the eastern side of property



Photograph of the rear (north) of property



Photograph of the eastern side of property