DELEGATED REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09561
Application Type:	Householder Planning permission
Site Address:	2, South View, Quarry Hill, Box, Corsham, SN13 8LW
Proposal:	Proposed porch extension to front elevation of existing dwelling, plus first floor extension over existing modern extension at the rear of the dwelling.
Recommendation:	Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for a first-floor flat roof rear extension and porch to the front elevation of a domestic dwellinghouse.

The submitted plans also show internal alterations to the existing dwelling, including a new staircase and first floor bathroom. Also shown are the replacement of some existing windows (switching from the mix of uPVC and metal to painted timber), but with size of opening unchanged.

The first-floor extension allows for internal reorganisation, with larger bedrooms at first floor, with an enlarged kitchen and utility space at ground floor. The existing property comprises three bedrooms, with that number remaining unchanged. Externally, the first-floor extension is to be finished in ashlar stone to match the existing, with single ply membrane, dark grey colour, to the flat roof which would be behind the parapet walls.

The proposed single storey porch extension at the existing front door into the dwelling, with pitched roof tiled in slate and external walls constructed from Bath stone, to match the existing.

The property is not served by any off-street parking, with the submitted plans not suggesting any change to that situation.

SITE DESCRIPTION

No.2 South View is one of a pair of ashlar stone built, two storey, semi-detached residential properties, positioned at right angles to, and accessed from, Quarry Hill, Box. Both properties have been extended to the rear, with a large two-storey flat roof addition of somewhat incongruous reconstituted stone the neighbouring no.1 being most obvious. The properties are not listed, but are clearly of traditional character and appearance, perhaps being of late C19th/early C20th origins.

The single storey extension to the application property adjoins that of the extension to no.1, providing for a kitchen and bathroom, and is not visible from public vantage points. There is a high, stone retaining wall around the rear and side of the dwelling, with the land at the higher level belonging to the neighbouring property to the east of the application site, Fleur-de-Lys.

The garden belonging to the application site is mainly to the front of the property, running down the hill to the west. The boundary to the north of 1 South View runs along Quarry Hill. The application site is accessed from Quarry Hill by pedestrian path only, across the site of 1 South View.

The application site is not listed and is not in a Conservation Area. The site lies inside the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscape) and is part of the Bath and West Wiltshire Green Belt.

There are no other relevant policy constraints covering the application site.

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS)
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)
Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
Section 12: Achieving well designed places
Section 13: Green Belt

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Green Belt
- Impact upon AONB
- Scale and design
- Residential amenity
- Highways

CONSULTATION

Box Parish Council: No objection:

> *The Box Parish Council has no objections in principle but would ask that the potential overlooking of the neighbours in addressed and the applicants be asked to consider velux or frosted windows.*

REPRESENTATIONS

One representation received, summarised below and available in full under the application reference on the Council's website.

- Concern over the potential impacts upon privacy as a result of the installation of the upstairs bathroom window.
- Development will be a dominant feature very close to the neighbour's property.
- Objects to the window overlooking bathroom and bedroom. Suggests alternative windows north facing.
- Neighbouring property has an extension with no windows on the boundary.

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 must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is a key material planning consideration. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.

Principle of Development

Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the policies contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and government guidance.

The principle of domestic extensions, alterations and/or outbuildings within the curtilage of existing dwellings is established as acceptable. The detail of the proposals must also be considered against other policies within the development plan.

Green Belt

The proposal is wholly within the North Wiltshire Green Belt but is within the village of Box.

Although unclear as to when the rear single storey extension was constructed, it can be well understood to not be part of the *original building* for the purposes of paragraph 154 to the NPPF. In that context, the original part of no.2 is in fact reasonably modest in scale and built form.

The proposed extension would be above the existing ground floor rear extension and introduce built form that is of reasonable scale and mass. Clearly, that built form is an addition to the "original building" of no.2, but in the context of its discreet position to the rear of the property and its screening from overt, publicly accessible views in the locality, it is not considered that it would be a disproportionate addition, as set out within paragraph 154(c) to the NPPF. Indeed, the property is positioned amongst built form of similar or greater scale within the village boundaries and would not somehow cause harm to the openness of the green belt.

For the above reasons, it is concluded that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the green belt.

Impact upon the AONB (now named National Landscape)

Whilst somewhat large, the first-floor extension is positioned to the rear of the property in a reasonable discreet fashion amongst other significant built form, and where overt and long distance views in the land will not be possible. Similarly, the front porch is positioned amongst the built form of Box village and will not be visible at distance from the wider landscape.

As such the proposal will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape. The proposal has therefore complied with the requirements of CP51 of the WCS.

Scale and design

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design, materials amongst other things. Sections 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design.

The proposal in this instance is made up of two distinct elements. The first being the porch extension to the front elevation the second being the rear flat roofed element.

The pitched roof porch extension is a novel feature to the front elevation. However, it is to be constructed of matching materials, with a ridge height lower than the bottom sill height of the first-floor windows. As a result of its complimentary appearance, it is not considered that the porch element would be such to cause an unacceptable impact to the character and of the principal elevation to the property which, aside from the prior introduction of uncharacteristic top hung windows, otherwise remains relatively unblemished.

The first-floor extension to the rear is to make use of a flat roof with a parapet. The extension reaches a height which exceeds the eaves of the cat-slide of the existing property and for that reason can be said to present a somewhat awkward relationship. However, natural stone is specified for the walls, with fenestration to be similarly scaled, with window frames of painted timber. The also proposed replacement of the mix of metal and uPVC windows across the existing property with a consistent painted timber represents a demonstrable improvement. Nonetheless, the flat roof design and massing of the extension are hallmarks of a poor and ugly approach.

The awkwardness of the height of the flat roof extension can also be seen with the way in which it relates to the neighbouring property (no.1). The proposal exceeds the height of an extension which has been built to the rear of no.1, with a somewhat bulky, ugly masonry element projecting above along the North elevation, meeting the catslide roof at an arbitrary point, thereby impacting on its current balance.

However, several factors mitigate what is obviously poor design for the extension: Firstly, the projecting element is at least specified as being natural stone, so as to match the existing property. Secondly, as previously mentioned, the location of the extension is discreet and hidden from overt public view, being positioned to the rear of the property and behind the neighbour's extended property and elevated ground/retaining wall to the South and East. Lastly, the extension to no.1 is itself a large, bulky, flat roof two extension, which cuts across the cat-slide roof of what was the original element of the property. That extension is highly visible in the street scene, being positioned close up against Quarry Hill, and is constructed of a reconstituted stone which is conspicuous

against the Ashlar of the original element of the property. Critically, the neighbour's extension is likely to almost entirely shield overt public view of the proposed rear extension – including, by reason of the available angle of view from Quarry Hill, the masonry wall which would project above the roof.

Accordingly, and whilst still acknowledging the poor design of the proposed rear extension when considered in isolation, the above contextual factors do render a form of development that is unlikely to be overtly visible from public vantage points and therefore be of minimal impact to the character and appearance of the locality. Indeed, the existing flat-roof two extension to no.1 is of much greater prominence and already of a design and construction that chafes with the simply, traditional vernacular of the pair of dwellings known as 1 and 2 South View. That existing character does very much contextualise the proposals under consideration.

Accordingly, and in the above very particular context, the proposed porch and extensions are not considered to be unacceptable and will comply with the requirements of CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Residential amenity

Core Policy 57 states that development should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. Section 12 of the NPPF also states that planning decisions should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Representations have been received from the Parish Council and the nearest neighbour at Islove House (appearing to be labelled as Fleur de Lys on plans) expressing concern over the close relationship of the extension and the potential for loss of privacy from overlooking and impact on amenity from noise and disturbance. Indeed, the proposed extension would be built close to the common boundary with Islove House (itself, being sited close to the boundary) and does introduce four new windows – two of which into the East elevation directly facing Islove House, one of which being at first floor level. However, both of those windows are to serve a bathroom and w/c, and both are shown as being fitted with obscure glazing.

Due to the topography of the site, the application site is positioned at a much lower level to that of the elevated Islove House. This does mean that the proposed ground floor window would not have a view; it being directly into a retaining structure. The proposed first floor bathroom window is approximately 1.8m from the boundary with Islove House and approximately 2.8m to the neighbouring property. Due to the aforementioned topography, the first-floor bathroom window, is approximately at mid-level of Islove House. As is noted within the representations, Islove House does also have windows in the facing elevation, meaning that mutual overlooking would be possible.

However, the proposed bathroom window is shown on the submitted plans as being obscure glazed, with the nature of the room the window serves meaning that lingering views are unlikely. Accordingly, and despite the close proximity of the two properties and opposing windows, provided the new facing windows are fitted with obscure glass (in accordance with the submitted plans), it is not considered that there would be an unacceptable loss of privacy or overlooking as a result of the development. Whilst the concerns of the neighbour in respect of noise and disturbance are

understood, the extension is to provide residential accommodation ancillary to an existing property and for that reason, the intensity of activity and consequent noise will amount to no more than would be expected in any residential situation in this part of Box and elsewhere. Unfortunately, there is no role for the planning system to seek to control the behaviour of residential occupiers, or the existence of *bad neighbours*, which of course have the potential to exist anywhere in a residential setting.

As referenced above, the proposed development would take place in close proximity to boundary with, and property of, Islove House. However, due to the lower topography of the application site, the mass and height of the extension is not considered to constitute an oppressive or overbearing form of development.

There are no neighbouring properties to the immediate South of the extension, but the garden to Islove House appears to wrap around no.1. However, because of the sunken level of no.2 and the existence of raised ground/retaining structures and several domestic outbuildings, there is not likely to be any unacceptable loss of privacy from the new windows to be inserted into the South facing elevation. Similarly, no windows are proposed to the elevation adjoining no.1 and, in any event, the relationship of existing flat roof extension to no.1 already shields blocks off the position of the proposal. The private garden to no.1 is to the front of the property.

Ultimately, whilst the concerns of the neighbour and the parish council are entirely understood in this context, subject to the imposition of planning conditions which compel the insertion, and retention of obscure glazing into the new windows to the East elevation (in accordance with the submitted plans), the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon the amenity or living conditions of surrounding residential occupiers when assessed against CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of size, scale and design and its impact on the character and appearance of the locality and wider landscape. Similarly, and subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure the insertion and retaining of obscure glazing t windows to be inserted into the East elevation, the development would not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenity and living conditions of surrounding residential occupiers.

Accordingly, the proposal will meet with the requirements of policies CP51 and CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy as well as relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

See decision notice.