STA/21077/1 – Mr and Mrs Norton. Conversion of existing dwelling and outbuilding into three separate dwellings including demolition and extensions, and alterations to existing access. Stanford Mill, Faringdon Road, Stanford in the Vale.

The Proposal

1. This application seeks planning permission for the remodelling and extension of Stanford Mill to form two separate dwellings and the conversion of an existing substantial outbuilding to one dwelling. The main house has been subject to numerous alterations over the years including removal of a first floor above the mill race and unsympathetic extensions, filling in the mill race channel and setting the mill wheel into concrete. The river was controlled by a sluice gate which is now broken and inoperable and restricts the river channel.

2. The application includes improvements to the river with an additional culvert reconstructing the mill race and repair of the sluice gate to improve flow capacity on the main river channel.

3. The original first floor above the mill race is proposed to be re-instated which will replace the existing ground floor accommodation in this location thereby improving flood capacity. Various flat roofed additions are proposed to be removed and the footprint of the building would be reduced by 124 square metres.

4. The existing outbuilding which already includes some ancillary accommodation is proposed to be converted into one unit with a small roof extension linking the existing roof space to create a useable first floor. Apart from this small addition the living space would be contained within the existing building utilising existing openings.

5. The site currently benefits from an existing access from the A417, and there is a garage accessed via an adjacent lane which also serves Mill Farm. Both of these access points would be retained with improvements to visibility at the main site access.

6. The plans have been amended from those originally submitted to correct the red line so that it includes all the proposed visibility splays. Extracts from the application drawings are at Appendix 1.

7. The site is located in flood zone 3.

8. The application comes to committee as Stanford in the Vale Parish Council objects.
Planning History

9. Various alterations and extensions have been permitted over the years to the main dwelling.

10. A previous application for 4 dwellings at the property was withdrawn in February 2010 due to an objection by the Environment Agency and concerns over the subdivision of the outbuilding into 2 units.

Planning Policies

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

11. Policy GS7 permits the re-use of vernacular buildings outside existing settlements subject to criteria including that the building must be of substantial construction and capable of conversion without significant alterations and extensions, and subject to the alterations not harming the character of the building.

12. Policy H14 refers to the subdivision of properties to form additional dwellings subject to criteria including having adequate amenity space and parking, not harming the character of the dwelling and surroundings and not harming neighbouring properties.

13. Policies DC1, DC5 and DC9 refer to the design of new development, access and parking considerations and impact on neighbouring properties.


Consultations

15. Stanford in the Vale Parish Council objects to the application due to concerns over “flooding, access/egress, infrastructure. Is this not contrary to new government guidelines re buildings in gardens?” They have referred back to their comments on the previous application which are attached at Appendix 2.

16. The County Engineer has raised no objections subject to conditions.

17. The Environment Agency has been involved in extensive discussions at pre-application stage and during the application process. They are generally happy with the proposals but any recommended conditions are still awaited at the time of writing. An update on these will be provided at the meeting.

18. The site is not in a conservation area, nor are the buildings listed, however given their historic nature the council’s conservation officer raises no objections in terms of design but says that conditions relating to the details of the scheme need to be imposed on the permission.

Officer Comments
19. The main issues to consider in determining the application are i) the principle of additional residential accommodation on the site; ii) the impact of the proposed alterations on the character of the existing buildings and the surrounding area; iii) access and parking considerations; and iv) flooding and ecology in relation to the site and surrounding area.

20. The existing outbuilding is proposed to be converted to one unit largely within the shell of the existing building, but with a small roof link. The building is of sound construction and capable of conversion without significant alterations or new openings so the proposal meets the requirements of Policy GS7.

21. The proposed conversion of the existing dwelling into two units includes some necessary alterations given the current condition of the property. The scheme involves the demolition of some unsympathetic flat roofed elements which would reduce the overall footprint of the building. It is proposed to remove the flat roofed kitchen above the mill race and replace part of this area with arches at ground level to allow for a through flow of water in extreme floods. The mill wheel would be restored and located in this open area as a feature. A first floor would be added to above the arches, which seeks to re-instate the building to its former design. The floor space of the building is not therefore proposed to be any greater than existing and the footprint is actually smaller than currently exists. The principle of dividing the existing dwelling into two is acceptable given the measures proposed to overcome current flood problems at the property.

22. In design terms the alterations to the outbuilding are sympathetic and retain the building’s existing character. The proposals for the main dwelling seek to re-instate the building to its original design which is shown in a painting of the property from many years ago (extract attached at Appendix 3). The later flat roof additions to the building are proposed to be removed, therefore it is considered that the scheme would enhance the character of the existing property and its surroundings.

23. The existing dwelling has a large curtilage and therefore there is sufficient land available to provide private amenity space for each unit together with parking.

24. Improvements to the site access are proposed including removal and replacement of an adjacent hedgerow to improve visibility. This hedge lies on the neighbour’s farmland and therefore a “Grampian” style condition is recommended requiring the visibility splay to be implemented and the new hedge planted prior to any further works taking place on the site. The County Engineer has raised no objections subject to conditions. A gravel drive and parking area is proposed within the site.

25. The applicants have carried out extensive discussions with the Environment Agency in terms of addressing the flooding and ecological issues. A flood risk assessment and ecological assessment have been carried out. The ecological assessment revealed some evidence of bats within the buildings
(but not a permanent roost), and otters within the main river and suggestions are made as to suitable mitigation including the installation of a buffer zone along the main river. There is no evidence of water voles or crayfish in this area. The Environment Agency is satisfied with the proposal in principle including measures to improve the flooding situation on the site and mitigation suggestions in relation to protected species. Any recommended conditions area awaited and an update will be provided at the meeting.

26. The nearest neighbour to the property is Mill Farm to the south east, however the proposal would have no harmful impact on the residential amenity of this neighbour.

27. The parish council refers to recent guidance on building in gardens, however this scheme does not propose any additional built development within the garden and the footprint of the main dwelling is actually being reduced. It is not considered therefore that the new guidance in PPS3 applies in this instance.

Recommendation

declares that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any additional conditions recommended by the Environment Agency.

1 TL1 – Time Limit

2 MC2 – Submission of Material Samples

3 RE6 – Boundary Details

4 Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the design, materials and finish of all windows, window sills and lintels, external doors and rainwater goods and the treatment of all verges and eaves of the building(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be built in accordance with the approved details.

5 RE2 – PD Restriction on Dwellings – Extensions and outbuildings

6 MC24 – Drainage Details (surface and foul water)

7 MC29 – Sustainable Drainage Scheme

8 No development shall commence on site until the vehicular access and visibility splays hereby approved and shown on approved drawing number 0308RCN 2 Rev D have been provided and a replacement hedge planted along the line of the new visibility splay to the north west of the site access. Thereafter, the visibility splays shall be permanently maintained free from obstruction to vision.

9 HY19 – No Drainage to Highway
10LS1 – Landscaping Scheme (submission)

11LS2 – Landscaping Scheme (implementation)