

WTT/20578 – Mr R Bevan
Re-modelling and extension to existing dwelling.
De La Rue, Orchard Lane, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5JH

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the re-modelling and extension of the existing dwelling to form additional living accommodation. The site lies within both the Oxford Green Belt and the North Vale Corallian Ridge, a locally designated area of High Landscape Value.
- 1.2 The existing property, located on a prominent corner plot at the junction with Jarn Way / Orchard Lane, is a late 1960 / early 70s chalet style detached dwelling that is set centrally on the site. The site is bounded by a variety of dwellings to the north (on Orchard Lane), and Yew Cottage, a thatched listed building to the east (on the opposite side of Jarn Way). To the south, lies a detached property known as Hillcote which due to the steep slope of Jarn Way is set down below the application site. A detached double garage building serving the property Farleigh lies to the west, which again is set down from the site level due to the slope of Orchard Lane.
- 1.3 The proposed remodelling of the dwelling is of a contemporary design, using modern materials such as a standing seam single membrane roof, aluminium fenestration, glazed balconies, rendered panels and cedar boarding.
- 1.4 Copies of the submitted plans showing the location of the proposal, its design and layout are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5 The application comes to Committee at the request of Councillor Val Shaw and because the Parish Council have submitted revised comments objecting to the proposal.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history for this property.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011*
Policies GS3 (development in the Oxford Green Belt), DC1, DC5, DC9 (quality of new development) and Policy H24 (extensions to dwellings) are relevant to this application.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Wootton Parish Council originally had no objection to the proposal, but amended their comments to objection on 24 July 2008. Their comments are attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 County Engineer – no objections.
- 4.3 Environmental Health – no objections.
- 4.4 Waste Management Team – no objections.

- 4.5 Consultant Architect – comments attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.6 Architects Panel – “The style of domestic architecture on Old Boars Hill is very varied with most houses set in sizable landscaped plots. This scheme has clearly been very carefully crafted and will add to the natural variety of housing on the hill. The Panel enthusiastically support the architect’s design approach.”
- 4.7 11 letters of objection have been received which are summarised as follows:
- Whilst delighted that the 1960s designed building is to be redesigned, the plans are entirely inappropriate for this sensitive site. The existing Victorian house and cottages that are adjacent to the site will not be enhanced by an ultra modern dwelling. The proposed development is not in keeping with what is otherwise a tight group of traditional dwellings.
 - The proposal will need to reinforce the party wall, which in turn is likely to undermine the foundations of the neighbouring garage. There is also uncertainty as to who owns the wall.
 - The property is in an elevated prominent position in the oldest part of Boars Hill. Its redesign is out of keeping with the area and will dominate neighbouring properties and the locality.
 - There is too little parking proposed. This will lead to highway safety issues.
 - The new building should be no higher than it currently is and should be set further back in the site.
 - The design is far too modern and is similar to an industrial building.
 - The proposal will adversely affect the setting of Yew Cottage – a thatched building that is grade II listed.
 - Other more modern developments in the area are on less prominent sites.
- 4.8 1 letter of support has been received stating “the plans look great, good luck to the owner”.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be 1) whether the development complies with prevailing Green Belt Policy, 2) the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including its design, 3) the impact on the setting of the nearby listed building 4) the impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties and 5) the safety of the access and parking arrangements.
- 5.2 Policy GS3 sets out the Council’s criteria in relation to extensions, alterations and replacement of dwelling houses in the Green Belt. It is consistent with the aims of ensuring against inappropriate development, as set down in PPG2 “Green Belts” specifically allowing up to a maximum 30% increase in the volume of original dwellings of this size. The reference to volume is made to restrict the overall massing of a proposal in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt. By assessing this proposal against this policy it can be determined whether or not the development is inappropriate, and by definition harmful to the Green Belt.
- 5.3 Based on the drawings submitted, the proposal represents an increase of 30% over the original building. As such the extension and alterations proposed under this application are considered to comply with the appropriate threshold in Policy GS3 and is acceptable in Green Belt Terms.

- 5.4 Regarding the second issue, the development in the form proposed is not considered to be harmful to the character of the locality. The resultant building is no higher than the existing dwelling for example and remains on the same siting within the plot. Taking account of the sloping nature of the site, and its central location on the site, the proposed development will be no more prominent in the street scene than the existing nor is it considered to be an overdevelopment of the site. Consequently, in this regard Officers consider the visual impact of the proposal to be acceptable.
- 5.5 The design is unashamedly modern, with the use of single ply membrane roofing, rendered panels, glazed balconies and cedar boarding. The design is clearly different to the more traditional housing found on Old Boars Hill but this, in itself, does not make the proposal harmful. Members will be aware that the site is not located in a designated Conservation Area and even if it were, this would not rule out a modern design.
- 5.6 Whilst objectors have stated that they find the building too modern in appearance, more akin to a commercial / industrial premise, Officers consider the contemporary design to be wholly acceptable. Furthermore, the Consultant Architect has commented that that 'the proposed re-modelling would create a contemporary design of higher quality', and in his opinion there are 'no contextual influences which indicate that this design should not be accepted here', and considers 'it should be commended to Members accordingly'. The Architects Panel also positively endorses the scheme. Your Officers consider, therefore, that there would be no justification for a design based refusal.
- 5.7 In respect of the impact on the setting of the nearby listed building (Yew Cottage), the proposed design is considered to have no adverse impact. The proposed building comes no closer to the listed building for example, which is on the opposite side of the road. Furthermore, existing boundary planting along Jarn Way is proposed to be retained, thus maintaining the character and setting of the listed building.
- 5.8 With respect to neighbouring properties, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to dwellings opposite the site in Orchard Road or to Yew Cottage. Existing window orientation relationships will be maintained, and the property is far enough away from neighbouring dwellings so as to not cause any overshadowing / loss of light problems. Similarly, the property to the south will not be adversely affected due to it being downhill from the site, and views from the proposal will be over the roof of this dwelling. As such, Officers consider the impact on this property to be acceptable.
- 5.9 In terms of parking and access, the existing access arrangement is considered acceptable. Furthermore, adequate parking will be retained on site, including the ability to turn and leave the site in a forward gear. The County Engineer has raised no objection to the application.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:*

1. *TL1 – Time Limit*
2. *MC2 – Sample Materials to be submitted.*
3. *RE2 – PD restriction on extending dwelling.*