

WLS/5900/5 & WLS/5900/7-CA – Mr G Tulloch
Demolition of detached garage, and the erection of a 3-bedroom cottage in the grounds of Beechtree Cottage
Beechtree Cottage, Marsh Way, Woolstone.

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 The applications propose the demolition of an existing garage, and the erection of a 3-bedroom cottage which would be located to the south east of Beechtree Cottage; adjacent to Laundry Cottage. The existing access is proposed to be removed, with a new access and parking area to serve the existing and proposed dwellings to be constructed to the north of that existing. The application site lies within Woolstone Conservation Area, and the adjacent property Beechtree Cottage is a Grade II Listed Building. It is also noted that two properties to the north west are also listed.
- 1.2 Extracts from the application plans are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The applications come to Committee due to the Parish Meeting objecting, the number of objection letters received, and also at the request of Councillor Yvonne Constance. This application was withdrawn from the Committee agenda of 15th September to allow the assessment of the Conservation Area Consent application.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 WLS/5900/1 - Erection of a detached garage and conservatory. Permitted in December 1986.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy DC1 requires development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings. Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking.
- 3.2 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 3.3 Policy H13 allows for housing outside of the built up areas of the towns and villages listed in policies H10-H12 if it is infilling of no more than one or two small new houses within the existing built up area of a settlement, or if it is essential to meet the needs of an agricultural, equestrian or other rural enterprise.
- 3.4 Policy HE1 seeks to ensure proposals would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Policy HE4 resists proposals that would not respect the setting of a listed building, in terms of the siting, scale, design, form, finishes and materials of the proposal.
- 3.5 PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment lays out the Government's guidance for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. These include matters of economic prosperity, visual impact, building alterations, and impact on the character or appearance of conservation areas.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Woolstone Parish Meeting objects “as the house is too large for the site, there is no mains drainage, Beechtree Cottage has already flooded this year, and the lane is unable to take more cars.”
- 4.2 County Engineer – “The proposed development will involve a new access north of the current stone garage. Whilst visibility at this location isn’t ideal, given the narrow width of the lane and the slow vehicle speeds, the Highway Authority has no objection. The proposed parking and turning facilities are considered sufficient. The new residential unit is in an unsustainable location, however since it is proposed within an already built up rural village, the Highway Authority do not consider this reason for refusal.”
- 4.3 Conservation Officer – “Further to the amended plans received which have increased the pitch of the roof and placed the dormers fully within the roof, I do not consider the proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings, and would preserve the character and appearance of the Woolstone Conservation Area; therefore I raise no objection to the proposed dwelling or to the loss of the garage.”
- 4.4 Principal Drainage Engineer – “Planning consent could be made conditional on the provision and approval of drainage details after the consent. The applicant should be asked to provide information about, and an assessment demonstrating that, the proposed method of foul sewerage will not create contamination of ground water sources or resources or any land. The assessment should include reasons why other methods of Foul Drainage have been rejected. The applicant must also obtain the approval of the Environment Agency.” Having further consulted the Drainage Engineer and highlighted the concerns of residents, he has stated that as the proposed method of foul sewerage is by a septic tank there will be no issues of contamination, and any issues relating to drainage, including surface water run off, can be dealt with by the submission and approval of acceptable methods of drainage. Further drainage details have been submitted by the applicant’s agent; however the Principal Drainage Engineer still considers a drainage condition necessary.
- 4.5 10 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents. Their comments can be summarised as follows:
- The scale and footprint of the proposal is too large, and out of keeping with the character of the area
 - Being a tall structure and set on elevated ground above the road, this will emphasise feelings of intrusion and domination
 - The proposal would be harmful to the Conservation Area
 - The proposal would set a precedent for infilling within the village
 - The house would be sited amongst older cottages; Beechtree Cottage is Grade II listed
 - The proposal would be sited higher than, overlook and dominate Beechtree Cottage
 - Due to its height, orientation and position the proposal would severely overlook the south facing garden of The Old School
 - The proposed new access would completely alter the character of this part of the village
 - Any development within the Conservation Area should only be considered if there is a strong local need or real local benefit to the community
 - The properties would be left with sub-standard gardens
 - Trees would need to be removed as they would be too near the house
 - There are highway safety concerns regarding pedestrians using the lane, the width

- of the lane, additional traffic movements and parking
- There is no mains drainage in the village
 - Beechtree Cottage is prone to flooding. To lay tarmac and construct a building would increase the risk of flooding
 - Church Lane has water permanently running on its surface, and the roads have been damaged by underlying drainage problems. To build another dwelling would add to this fundamental problem

3 letters of concern/comment have also been received. These can be summarised as follows:

- Concerns as to where the soak away pipes from the septic tank will be
- There is constant evidence of a drainage problem on Church Lane
- Concerns relating to potential damage during the construction phase
- The existing leylandii hedge blocks views and sunlight from 'Coopers'. Would it be possible to measure it and a smaller variety put in its place?

A further letter of objection and comment has been received from DPDS Consulting which is stated as being on behalf of 34 local residents. The content of this letter can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed parking and manoeuvring area would be a more extensive and exposed area closer to Beechtree Cottage, and would be harmful to the setting of the listed building
- It is difficult to accommodate open car park areas within the curtilage of a listed building without harming its setting
- A better solution would be to provide a garage or car port as a complementary building with traditional materials
- The new access would require the removal of a section of mature hedge and it would be in a more prominent location and of a greater extent than the existing access
- The application needs to consider the impact on the nearby listed buildings Wall Cottage and Elm Cottage
- A brief assessment of the character of the Conservation Area and how the proposal may affect it should be set out
- This part of the Conservation Area is characterised by mature landscaping, typically with strong front boundary hedgerows, and a variation of curtilage sizes, but with a generally low density
- The proposed hardsurfacing and changes to the hedgerow are not considered to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area
- A Heritage Statement should be submitted to accompany the application (this is not a statutory requirement)
- The application needs to consider the impact of the loss of the garage on the Conservation Area
- Listed building consent is not required for the demolition of the garage, but Conservation Area Consent is required

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The key issues to be considered are: the principle of residential development, the impact of the proposal on the Woolstone Conservation Area and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, the amenities of future occupiers and those of surrounding residents, and highway and drainage matters. Furthermore, the Conservation Area Consent application needs to assess the impact of the loss of the garage on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 5.2 The application site is considered to be within the built up area of Woolstone where in accordance with Local Plan Policy H13 new houses can be permitted as infilling providing they are no more than one or two small dwellings. The proposed dwelling is a three bedroom one and a half storey dwelling of modest proportions. The dwelling is considered to be of an attractive design with a narrow span, steep pitch and small dormer windows within the roofslope which reflects the design and character of other properties within the Woolstone Conservation Area. Furthermore its juxtaposition with the lane is also considered to reflect the general siting of buildings within the Woolstone Conservation Area. It is noted that the application site is at a higher level compared to Beechtree Cottage and the land to the north. However as the proposed dwelling is a considerable distance from Beechtree Cottage (24 metres) and is set against the backdrop of Laundry Cottage which is sited higher and has its widest elevation facing the application site, it is not considered that the proposal would be overly prominent within its setting. The proposal, therefore, would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Furthermore the dwelling would be set back nearly 10 metres from the front boundary, and there is substantial hedging and vegetative screening which forms the front boundary treatment and is to be retained.
- 5.3 The existing access is proposed to be closed and planted and this would be replaced with a new access to the north. The new access would be narrower than that existing, and a landscaping and hardsurfacing scheme could help to enhance the Conservation Area when compared to the existing access and hardsurfacing area. It is appreciated that the new parking and turning area would be closer to Beechtree Cottage (a minimum of 6.5 metres); however the provision of a landscaping and hardsurfacing scheme would enable the development to preserve the setting of the listed building. The dwelling itself would be some 24 metres from Beechtree Cottage. By reason of this distance and the design and scale of the dwelling it is not considered to have a harmful impact on the setting of Beechtree Cottage. Due to the distance of the proposed dwelling to the front boundary and the front boundary vegetation, it is not considered that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of the listed buildings Wall Cottage and Elm Cottage, which are sited on the opposite side of the road to the north east, a minimum of 28 metres away.
- 5.4 As stated above the proposed dwelling would be some 24 metres from Beechtree Cottage, and is therefore not considered to have a harmful impact on the amenities of any future occupiers of this dwelling. The proposal would be sited 4 metres from the common boundary with Laundry Cottage, which itself is sited a further 1.5 metres from the boundary. It is noted that there are 3 small first floor windows within the facing elevation of Laundry Cottage; however these serve a hallway. In any event, given the distance between the properties, the narrow span of the proposal and the fact that there are no side facing windows proposed, it is not considered that the proposed dwelling would have a harmful impact on the amenities of the occupiers of Laundry Cottage. Whilst the proposal may be seen from other properties in the vicinity, it is not considered to have a harmful impact on the amenities of the occupiers of these properties
- 5.5 Concerns have been raised by neighbouring occupiers regarding highway issues. In this regard the County Engineer has raised no objection to the proposed dwelling or the new access. The proposed access would replace an existing access which would be closed. Furthermore, the County Engineer has commented that given the narrow width of the lane, vehicle movements are likely to be slow; therefore no objections are

raised on highway safety grounds.

5.6 A number of concerns have been raised by neighbouring residents regarding flooding and drainage. It should be noted that the application site is not within a flood zone, and the Principal Drainage Engineer is of the opinion that any concerns could be dealt with by the provision of an appropriate drainage and surface water run off scheme secured by condition.

5.7 With regard to the demolition of the existing garage which requires Conservation Area Consent Officers are of the opinion that the existing garage is of no particular architectural merit. It is not considered that its design or materials are a good reflection of the Conservation Area, and it is therefore considered that its demolition would be an improvement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions.*

1. *TL1 Time Limit – Full Application*

2. *MC1 Submission of all external materials (including doors and fenestration, and hardsurfacing of the driveway/parking/turning area)*

3. *No windows in the first floor north and south elevations*

4. *RE7 Submission of details of internal and external boundary treatments*

5. *RE8 Submission of drainage details (surface water and foul sewerage)*

6. *LS3 Landscaping scheme (incorporating existing trees)*

7. *HY8 Closure of existing access*

8. *HY16 Parking, turning and manoeuvring in accordance with plan, and retained as such thereafter*

6.2 *It is recommended that Conservation Area Consent be granted, subject to the following conditions.*

1. *TL4 Time Limit – Conservation Area Consent*