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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA MRTPI

**Decision by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 15 October 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/20/3251102**

**Oakridge Farm, Wood Lane, Kidmore End, Reading RG4 9BL**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Alistair Hartrup against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
  - The application Ref P19/S4630/HH, dated 17 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2020.
  - The development proposed is single storey extension to existing garage/outbuilding.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension to existing garage/outbuilding at Oakridge Farm, Wood Lane, Kidmore End, Reading, RG4 9BL in accordance with the terms of application Ref P19/S4630/HH, dated 17 December 2019 and subject to the conditions set out below:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 3408/270, 3408/271 Rev A and 3408/272 Rev A.
  - 3) Notwithstanding the details that have been submitted, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing garage/outbuilding.
  - 4) Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include the retention of the front boundary hedge shown on approved drawing 3408/270. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first use of the development, and any trees or plants, including the retained front boundary hedge, which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.
  - 5) Before the development is commenced details of how the front boundary hedge shown on approved drawing 3408/270 will be protected throughout the construction of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to

and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The agreed details shall be implemented prior to any works being carried out and shall be retained throughout the duration of the construction of the development hereby approved.

- 6) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Oakridge Farm, Wood Lane, Kidmore End, Reading, RG4 9BL.

### **Appeal Procedure**

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### **Application for Costs**

3. An application for costs was made by Mr Alistair Hartrup against South Oxfordshire District Council. That application is the subject of a separate decision.

### **Procedural Matters**

4. Comments from a third party to the Council suggests that works have commenced on the proposal with foundations poured and courses of block work erected. I observed such works at my visit and have sought confirmation from both parties as to whether these are in respect of the appeal proposal. The Council states that it is "not sure of the extent to which the refused permission has been implemented compared with the approved schemes at the site". The appellant has responded indicating that the refused application was made retrospectively, although I note that in the application form they state that works have not started. Moreover, both parties have suggested the standard time condition in the event that the appeal is allowed, indicating that the proposed development has not commenced. Given the lack of clarity surrounding this matter, I have assessed the proposal in respect of the drawings that were submitted to the Council and on the basis that works have not commenced.

### **Main Issue**

5. The main issue in this matter is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider area, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB).

### **Reasons for the Recommendation**

6. The appeal site comprises a large detached property set within substantial grounds on Wood Lane occupying a rural location within the CAONB. The appeal building is a detached double garage/outbuilding located in the south east corner of the site to the front of the main dwelling.
7. The proposal would extend the garage/outbuilding in the form of a single storey gable ended extension towards the boundary with No 2 Kiln Cottages. Although the resultant building would be sizeable, the proposed extension itself would be single storey in height and be set in from the side elevations and, as a result, would not dominate the host building. Moreover, given the separation between the appeal building and the main dwelling, the extended

garage/outbuilding would appear as an ancillary structure and would not compete visually with the main dwelling, thus ensuring that an acceptable visual relationship would remain.

8. The drawings and application form indicate that the proposed elevations would be finished in facing brick work and cladding to match the existing. However, the appeal building is finished in render and I consider that matching materials are required to ensure that the proposal is sympathetic to the host building and its surroundings. Subject to this requirement, which could be secured by condition, the external appearance of the proposal would be acceptable.
9. Notwithstanding the above, the appeal building is located close to the front boundary of the site and is therefore in a prominent location within the streetscene. However, the presence of the existing front boundary hedge helps to screen the appeal building, reducing its prominence and preserving the rural character of the area. The retention of this hedge is therefore vital in ensuring that the proposal does not appear unduly prominent in the streetscene. The appellant has suggested submitting a landscaping scheme to help screen the proposal. Such a scheme could include the retention of the front boundary hedge and I consider that this would help to preserve the rural character of the area and successfully assimilate the proposal into its surroundings. Subject to this requirement, which could be secured by condition, the proposal would have no harmful effects on the character and appearance of the area.
10. The proposal introduces a number of domestic appearing features into the garage/outbuilding, including roof lights, windows and doors. However, I do not consider that these features have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building or the wider area. Further, given that the largest section of the building would remain clearly for the garaging of vehicles, it would retain an appropriate degree of its functional and ancillary appearance. Moreover, the use of the proposal could be controlled by way of a suitably worded planning condition.
11. Paragraph 172 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. The proposal is for an extension to an existing building, which I consider would be appropriate in both scale and design. There are other buildings in this location, including the large host dwelling and the neighbouring dwellings at Kiln Cottages and their outbuildings. Within this context, the proposal would not appear incongruous and would have no harmful effects on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, which would be conserved.
12. I conclude that the proposal would have no harmful effects on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the wider area, including the AONB. It would comply with Policies C4, D1, G2, G4 and H13 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Adopted January 2006. These policies collectively seek, among other things, to ensure that development incorporates good design, respects local character and protects the countryside. The proposal also complies with Policies CS1, CSEN1 and CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy December 2012 Part of the Local Plan, which among other things, seek to protect the district's distinct landscape character and ensure that development responds positively to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings. It would also comply with Section 6 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, which provides guidance for householder extensions and

outbuildings, as well as the design objectives at Section 12 of the Framework and those relating to conserving AONBs at Section 15.

### **Other Matters**

13. The proposal would result in the garage/outbuilding being extended closer to the boundary with No 2 Kiln Cottages. Given the relationship between the two buildings, I do not consider that the proposal would cause harm to the living conditions of the occupants of that dwelling. In reaching this conclusion, I have had regard to the comments from the occupants of No 2 Kiln Cottages that the drawings submitted depict their property inaccurately. However, I have assessed the proposal at my visit and consider the relationship between the two buildings would be acceptable. I also note that the Council did not raise any issues regarding the accuracy of the plans that were submitted.
14. There has been concern expressed that previous planning permissions implemented at the site required planting that has not been undertaken. A query has also been raised as to whether the current proposal is liable for Community Infrastructure Levy contributions. These are matters for the Council to address and do not affect my assessment of the current appeal proposal.

### **Conditions and Recommendation**

15. The parties have suggested a number of conditions that they would wish to see imposed in the event that the appeal is allowed.
16. The standard plans and commencement conditions will be attached for certainty. In the interests of the character and appearance of the appeal building and the area, I shall attach conditions requiring external materials to match the existing building, a landscaping scheme and for details of how the existing boundary hedge is to be protected through the construction period. A condition is also necessary to ensure that the proposal is used ancillary to the residential use of the host property. In imposing these conditions, I have had regard to the suggested conditions of both parties and where necessary have altered them so that they meet the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.
17. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed with the suggested conditions.

*Scott Britnell*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed with the suggested conditions.

*Andrew Owen*

INSPECTOR