

| Name of Applicant Type of Certificate | Proposal | Map/Plan Policy | Plan Ref. Expiry Date |
|--|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Mrs. A. Gibbs 'A' | Two storey extension - The Stables, Banks Green, Upper Bentley, B97 5SU | GB | 10/0957-DK |

Councillor P. J. Whittaker has requested that this application be considered by the Committee, rather than being determined under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

Consultations

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| WH | Consulted 04.11.2010. No response to date. |
| Bentley Pauncefoot PC | Consulted 04.11.2010. Response received 18.11.2010 - no objection. |
| CO | Consulted 15.11.2010. Response received 18.11.2010. I agree that the proposal will negatively affect the character of the farm group when seen from the main road, given the prominence of the stables. This could be mitigated by inserting a new door opening in the proposed extension, detailed to match the existing door under a segmental brick arch. Alternatively, the extension could be reduced to a single storey height to match the scale and detailing of the existing stable blocks (this would of course involve removal of the carer's flat and kitchenette, which may not be practical in terms of the care requirements needed). Generally speaking, any proposal should be careful to match existing such as the dentilled brick eaves detail, guttering type, roof tiles, brick type, etc. |
| Publicity | Site notice posted 10.11.2010; expires 25.11.2010. 1 letter sent 04.11.2010; expires 01.12.2010. No responses received. |

The site and its surroundings

The application site comprises a converted vernacular building which almost certainly served Banks Green Farm which adjoins to the east. There is an enclosed garden to the rear with a picket fence. There are modern agricultural buildings in proximity and one obscure glazed window overlooks the proposed site from Banks Green Farm.

Proposal

The proposal is for a two storey side extension of the dwelling.

Relevant Policies

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| WMRSS | QE3 |
| WCSP | CTC.1, CTC.19 |
| BDLP | C27C, DS13, TR11 |
| Others | SPG4, PPG2 |

Relevant Planning History

- B/1994/0333 Conversion of redundant stable building into dwelling. Granted 01.10.1994.
- 10/0566 Construction of a single storey disabled bedroom with direct access to adjoining bathroom and remedial works to existing exterior doorways. Refused 24.08.2010.

Assessment

Members should note the planning history of this site. Planning permission was refused in B/2010/0566 for a single storey rear extension of the building because of the negative impact of the proposal on the simple vernacular character of the dwelling. Members should note the personal circumstances of the applicant and there is a letter in support of the application from Physical Disability Team at Worcestershire County Council.

I consider the main issues in the determination of this application are

- (i) whether it reflects the scale and character of the converted rural building and whether the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- (ii) impact on residential amenity
- (iii) the personal circumstances of the applicant

In this respect, the most relevant policies are policies DS2 and C27C of the BDLP and the guidance of SPG1 and SPG4.

Design

Policy C27C states that proposals for extensions to converted rural buildings will be assessed against the impact of the scheme on the character of the building as it existed immediately prior to the conversion rather than the use to which it has been converted. Paragraph 3.7 of SPG4 advises that extensions which would alter the simple utilitarian character of a vernacular rural building should not be permitted.

In terms of the planning history of the proposal, I note that the building was approved for conversion to residential use in 1994 (Ref: B/1994/0333). This consent removed the permitted development rights for both the erection of outbuildings and the extension/alteration of the building. I consider that the conversion has retained the traditional character of the original since 1994. This is especially true of the elevations to the front and sides, but there is evidence of infilling of walls on the east elevation to the rear. The first floor (byre type structure) is still present. The overall character of the traditional building is still apparent.

I consider that the original buildings were retained in the conversion and this must be considered as the original form of the settlement. The previous application was for the erection of an extension on the north end of the building (closest to Banks Green farmhouse) which the original building would have served. The current proposal is a two storey extension to the SW end adjoining the existing two storey byre structure. The projection from the existing structure will be 4.1m with a height of 5.2. It will accommodate an additional lounge and carers bedroom.

I do not consider that there has been significant effort made in the extension to reflect the original vernacular character of the dwelling notwithstanding the brickwork and matching windows described in the drawings. Members should note the views of the Conservation Officer and I concur that the addition would have a negative impact on the original design of the structure. This is caused by the change in the proportions of the two storey element of the building which does not reflect the vernacular character of the building. The proposal would also be located in a prominent position. The Design and Access Statement does not address these issues. The applicant has been advised to make amendments to the scheme such as an additional entrance door in the extension and a reduction to one storey.

On balance, I do not consider that the proposal accords with policy C27C or the guidance of SPG4.

Green Belt issues

I consider that the proposal, as an extension of a converted rural building (where permitted development has been removed) is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition harmful. The proposal would result in a loss of openness at the site compared with the present situation. I note that the extension would occupy an existing informal access to the farm and it would be necessary for functional reasons to reinstate this resulting in additional inappropriate development. The extension does not fall into any of the categories of development in the Green Belt which would be considered appropriate. No very special circumstances have been put forward which would outweigh the harm caused.

Residential amenity

Although there are side windows on Banks Green Farm, the proposed extension will be to the opposite side of the converted rural building and I do not consider that there would be any loss of residential amenity.

Personal Circumstances

The application is accompanied by a letter from the Physical Disability Team at Worcestershire County Council and there is also supplementary information in the Design and Access Statement. The occupier of the property is suffering from a disability which means that he has become permanently wheelchair dependent. Social Services consider that there are serious issues in terms of access to the property which prevent the occupier from returning home from hospital. The house needs to be adapted to enable mobility and access for the occupier. I consider that there are personal circumstances in respect of this application and Members need to consider these.

In weighing up the arguments, it must be noted that whilst personal circumstances can be material considerations, it is only exceptionally that they would outweigh general planning considerations. This is outlined in '*The Planning System: General Principles*' which accompanies PPS1. The development will be permanent and will remain long after the personal circumstances have ceased to be material. These circumstances have been considered in the application. However, the letter from WCC Social Services makes no

reference to the need for a dedicated facility for a carer and I consider that there are options to adapt the building as it is or consider a smaller scale of extension.

Conclusion

Whilst I am sympathetic to the personal circumstances of the case, the proposal would harm the simple character of the dwelling and the impact will remain permanently. Overall, I do not consider that the proposal accords with policy C27C and is not appropriate for the settlement. The proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

RECOMMENDATION that planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The scale and design of the proposal would not respect the form and architectural character of the converted rural building. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy CTC21 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, policies DS2, C27C, DS13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, and the guidance of SPG4 (Converted Rural Buildings).
2. The proposed extension would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been put forward to justify it. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with policies D38 and D39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, policy DS2 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the advice of PPG2.