

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	8 Week Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(1)	19/01035/HOUSE Leckhampstead Parish Council	6 th June 2019 ¹	Demolition of porch and single storey extensions, new single storey extension and other alterations. Gilberts, Hill Green, Leckhampstead Mrs V Von Celsing
¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 5 th July 2019			

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=19/01035/HOUSE>

Recommendation Summary: To **DELEGATE** to the Head of Development and Planning to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION**

Ward Member: Councillor Clive Hooker

Reason for Committee Determination: Called in by Councillor Hooker due to concerns with Conservation Officer's comments with regards to subservience and design.

Committee Site Visit: 27th June 2019

Contact Officer Details

Name: Gemma Kirk
Job Title: Planning Officer
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a single storey rear extension that will be positioned over the existing rear projection that will be demolished as part of this proposal. The rear extension is comprised of a hipped gable natural slate roof and a zinc flat roof.
- 1.2 The proposal includes alterations to the front elevation by removing the existing porch and replacing with a lead flat roofed canopy. The garage doors will be removed and the slate roof over the garage will be replaced with a thatched roof. The thatch on the main building is proposed to be renewed and windows to be replaced with metal framed windows.
- 1.3 The Design and Access Statement refers to the addition of a swimming pool in the rear garden. The swimming pool appears to be fall within permitted development but in any event does not form part of this application and so cannot be taken into consideration.
- 1.4 Gilberts is located in Hill Green; a conservation area formed of a small number of modest sized dwellings. A number of the dwellings in the conservation area are listed, however Gilberts is a non-designated heritage asset. Gilberts is the first visible dwelling in the conservation area when approaching from the south. The application site is located within the open countryside and forms part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB).
- 1.5 Please note Supporting Photographs have been submitted by the agent on 18.06.2019; these can be viewed on the Council's website using the link above.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 18/02913/HOUSE: Demolition of porch and single storey extensions, new two storey extension and single storey link and other alterations. Withdrawn. 27.12.2018. The applicant was advised this application would be refused for the following reasons:
 - The impact on a non-designated heritage asset: the proposal was considered to dominate the existing building due to the scale, mass and bulk failing to reflect the existing cottage.
 - The impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Yew Tree Cottage: the proposed extension would obstruct views to the listed building. The views contributed positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
 - The impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area: the extension failed to respect the prevailing character of the conservation area.
 - Principle of development: the extension would not be subservient to the original dwelling and therefore contrary to Policy C6 of the HSA DPD.
- 2.2 140082: Demolition of existing brick porch and erect new porch of similar construction. Refused. 15.01.1992.
- 2.3 140083: Demolition of porch. Approved. 15.01.1992.

3. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- 3.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Given the nature and scale of this householder development, it is not considered to fall within the description of any development listed in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, EIA screening is not required.
- 3.2 Publicity: Site notices displayed on 13th May 2019 at the front of the application site; the deadline for representations expired on 4th June 2019.
- 3.3 CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floorspace (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres). Based on the CIL PAAIR form, it appears that the development will not be CIL liable. However, CIL liability will be formally confirmed by CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following the grant of any permission.
- 3.4 Common Land: The red line has been amended as part of this application to ensure that the Common Land adjacent to the site is not included as part of the proposal. The application site is positioned adjacent to registered Common Land.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultations

Parish Council: No objections.

Highways Authority: No comments.

Conservation Officer: Whilst I appreciate that the applicant has reduced the height of the proposed extension in an attempt to make it subservient to the main building, I do not feel that the resulting built form respects the character of the building.

There is an awkward relationship between the proposed and existing roof form, which results in the creation of two distinct built forms. This is emphasised where the hipped gable end of the proposal meets the thatched roof of the original cottage. The proposal does not read as a natural extension to this historic cottage but rather as an, awkward, incongruous addition. Furthermore, as a result of its excessive length (approx. 12.5m) it fails to read as a subservient addition.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy C 6 which seeks to ensure that the scale of the enlargement is subservient to the original dwelling and is designed to be in character with the existing dwelling; and that it has no adverse impact on the historic interest of the building.

At the site meeting with the architect I recommended that a more appropriate addition would be a single storey extension that continued the same ridge and eaves line as the existing rear extension. Such an addition (provided it was appropriate in length) would appear as a natural extension to the building, respecting its existing character, scale and form.

Tree Officer: The site is located within the Conservation Area, there are several trees in the garden which are unlikely to be affected by the development proposal, however there is a significant hedge to the rear of the property which is worthy of protection. The use of a condition protection it using the BS5837 guidance seems onerous, however the use of an informative in this case seems more appropriate.

Recommendations: If you are minded to grant consent I would have no objections subject to the following informative being attached to any planning consent: Tree protection precautions informative note.

Land Drainage Engineer: No comments received at time of writing the report.

North Wessex Downs Management: No comments received at time of writing the report.

4.2 Public representations

Original consultation: Total: 2 Support: 2

Summary of support

- The proposed extension will be unseen in the context of the village and the public footpath.
- The proposed extension will enhance the existing property.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS):
Policies- ADPP1: Spatial Strategy, ADPP5: North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, CS13: Transport, CS14: Design Principles, CS18: Green Infrastructure, CS19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character

5.2 Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD):
Policies- C1: Location of New Housing in the Countryside, C3: Design of Housing in the Countryside, C6: Extension of Existing Dwellings within the Countryside, P1: Residential Parking for New Development

5.3 Material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019
- House Extensions SPG (2004)
- Quality Design SPD (2006)

6. APPRAISAL

The main considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of development
- The impact on the character of the area
- The impact on neighbouring amenity
- The impact on highway safety

6.1 Principle of development

6.1.1 The application site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary within the district and therefore is regarded as 'open countryside' under both Policy ADPP1 of the Core Strategy and C1 of the HSA DPD. These policies state that only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed.

6.1.2 In the context of this general policy of restraint in the countryside, Policy C6 of the HSA DPD gives presumption in favour of proposals for the extension of existing permanent dwellings. An extension or alteration will be permitted providing that:

- (i) The scale of the enlargement is subservient to the original dwelling and is designed to be in character with the existing dwelling; and
- (ii) It has no adverse impact on: the setting, the space occupied within the plot boundary, on local rural character, the historic interest of the building and its setting within the wider landscape; and
- (iii) The use of materials is appropriate within the local architectural context; and
- (iv) There is no significant harm on the living conditions currently enjoyed by residents of neighbouring properties.

6.1.3 The proposal will be assessed against the criteria under the below headings.

6.2 The impact on the character of the area

6.2.1 Gilberts is located at the south entrance to Hill Green Conservation Area. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. One of the key aims of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy is the conservation, protection and enhancement of the historic environment and states that particular regard will be given to the sensitivity of the area to change and ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

6.2.2 The Hill Green Conservation Area is situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). Through the NPPF, the Government advises that greater weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the

landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Policy ADPP5 of the Core Strategy reiterates this and seeks development that will respect and respond to the historic environment of the NWD AONB.

- 6.2.3 Although not statutorily listed, Gilberts is of historic interest and included within the Historic Environment Record as an unlisted 18th century cottage with thatched roof. It is therefore considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, as defined by the NPPF. The key factors which contribute to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset are: the extent of historic fabric which remains, the use of vernacular materials, the extent to which the cottage illustrates the smallholder tradition of the area, the relatively modest form of the building and its prominent position at the south entrance into the conservation area. Gilberts makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hill Green Conservation Area. It is therefore sensitive to inappropriate extension.
- 6.2.4 The first criteria for Policy C6 of the HSA DPD requires extensions to existing houses to be subservient to the original dwelling and designed to be in character with the existing dwelling. The House Extensions SPG advises that extensions should generally be subservient to the original building, taking into consideration the overall height and bulk, the materials, roof shape and size and proportion of the openings. The Quality Design SPD states that the physical bulk of a development should be considered in terms of length, width, height and footprint.
- 6.2.5 The proposed single storey extension at the rear is designed with a hipped gable slate roof and zinc flat roof. The extension will extend from the rear elevation by approximately 11.9 metres. The Conservation Officer advises that the rear extension does not respect the character of the existing building. The design of the roof form creates two distinctive built forms emphasised by where the hipped gable of the extension meets the thatched roof of the original cottage; this creates an awkward relationship which appears incongruous. The Conservation Officer considers the length of the extension is excessive and fails to be subservient to Gilberts. Whilst it is acknowledged that letters of support have been received for this proposal the scale, mass and bulk of this extension does not respect the modest sized cottage.
- 6.2.6 It is acknowledged that the other proposed alterations, including the works to the front elevation, would not harm the character and appearance of Gilberts. However, to ensure the proposal respects the character of the dwelling a condition for a schedule of materials is considered necessary.
- 6.2.7 The identified harm that the extension will have on the character and appearance of Gilberts will also impact upon the Hill Green Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is characterised by modest sized dwellings located in relatively large plots. The large extension would fail to respect this prevailing character. In addition the application site is positioned, in a prominent location in the conservation area street scene, at the south entrance. Whilst public views of the extension would be limited due to vegetation it is considered that the extension would still have a negative impact on the views of the conservation area. It is therefore considered that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 6.2.8 This proposal follows application 18/02913/HOUSE; this was for a two storey extension which was withdrawn. This previous proposal was considered to have a harmful impact on character and appearance of Gilberts and the conservation area due to its scale, mass and bulk. It is acknowledged that this proposal has attempted to address these concerns however it is considered the scheme does not overcome the impact on the character of the existing building. The agent was advised that a proposed extension which continued the same ridge and eaves line as the existing rear extension would be more appropriate.
- 6.2.9 The Tree Officer provided comments on the landscaping at Gilberts. It was considered that the several trees on the application site will be unlikely to be affected by the proposal. It is considered a Tree Protection Precaution informative will be sufficient to protect the significant hedge worthy of protection at the application site.
- 6.2.10 The extension at the rear will have an adverse impact on both the character and appearance of Gilberts and Hill Green Conservation Area. As a result the proposal does not comply with criteria (i) and (ii) of Policy C6 of the HSA DPD; the principle of the development is therefore not acceptable. The proposal is contrary to Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy, Policies C3 and C6 of the HSA DPD, the NPPF, the Council's adopted House Extensions SPG and its adopted Quality Design SPD.
- 6.2.11 According to the NPPF, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (in this case, the conservation area), great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Where a proposal leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. As the extension of a reasonably-sized existing dwelling, there are not considered to be any material *public* benefits of the extension to outweigh the harm to the conservation area.
- 6.2.12 According to the NPPF, the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset (in this case, Gilberts itself) should be taken into account in the determination of the application. In weighing applications that directly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The proposal would substantially alter the character and appearance of the existing property and thereby undermine its significance. Overall, the policies of the NPPF direct the decision maker to place great weight on the harm identified to the historic environment.

6.3 The impact on neighbouring amenity

- 6.3.1 Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy states that new development must make a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire. The NPPF also seeks to protect the amenity of neighbouring land users.

- 6.3.2 Dwellings in Hill Green are predominately located in relatively large plots. As the neighbouring dwelling Yew Tree Cottage is approximately 21 metres from the communal boundary shared between Yew Tree Cottage and Gilberts. This separation distance mitigates the impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of overbearing impact, daylight/sunlight received and privacy.
- 6.3.3 It is recommended that if this application is to be approved, a condition for hours of work is added to protect the neighbours whilst construction takes place.

6.4 The impact on highway safety

- 6.4.1 The NPPF states that decisions should take into account whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Policy P1 of the HSA DPD sets out residential car parking levels for the district.
- 6.4.2 The proposal will not alter the existing vehicular access. The Proposed Ground Floor Plan demonstrates that 3 car parking spaces can be achieved at Gilberts. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy P1 of the HSA DPD.
- 6.4.3 The Highways Officer raised no objections to the proposal.

7. RESPONSE TO LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION

- 7.1 Letters of representation are noted and the matters raised have been addressed in the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Having taken into account all of the relevant policy considerations and other material considerations referred to above, it is considered that the proposal is unacceptable due to the impact on the character and appearance of Gilberts and the impact on the character and appearance of the Hill Green Conservation Area.
- 8.2 The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy, Policies C3 and C6 of the HSA DPD, the NPPF, the Council's adopted House Extensions SPG and its adopted Quality Design SPD.

9. FULL RECOMMENDATION

To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions.

1. Impact on the character and appearance of Gilberts

Gilberts is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. According to the NPPF, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy states that particular regard will be given to the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. Policy CS14 of the Core

Strategy states that new development must demonstrate high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy C6 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD requires an extension to an existing dwelling within the countryside to be subservient to the original dwelling and in character with the existing dwelling.

The key factors that contribute to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset are the extent of historic fabric which remains, the use of vernacular materials, the extent to which the cottage illustrates the smallholder tradition the area, the relatively modest form of the building and its prominent position at the south entrance into the conservation area. Gilberts makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hill Green Conservation Area.

The rear extension is designed with a hipped gable slate roof and zinc flat roof. The extension will extend from the rear elevation by approximately 11.9 metres. The design of the roof form creates two distinctive built forms emphasised by where the hipped gable of the extension meets the thatched roof of the original cottage; this creates an awkward relationship which appears incongruous. The length of the extension is excessive and fails to be subservient to Gilberts. The scale, mass and bulk of this extension does not respect the modest sized cottage. The proposal therefore fails to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.

The application is therefore contrary to the NPPF (February 2019), Policies C3 and C6 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026, Policies ADPP5, CS14, CS19 of the Core Strategy 2006-2026, the North Wessex Downs Management Plan (2014-19), the Council's adopted House Extensions SPG (2004) and its adopted Quality Design SPD (2006).

2. Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

Gilberts is located in Hill Green Conservation Area and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Policy CS19 state that particular regard shall be given to given to the sensitivity of the area to change and ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character. Policy ADPP5 of the Core Strategy seeks development that will respond to the historic environment of the AONB.

Hill Green Conservation Area is characterised by modest sized dwellings located in relatively large plots. The application site is located in a prominent location at the south entrance to the Hill Green Conservation Area. Gilberts makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The large extension would fail to respect this prevailing character. There is also an impact on the conservation area street scene. Whilst public views of the extension would be limited due to vegetation it is still considered that the extension would have a negative impact on the views of the conservation area. It is therefore considered that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The application is therefore contrary to the NPPF (February 2019), Policies C3 and C6 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026, Policies ADPP5, CS14, CS19 of the Core Strategy 2006-2026, the North Wessex Downs Management Plan (2014-19), the Council's adopted House Extensions SPG (2004) and its adopted Quality Design SPD (2006).

INFORMATIVES

1. Refuse: Objections/ support received

In attempting to determine the application in a way that can foster the delivery of sustainable development, the local planning authority has approached this decision in a positive way having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to try to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has also been unable to find an acceptable solution to the problems with the development so that the development can be said to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

DC