

Item (1)	
Application:	20/01083/FUL
Site Address:	Quill Cottage, Craven Road, Inkpen
Proposal:	Replacement dwelling
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs Jones
Report to be considered by:	District Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 th Febuary 2021

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=20/01083/FUL>

Purpose of Report: For the District Planning Committee to determine the planning application.

Recommended Action: The Western Area Planning Committee resolved that the application be approved.

Reason for decision to be taken: The application is contrary to the statutory development plan.

Key background documentation: Western Area Planning Committee Agenda Report of 14th October 2020, the update report, and the minutes of that meeting, plus officer recommended conditions should the application be approved.

Key aims N/A

Portfolio Member Details	
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Contact Officer Details	
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Implications

Policy: The proposal conflicts with policies ADPP1 and ADPP5, of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and policies CS1 and CS7 of the Housing Site Allocations.

Financial: Should the application be approved and implemented, it will be liable to a CIL charge.

Personnel: N/A

Legal/Procurement: N/A

Property:	N/A
Risk Management:	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment:	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 22 July 2020, the Western Area Planning Committee (WAPC) considered the agenda and update reports for this application, which seeks full planning permission for the replacement of a single storey bungalow with a two storey dwelling house. The site is located outside of a policy defined settlement boundary, it is therefore located within the open countryside. The proposed development site is also within the highly sensitive location of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). The red line of the proposal scheme runs adjacent to public right of way INKP/16/1 and is directly opposite public right of way INKP/15/1. Policy C7 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) allows for the replacement of existing permanent dwellings in to the open countryside provided that the replacement dwelling is proportionate to the existing dwelling. The officer recommendation is to refuse planning permission on the grounds that, the principle of development is unacceptable as the proposed dwelling is not proportionate to that of the existing dwelling on site, it would be clearly contrary to adopted policy to protect the wider countryside in the District and it would have a harmful visual impact on the NWD AONB. During the meeting of the WAPC on 22 July 2020 the Committee Members raised concerns regarding discrepancies between the measurements submitted by the agent and those provided by the case officer, and the determination of the application was deferred in order to allow officers additional time to review the submitted drawings and seek additional information from the agent in respect of the measurements stated on the drawings.
- 1.2 Following officers having checked the scale on the submitted drawings and noted that a number of the dimension measurements included on them were incorrect, but that the plans could be measured correctly using electronic scale tools, the application was taken back to Committee with an updated report on 14 October 2020. However, the WAPC voted to approve the proposal scheme as the majority of Members of the Committee were of the view that the proposed dwelling was not disproportionate to the existing bungalow on the site and that the existing bungalow was an eyesore. Members also remarked that they considered that the Council would be unlikely to succeed at appeal should the application be refused. It was also noted that there had been public support for the application.
- 1.3 The differences between the case officer's measurements and those of the agents are explained in the WAPC report and minutes of 14th October 2020, but following Members having raised further concerns in respect of these measurements at the meeting of the WAPC on the 14th October 2020 a review of the measurements was undertaken by a senior planning officer which was subsequently checked by the Western Area team leader. The Council's officers are in agreement regarding the measurements of the proposal scheme (allowing for a slight margin of error) and an updated schedule of measurements has been provided at section 2.7 below.
- 1.4 Since the last application was considered by the WAPC the Council has received a consultee response from the Council's tree officer, who has raised no objections to the proposal scheme, subject to a pre-commencement planning condition. This condition has been agreed with the agent.

- 1.5 An update report has been provided below which expands on your officers' view in respect of the conflict with policy that officers have identified and due to which the application has been referred to the District Planning Committee. Copies of the previous officer's report and minutes of the meetings of the Western Area Planning Committee dated 14 October 2020 are included at appendix 1 and 2.

2. THE MAIN ISSUE OF PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.1 In this application the main issue is the interpretation of proportionality in respect to the requirements of Policy C7, which states that a replacement dwelling will be permitted providing that, inter alia:

“(ii) the replacement dwelling is proportionate in size and scale to the existing dwelling, uses appropriate materials and does not have an adverse impact on:

1. The character and local distinctiveness of the rural area
2. Individual heritage assets and their settings
3. Its setting within the wider landscape”

- 2.2 The existing dwelling on the site is a relatively modest single storey dwelling alongside Craven Road, set back from the road behind a well established boundary hedge. Although this dwelling has been considerably extended it has remained a single storey development and its impact is confined by a boundary hedge alongside Craven Road and mature vegetation on its south-western and south-eastern elevations, which face into the public realm. The main views of this dwelling are from Craven Road alongside the site to the south-west, and particularly with localised views at the access to the drive in front of the dwelling, and from Public Right of Way Inkpen 15/1, which exits onto Craven Road directly opposite the site, at which point the site is prominent in public views. At present the impact of the existing dwelling in these views is quite negligible due to the low roof form of the single storey dwelling and the screening offered by the south-western boundary hedge. More localised views of the south-eastern boundary of the site are available from Public Right of Way Inkpen 16/1 that runs alongside the southern-eastern boundary of the site between the site and Vale Farm, although these are well screened at present by high, mature vegetation within the site boundary.

- 2.3 Officers do not dispute that the principle of a replacement dwelling is acceptable, subject to the criteria of Policy C7, but are concerned that the application proposal would substantially increase both the size and consequently the visual impact of the dwelling in surrounding public views, resulting in a dwelling that is not proportionate in size and scale to the existing dwelling, thereby failing to meet these criteria. The proposal would represent an increase in floor space of approximately 113% of the gross external floor area of the dwelling. As such your officers consider that the proposed replacement dwelling would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

- 2.4 A recent Inspector's decision on Inglewood Farm Cottage (ref. APP/W03340/W/20/3250230, WBC ref. 19/02144/FULD), makes the following comments which are helpful in interpreting proportionality in the context of a replacement dwelling:

“Policy C7 does not provide a definition nor metric in which proportionality is measured. However, the explanatory text states that the key components of proportionality are scale, massing, height and layout of a development. There are no rules that can be applied as to the acceptable size of a replacement dwelling. Any size increase has to be considered on the basis of the impact of a particular property in a particular location. Clearly, the definition and degree of harm is a matter of planning judgement based on the site specifics.”

- 2.5 While the proposed works would only increase the footprint of the dwelling by approximately 21% due to the extended nature of the existing single storey dwelling, the proposed new dwelling would have a substantially higher roof ridge than the existing

dwelling, at 7.6 metres proposed, vs 5.1 metres existing. This increase in ridge height would be sufficient to raise the roof form and first floor of the dwelling significantly above the level of the south western boundary hedge that currently substantially screens the dwelling from wider public views alongside Craven Road and at the point the PROW exits onto Craven Road opposite. This would be compounded by the proposed fascia and roof form which consists of two large, prominent gables finished in flint with brick detailing. The effect of these gables would be to increase the massing of development at first floor level, considerably increasing its immediacy and prominence of the dwelling in these public views far beyond the impact of the views of the partially screened receding roof slope of the existing dwelling. The effect of the substantial gables and large first floor windows rising above the front hedge would be to draw the eye to this aspect of the development, which would appear to loom over the street scene, especially from the public viewpoints from the PROW opposite, and those along Craven Road and at the access to the site.

2.6 Whilst there is a considerable amount of residential development alongside Craven Road in the area nearby to the site, and this is of mixed character and quality, the part of the street scene including the site forms a transition into more sparse development, making up the rural fringe of this envelope of residential development. The proposed dwelling would replace a modest and low key form of dwelling with a far more visually prominent and intrusive dwelling that by virtue of its height, scale, massing and design would erode this transitional character of the site in surrounding views, and particularly those from the Public Right of Way, Inkpen 15/1, resulting in visual harm to the character and appearance of the area. This impact has been compounded by the prominent fascia design, including two large, full height gables, large first floor windows and the choice of flint with brick detailing as a material, which would be highly visible in the street scene by contrast to the simple roof form of the existing single storey dwelling, which consists the majority of public views of the existing dwelling from Craven Road and the PROW. It is therefore your officers' view that the proposed replacement dwelling would fail to be proportionate to the existing dwelling in height, scale and massing, and this would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

2.7 Updated measurements table:

	Existing with garage	Existing without garage	Proposed with garage	Proposed without garage
Footprint	164.8	149.1	196.5	180.5
Ground Floor area	164.8	149.1	196.5	180.5
First floor Area	0	0	137.1	137.1
Total floor area	164.8	149.1	333.6	318.5
Height to eaves	2.7	2.7	3.9 and 4.9	3.9 and 4.9
Height to ridge	5.1	5.1	7.6	7.6
Volume	690.1	565.8	1114.06	1069.4

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Members of the WAPC resolved to approve the application contrary to the recommendation of Officers. Owing to the conflict with the development plan and the implications for the determination of similar future applications across the District, the Development Control Manager referred the application to be determined by the DPC.

4. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To **DELEGATE** to the Head of Development and Planning to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** on the grounds of the following grounds:
- 4.2 The proposal is considered to be unacceptable in principle. The site is within open countryside in the North Wessex Downs AONB. The replacement dwelling is disproportionate in size, scale, mass and bulk to the existing dwelling and will have an adverse and harmful impact on the setting, character and appearance of the site within the wider landscape including the open countryside and North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 4.3 By the nature of the proposed dwellings scale, mass and bulk the development would result in a harmful impact on the openness and rural character of the street scene, open countryside and North Wessex Downs AONB. The use of flint material, light grey window casement and drain pipes, and inclusion of dormer windows do not form part of the design of the street scene. The proposed dwelling includes a significant level of glazing in an area which benefits from dark skies. The soft landscaping to the front of the site, facing Craven Road will be lost and replaced with hardstanding and a timber shed forward of the principle elevation. For the reasons listed the proposed development would not result in a replacement dwelling of high quality design which respects the rural character and appearance of the open countryside, North Wessex Downs AONB and street scene. It would result in a much larger, higher and prominent built form on the site, of inappropriately suburban design, which would have a significantly detrimental visual impact on the character and appearance of the local area and the surrounding AONB. Due to the extensive areas of glazing proposed there would also an unacceptable negative impact on the dark skies within this part of the AONB.

The proposal is contrary to development plan policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and policies CS3 and CS7 of the Housing allocations DPD, West Berkshire Councils Quality Design SPD Part 5 and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Appendices

1. Agenda Report, appendices and update sheet for 20/01083/FUL for the WAPC meeting held on the 14th October 2020.
2. Approved minutes of the WAPC on the 14th October 2020
3. Proposed conditions should Members be minded to approve