

Item No	Application No. and Parish	8/13 week date	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(2)	13/02394/HOUSE Woolhampton	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	Flat roofed single storey extensions removed, two storey extension and single storey extensions.  Little Paddocks, Woolhampton Hill, Woolhampton  Mr and Mrs Robinson

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

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=13/02394/HOUSE>

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

**Ward Member(s):** Councillor Irene Neill

**Reason for Committee determination:** Member call in due to a substantial amount of local support for the project.

**Committee Site Visit:** 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

#### Contact Officer Details

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## **1. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 13/61** Dwellinghouse at Woolhampton Hill. GRANTED 17<sup>th</sup> January 1961.
- 12/70** Additions. GRANTED 20<sup>th</sup> January 1970.
- 109367** Alterations and addition to first floor to provide 3 bedrooms. GRANTED 25<sup>th</sup> October 1978.
- 121893** Lounge extension. GRANTED 11<sup>th</sup> July 1984.
- 122235** Two storey extension. WITHDRAWN 9<sup>th</sup> August 1984.
- 138240** Timber garage to replace iron shed. Cannot determine.
- 141560** Two storey extension to dwelling. Cloaks/hall/dining/bathroom/bedroom/en-suite. GRANTED 25<sup>th</sup> September 1992.
- 06/01074/HOUSE** Pitched roofs over the two existing flat roofed sections and with bedroom accommodation in one of the roofs. Two dormer windows within the new bedroom and the conversion of the existing garage into the kitchen and utility room. Alterations to porch. WITHDRAWN.
- 11/00575/HOUSE** Flat roofed single storey extensions removed, 2 storey extensions, single storey garden room and new pitched roof garage added. REFUSED 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and dismissed at appeal.
- 12/01144/HOUSE** Flat roofed single storey extensions removed, 2 storey extensions, single storey garden room and new pitched roof garage added. REFUSED 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and dismissed at appeal.
- 13/00782/HOUSE** Remove existing single storey garage, southern single storey extension, western boiler house and eastern section of two storey house. Erect new 2 storey extension to east and single storey glazed extension to south. WITHDRAWN.
- 13/01845/PASSHE** Single storey extension – depth from rear wall 8 metres, maximum height 4 metres, eaves height 3.5 metres. Application not required (permitted development).

## **2. PUBLICITY**

Site Notice Expired: 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013.  
Neighbour Notification Expired: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

## **3. CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

### **3.1 Consultations**

<b>Parish Council:</b>	No response received at time of writing due to parish meeting date. Comments will be reported to Planning Committee.
<b>Highways:</b>	There is adequate parking and turning within the site at the front of the dwelling on the existing large parking area for 4/5 vehicles. No objection.
<b>Public Rights of Way</b>	Woolhampton Footpath 6/1 runs immediately alongside the eastern boundary of the site. This is a very narrow footpath bounded by an evergreen hedge. The proposals will not impact on the footpath providing no alteration is made to the property side of the hedge. Conditions and informatives suggested to remind applicants to keep the hedge cut back so not to obstruct the footpath.

### 3.2 Representations

Total: 1                      Object: 0                      Support: 1

#### Summary of comments:

- The removal of the current flat roof, single storey extension will greatly improve the look of the property and the proposed work will create a much more aesthetically pleasing home. The size of the plot lends itself to a large family home and the neighbouring homes are some distance from the house. The well established trees provide screening and privacy from the neighbouring houses as well.

## 4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The statutory development plan comprises the saved policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) (WBDLP), and the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
- 4.2 Other material considerations include government guidance, in particular:
  - The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF)
  - By Design: urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (DETR/CABE)
  - Manual for Streets (DCLG/DfT)
- 4.3 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF advises that, for the 12 months from the day of its publication, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. The following saved policies from the Local Plan are relevant to this application:
  - ENV.1: The Wider Countryside
  - ENV.24: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
  - HSG.1: The Identification of Settlements for Planning Purposes
  - TRANS.1: Meeting the Transport Needs of New Development
- 4.4 In addition, the following locally adopted policy documents are relevant to this application:

- SPG 4/02: House Extensions (July 2004)
- SPG 4/03: Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside (July 2004)
- Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006)
  - Part 1 Achieving Quality Design
  - Part 2 Residential Development
  - Part 3 Residential Character Framework
  - Part 4 Sustainable Design Techniques
  - Part 5 External Lighting

4.5 The West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2016) July 2012 now forms part of the development plan and therefore its policies attract full weight. The following policies are relevant to this application:

- Area Delivery Plan Policy 1: Spatial Strategy
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 6: The East Kennet Valley
- CS 4: Housing Type and Mix
- CS 13: Transport
- CS 14: Design Principles
- CS 19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 The application seeks consent for the removal of existing flat roofed single storey extensions and the erection of a two storey extension and single storey extensions. The application site is located at Little Paddocks, Woolhampton Hill, Woolhampton. The site is in residential use occupied by a large detached two storey dwelling. The site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary, on a prominent and exposed ridge in an area characterised by open countryside with individual houses set in spacious plots. The house is open to views from across the valley to the south and from Woolhampton Footpath 6/1 that runs along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 5.2 The wooden shed, garage, boiler house and rear extension would be removed. The two storey extension would be added on the eastern elevation and would match the height of the main ridge. The extension would be 3.7m in width and 8.2m in depth. The single storey side extension would be 3.5m in height, 3.4m in width and 8.2m in depth. A terrace would be added at first floor level. The aim of the proposals is to remodel the internal space whilst also making external alterations. The windows are proposed to be change to timber sash style. The rear would include a large section of glazing. Solar panels are proposed for the roof.
- 5.3 The application follows the refusal of a scheme in 2011 for the removal of the single storey extensions as outlined in 5.2, and two storey extensions on either side of the main two storey central section of the dwelling. The application was refused by Eastern Area Planning Committee following the advice of its officers, and was dismissed on appeal. The appeal decision is attached to the committee report. This scheme was refused as the extensions were considered disproportionate to the original and as they were not subservient to the dwelling. The Inspector agreed that the proposal would conflict with Policy ENV24, as they were disproportionate additions and would not fall within the exceptions to the size guidelines set out in the SPG. The Inspector also considered that the extensions would significantly increase the bulk of the dwelling when seen from both the footpath and

Woolhampton Road, and taking all factors into consideration would represent a disproportionate addition conflicting with Policy ENV24. However, the Inspector did not share the view of the Council that the extensions would not be subservient.

- 5.4 Pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of the current planning application. The scheme was as presented in the current scheme, and it was noted considered by officers, on an informal level, that the proposal could not be supported. The officer considered that the existing dwelling house in materially greater than the original dwelling house. By virtue of this, the bulk and mass of the proposals would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. It was suggested to the applicants to make improvements to the external appearance of the dwelling rather than increasing the volume or floor area further.

## **6. APPRAISAL**

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of the development and disproportionality
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Impact on highway safety
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development

### **6.1 Principle of the development and disproportionality**

- 6.1.1 The site is located outside any defined settlement boundary, in the countryside, where development is more generally resisted. However, saved Local Plan Policy ENV24 permits extensions to dwellings in the countryside subject to meeting certain criteria. The Inspector in the most recent appeal case considered that Policy ENV24 is consistent with one of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Therefore the policy is given full weight. The aim of the policy is to prevent material increases in visual intrusion into the countryside and the over-development of residential sites. The policy is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside, which gives a general guide that the increase of the original dwellinghouse of less than 50% is unlikely to be considered disproportionate. However, the size increase is only one factor in the determination of whether an extension is disproportionate.
- 6.1.2 As can be seen from the planning history there have been extensive extensions already undertaken at the property, which was built after permission was granted in 1961.
- 6.1.3 The table below represents the additional floor space created by the proposed extensions and the previous extensions. It is important to note that the applicants intend to demolish 110 square metres of the existing house and erect 110 square metres to replace this loss. The 110 square metres of floor space would be removed from past extensions rather than the original house.

	Original House	Existing	11/00575/HOUSE	12/01144/HOUSE	13/02394/HOUSE
Floor Area	154sqm	444.4sqm	412.37sqm	415sqm	110sqm, though demolishing 110sqm.
Percentage Increase	-	188%	268%	269%	0% on existing, and 188% on original.
Volume	477m3	947m3	1511.38m3	1424m3	45m3 on existing, and 340m3 on original. Demolition of 295m3.
Percentage Increase	-	99%	316%	298%	4.8% on existing and 114% on original.

6.1.4 It is considered that the proposal is an improvement on the previously refused schemes in relation to the size, as the proposals have been scaled down with removal of previously proposed single storey extensions. However, the fact remains that the dwelling has already been extended disproportionately. Thus any alterations or additions would still result in a dwelling disproportionate in size to the original. The volume would be increased by virtue of the fact that space is being removed from single storey additions and being placed in a two storey extension. The bulk would also be increased.

6.1.5 On balance, as it is recognised that there is a nil increase in the floor space above the existing dwelling, Policy ENV24 is clear that the aim is to prevent the alteration of the character of the original dwelling, and this is why the size increase over and above the original dwelling is important to measure. It is considered that the proposal does not comply with criterion d) of policy ENV24.

## 6.2 Impact on the character and appearance of the area

6.2.1 There are other factors to consider aside from the size increase. The achievement of high quality design is an equally important factor, and one that is promoted in Core Strategy policies CS14 and CS19, and the general guidance and the core principles outlined in the NPPF, as well as policy ENV24 of the Local Plan. Core planning principle number 5 of the NPPF states that in decision making the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be taken into account.

6.2.2 The site is relatively well screened to the north and west though is adjacent to a public right of way, Woolhampton 6/1 to the east and can be viewed from the lower ground and across the valley to the south. There has been new vegetation placed in previous gaps in the hedge running alongside the site, however there are still quite clear views of the house from the footpath.

6.2.3 When considering the size and design of the dwelling house originally permitted in 1961 although the dwelling was quite modest, when compared to the existing house, it still contained four bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen, dining room, hall, study

and store. The extensions added since have not been sympathetic to the original house which is functional in design and is considered to be of no particular architectural merit. The plot is large and spacious enjoying far reaching views across the Kennet Valley. However, the plot size and the style of the original house define the character of the site, and the size of the plot should not be justification in itself for allowing a dwelling disproportionate in size to its original and policy ENV24 does not include plot size as a factor in assessing such applications.

- 6.2.4 At present the extensions are at single storey level, and are generally subservient and a more inconspicuous way of extending a property. By using the floorspace from the single storey and placing it mostly into a two storey extension this should not be considered as a 'quid pro quo', as it would change the overall appearance of the dwelling, and would have a materially greater impact on the character of the area and countryside than the existing and original dwelling. Whilst the current scheme is recognised to be an improvement on previous schemes it does not overcome the issues of impact due to disproportionality identified in the previous refusals and dismissed appeals.
- 6.2.5 The bulk of the dwelling would still be increased, and this has not significantly changed from the scheme previously refused and dismissed on appeal. Rather than having two 2-storey extensions on either side of the central two storey section to the dwelling, the proposal would add a slightly larger 2 storey extension than that previously proposed on one side of the dwelling. When considering the increase in volume this is still considered a bulky addition to the existing and original dwelling, and the Inspector in the previous appeal considered the additional bulk, albeit on a larger scale, was unacceptable.
- 6.2.6 Concern is had with the design features of the proposed extension. Quite a large dormer is proposed and considered with the two small windows at ground floor level would make the dormer appear quite prominent. Improvements have been made to the fenestration in the remainder of the house to make it more consistent and uniform, and it would be expected that new windows in the extension would follow this style.
- 6.2.7 It has been confirmed that the applicants would be able to build a relatively large single storey rear extension under the amended permitted development rights which enable an 8 metre deep extension with a maximum height of 4 metres. Whilst this has not been built and is only a potential extension there is concern that cumulatively the dwelling would be further extended disproportionately to the original.
- 6.2.8 Overall, despite the improvements made to the extensions in comparison to previous schemes the conversion of floor space and volume from the existing single storey extensions into a two storey extension would change the character and appearance of the dwelling, both as existing and the original house, though particularly when compared to the original. The bulk of the house would be significantly increased. As the Inspector opined in the previous appeal the design concept 'would create a remodelled dwelling as opposed to an extended dwelling', and this proposal is not considered to successfully address this view. When considering the already disproportionate nature of the previous extensions the proposal would still contribute to a dwelling disproportionate in size to the original, and would have a materially greater impact upon the dwelling and character of the

area than the existing extended house or the original. Therefore, the proposal would fail to comply with the objectives of the NPPF, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy ENV24 of the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007, and guidance set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance notes on House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside.

### **6.3 Impact on neighbouring amenity**

- 6.3.1 The site is well screened from neighbouring occupiers. Therefore the application has no significant impact on neighbouring amenity.

### **6.4 Impact on highway safety**

- 6.4.1 The Highways Authority considers there is adequate space for parking despite the loss of the garage. The proposal would not have any impact upon highway safety.

### **6.5 Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

- 6.5.1 The NPPF has introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which paragraph 197 advises should be applied in assessing and determining development proposals.
- 6.5.2 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The policies of the NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.
- 6.5.3 In support of the economic role the extensions would contribute to providing employment during construction. In support of the social role the energy efficiency measures would be beneficial, though the design is a concern. When considering the environmental role, the increased bulk of the dwelling would not contribute to the protection of the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. As the three tenants of sustainable development need to be considered together the failure to achieve one means that the scheme does not fall to be considered as sustainable development.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Having taken into account all the relevant policy considerations and the other material considerations it is considered that the proposed development is not considered to contribute to the aims of delivering sustainable development. The increase in size to the original dwelling house is considered to be clearly unacceptable both in terms of general policy and guidance seeking to achieve high quality design and in terms of disproportionality. The application is therefore contrary to the guidance on the design contained in the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Local Planning Core Strategy 2006-2026 July 2012 and West Berkshire Council Supplementary Planning Guidance 'House Extensions' July 2004 and Policy ENV24 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006, Saved Policies 2007 and the accompanying Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside', July 2004.



## **8. FULL RECOMMENDATION**

**DELEGATE** to the Head of Planning & Countryside to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** for the reason set out in Section 8.1.

### **8.1 Recommended refusal reason**

1. Little Paddocks is located outside of any defined settlement boundary, in the countryside in planning policy terms. Guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2006-2026 requires the achievement of high quality design appropriate to their setting. Policy ENV24 of the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 seeks to prevent the over development of sites in the countryside and a material increase in visual intrusion into the countryside.

Little Paddocks has been greatly extended and its extensions already represent disproportionate additions. Although the proposal involves the demolition of 110 square metres of floor space and its replacement with 110 square metres of floor space as this area would be placed mainly into a two storey extension this would increase the bulk of the dwelling, and would be visible from public vantage points. The nil increase over the existing dwelling in terms of floor space does not negate the significant change in character from the character and appearance of the original dwelling, which was a relatively modest house. Volume would be increased, and overall the extensions would still be regarded as disproportionate additions, greater than a 50% increase as advocated by the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside', July 2004. When considering the design aspects the proposed extensions would be materially greater than the original dwelling. The large dormer window and two small windows on the ground floor of the extension are not considered to be generally in keeping with the style of the fenestration across the remodelled house. Despite the changes and improvements made to the schemes previously refused and dismissed on appeal they are not considered to outweigh the harm created by the proposal.

The proposal therefore fails to comply with guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy ENV24 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), West Berkshire Council's Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (Part 2) (June 2006), West Berkshire Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance notes 'House Extensions' and 'Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside' (July 2004).