

Planning Statement

Design and Access Statement

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Proposal: Conversion of garage building and construction of a single storey extension, to form a granny annexe

Address: Carters Yard, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RW

Applicant: Mr and Mrs M Bannister

Date: 17 February 2021

Bromley Planning

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The Proposal

1. This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for a granny annexe at Carters Yard, Sibford Gower. Carters Yard is owned and occupied by Malcolm and Sue Bannister who have been resident in the village of Sibford Gower for many years. They wish to continue to reside in the village however their current house, due to its size and layout, is becoming increasingly unsuitable, in particular the staircase and various steps throughout the building are increasingly difficult for Mr Bannister to navigate. They are therefore seeking to downsize to a smaller, more accessible dwelling, while remaining in the village. The proposed annexe, achieved by converting and extending the existing garage building, would provide Mr and Mrs Bannister with a 'home for life' in Sibford Gower. The main house would be occupied by Mr and Mrs Bannister's son and family.

Site Description

2. The site is located within the built up area of Sibford Gower and is within the Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area. The site, known as Carters Yard, comprises a two storey stone house with thatched roof fronting on to Main Street, a single storey stone annexe building with thatched roof alongside Colony Road and a modern detached domestic garage building constructed of stone with a tiled roof, fronting on to Colony Road. The main house is Grade II listed. Adjacent to the site on the south side is a Grade II listed public house.

Pre-Application Discussions

3. Prior to the submission of this planning application, the applicant has engaged in the pre-application advice service with the Council (see below) including two formal requests for advice, a planning officer site visit, online meeting and two advice reports.

Pre-application Ref:	Proposal	Date of Report
20/02220/PREAPP	Conversion of garage building and construction of single storey rear extension, to form a granny annexe	23 September 2020
20/02972/PREAPP	Conversion of garage building and construction of single storey rear extension, to form a granny annexe (follow up request to 20/02220/PREAPP)	2 December 2020

4. The assessment by the case officer to the pre-application submissions concluded the principle of development to be acceptable. Following officer advice, a number of design changes have been incorporated into the proposals to enhance the appearance of the building and to ensure satisfactory parking arrangements.

Principle of Development

5. Planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the purposes of determining this planning application comprises the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Part 1 (adopted July 2015), and the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996.
6. Other material considerations to be afforded weight include the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, Planning Practice Guidance, the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal (2012), and the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD (2018).
7. Policy Villages 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2015 provides a categorisation of villages to guide the consideration of small scale proposals for residential development within the built up limits of settlements. Policy Villages 1 identifies Sibford Gower as a Category A village where minor development, infilling and conversions are considered to be suitable types of residential development. The proposals are within the built up area of Sibford Gower and are therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Historic Environment

8. The proposed development will have no harmful impacts on the historic environment. A separate Heritage Statement is submitted with the application.

Design and Visual Impact

9. Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2015 states *“New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards”*. Saved Policies C28 and C30 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 seek to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including external finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the area. In conservation areas, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.

10. The existing garage building incorporates a ground floor parking area with ancillary residential accommodation above. To meet the requirements of the applicant, the proposed annexe is designed on three levels, which include the garage and utility at lower ground level, the main living spaces at mid-ground level and two bedrooms at upper ground level. Despite the changes in levels, the annexe is fully accessible with a lift arrangement. The main living spaces are open plan and interlinked with a focus on accessibility. These spaces have focused views on to the garden to the east with flush threshold access on to the terraces.
11. A principle consideration in the design methodology has been to keep the development low in height and subservient in both design and scale to surrounding buildings. The proposed conversion utilises the existing structure, with fenestration changes to the west elevation and a single storey extension to the rear. The rear extension will replace a vegetable garden that is currently separated from the main garden area of the house by a tall planted herbaceous border. The form of the extension is rectilinear to reflect the layout of neighbouring buildings. The initial design proposed a modern interpretation with flat roofs for the extension, with brick and large areas of glazing for the external elevations. The concept was of a modern garden pavilion that would enhance its surroundings. Following the submission of a request for pre-application advice, officers advised against this approach and indicated a preference for a more traditional design.
12. The current submission follows the recommendations of officers and proposes a traditional design with natural stone walls and pitched roofs clad with natural slate. Following officer concern about the impact of the sitting room extension on the north elevation and potential impact when viewed from Colony Road, the design has been changed further by lowering the height of the roof of the extension. The lower roof height and greatly reduced height of walls, combined with a pitched roof in a slate covering, will result in the extension having very little impact when viewed from Colony Road. Following discussions with officers, the design also improves the appearance of the building by replacing two roof lights with two traditional dormer windows on the road facing roof slope.
13. The modern garage building is unattractive and incongruous in its traditional setting. The conversion scheme with small scale and traditional design of extension, construction materials of natural stone and slate, and fenestration changes including two dormer windows, will provide a significantly improved and more balanced appearance to the building and an enhancement to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As described in the Heritage Statement the development will preserve the setting of the listed main house and because of the improvements to the appearance of the garage building, will enhance the setting of the listed public house. By careful attention to detail, the proposals meet

the standards of development required by Policy ESD 15 of the CLP 2015 and Saved Policies C28 and C30 of the CLP 1996.

Residential Amenity

14. The nearest neighbouring property is the Wykham Arms public house which forms the southern boundary with the application site. There are no windows in the rear wall of the public house which will ensure no loss of amenity for the future occupiers of the development and no harmful impacts on the operation of the public house. Facing the application site on the opposite side of Colony Road is the Manor House. The relationship between the Manor House and the application site will remain unchanged. The nearest property other than these is Gower Close, a dwelling alongside Carters Yard on Main Street, over 30 metres from the proposed development. At this distance the development will not result in any loss of privacy for the neighbouring property.

Access/Highway Safety and Parking Provision

15. Currently Carters Yard has five parking spaces, one off-street parking space alongside Main Street immediately to the front of the house, two parking spaces within the garage and two parking spaces on the garage forecourt facing on to Colony Road. The conversion scheme proposes replacing one garage parking space with a lift. The boundary wall alongside the garage will be re-positioned to provide an additional two forecourt parking spaces, bringing the total number of parking spaces available to Carters Yard to six spaces. The provision of an additional parking space is in response to the initial pre-application advice of the highway authority who expressed concerns that on-site parking would not be sufficient for the scale of development proposed. The dimensions of the spaces are compatible with the dimensions recommended in the Oxfordshire County Council Residential Design Guide (2003) – Second Addition (2015), at paragraph 7.20. It is noted that the Design Guide states (at 1.8) that *“whilst the document includes recommended ‘standards’ they should not be considered overly prescriptive”*. The forecourt parking spaces vary in length from 5.18m to 6.20m. Three of the forecourt spaces are 2.8m to 2.9m wide, with the space alongside the wall being 3.0m wide, thereby complying with the recommended width of a parking space alongside an obstruction. Due to the position of the splayed boundary wall adjoining the garage, the parking space in front of the garage will have a practical width of 5.0m. The existing and proposed parking space within the garage is 5.0m in length which, although slightly less than recommended by the Design Guide, is a practical parking space and is currently used on a daily basis by the applicant for secure parking. The proposed garage parking space will have an oversize width of 3.45m to provide ease of access.

16. The pedestrian access to the site has been improved by re-aligning the access so that it emerges onto the forecourt rather than directly onto the public highway.

Ecology

17. With the design change to incorporate pitched roofs with an eaves overhang, it is now proposed to erect a bird nesting box on the north elevation. Officer comments about the potential for swifts in the area are noted. The proposal also incorporates an under eaves bat box on the south elevation.

Summary

18. The application is for a modest form of development permitted by Development Plan Policy Villages 1 for conversion and infill development. The design, fenestration and use of external materials are traditional and sympathetic to local character, and will improve the appearance of the building and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. There will be no overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties. Parking provision will provide six off street spaces which will more than cater for the needs of both Carters Yard and the proposed development. There will be a modest improvement in highway safety by the re-alignment of the pedestrian access. The application is for a sustainable form of development which accords with the Development Plan.

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