

Parish: STRATFORD ST MARY

Location: The Boathouse, Lower Street, Stratford St Mary

Proposal: Erection of first floor extension and alterations to roof of garden room.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs P Boorman

Case Officer: Lucy Mondon

Date for Determination: 21/04/10

This application is referred to the Development Committee at the request of the Ward Member. A panel of members inspected the site on 24th March 2010 in order to assess the scale of the proposed extension in relation to the existing dwelling, its impact on neighbouring properties and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

THE SITE

1. The site is located on the west side of Lower Street in Stratford St Mary, adjacent to the River Stour and within the Stratford St Mary Conservation Area and Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
2. The Boathouse is set back from the road and orientated at a right angle to the road so that the front of the property faces the river.
3. The property was built as part of a development of three dwellings (two flats and 1 bungalow). The flats that formed part of this scheme are sited to the north-east of the property and face onto the road. A number of older properties lie to the south-east of the site, including two Grade II Listed Buildings (Nelson Cottage and Rosebank).

THE PROPOSAL

4. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a first floor extension over part of an existing bungalow. The alterations to the roof of the garden room involve the replacement of a shallow hipped roof with a gabled roof.
5. The existing bungalow measures 19.5 metres in length and is approximately 4.9 metres in height at its highest point. The rear garden room currently measures 3.4 metres high with a hipped roof. The first floor extension would be above the eastern end of the building closest to the road and would be 11.7 metres in length. The extension would increase the height of the bungalow by 2.4 metres, taking its overall height to 7.3 metres. The height of the garden room would increase to 4.2 metres.
6. The extension would be constructed of materials that match the existing property: light stained timber weatherboarding, slate roofing and timber casement windows.
7. The bungalow currently provides two bedrooms. The extension would provide three bedrooms, a bathroom and an ensuite bathroom, resulting in a four bedroom property.

RELEVANT HISTORY

8. 2000 – Outline Planning Permission granted for the erection of 2 No. detached dwellings and construction of vehicular access (B/00/00407/OUT).

9. 2004 – Planning Permission refused at Development Committee for the erection of 2 No. detached dwellings and construction of vehicular accesses (B/04/01016/FUL). This proposal was later allowed on appeal dated 4th April 2005, but has not been implemented.
10. 2004 – Planning Permission granted for the erection of 2 No. flats and 1 No. bungalow and construction of vehicular accesses (B/04/01712/FUL).
11. 2005 – Planning Permission granted for the erection of 2 No. flats and 1 No. bungalow and construction of vehicular accesses (B/05/00257/FUL).
12. 2006 – Planning Permission granted for the erection of a detached single garage (B/05/02019/FHA).

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

13. **PPS 1** (Delivering Sustainable Development)
14. **PPS5** (Planning for the Historic Environment)

PLANNING POLICIES

15. The Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, adopted 2008, saved policies in the Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted 2001, and the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) adopted 2006. The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No.2) 2006

- **CN01** (Design standards)
- **CN08** (Development in or near conservation areas)
- **CR02** (AONB landscape)
- **HS33** (Extensions to existing dwellings)

The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see Page 4 for details.

CONSULTATIONS

16. PC – Recommend refusal for the following reasons:
 - The property would be too imposing and would intrude on views of the conservation area and features painted by John Constable.
 - The development would result in the property being disproportionate in size and would overshadow the two adjacent flats.
 - Invasion of privacy to the back garden of the adjacent ground floor flat.
 - Loss of two-bedroom property in village.
17. EA - No comments received at time of writing report.

REPRESENTATIONS

18. Three letters of objection have been received. In summary the objections raised are as follows:
 - The height and width of the extension is visually intrusive and overbearing to neighbouring properties.

- The extension would affect the skyline and light levels on neighbouring properties (Riverside House, Side Cottage, Nelson Cottage, Rosebank, 1 Millstream House, and Pantiles).
- The first floor windows would overlook the garden of Millstream House.
- The extension would have an adverse impact on historic character of area and the surrounding landscape.
- The extension would obstruct views contained in the John Constable painting depicting Stratford Mill.
- Overdevelopment of site.
- The extension is not appropriate in scale to the surrounding environment.
- The extension is not subservient to the existing building.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

17. The main planning considerations are:

- Landscape impact
- Design and impact on surrounding area (including conservation area)
- Relationship to adjoining dwellings, and,
- Other material considerations

Landscape impact

18. The application site lies within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is in a relevantly prominent position when viewed from the northern approach into Stratford St Mary and from the western river bank.

19. Although the bungalow is visible within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is seen in context with the built up area of Stratford St Mary. In particular, when viewed from the north-east and north-west, the bungalow is seen in context with a number of properties, namely the modern flats located to the north-east of the site with the properties Riverside House, Side Cottage, Nelson Cottage and Rosebank serving as a backdrop. While the proposal would have a visual impact, in that the appearance of the bungalow will change, it is not considered to have a negative landscape impact as the building would still be seen in context with the built up area rather than the open countryside.

Design and impact on the surrounding area

20. Lower Street is characterised by a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties that front the roadside. The majority of these properties are listed buildings or older style properties and, as such, the area has a historic feel. The properties are of a traditional form in the main, with steeply pitched roofs and slim frontages.

21. The Boathouse is currently a modest weatherboarded bungalow that is set back from Lower Street and has the appearance of a converted outbuilding. Although visible from Lower Street, the property is not conspicuous within the street scene and blends in with the overall character of the Conservation Area.

22. The proposal would result in a two-storey property of a design, scale and form that is considered inappropriate for the prevailing character of the area and incongruous in the street scene. In particular, the shallow roof pitch and dominant central range of the extension would not harmonise with the traditional form of the surrounding properties, including the adjacent modern flats, and would detract from their character and appearance. As such, the proposal does not reflect nor respect the relationship of the site and its setting, as set out in policies CN01 and HS33 of the Babergh Local Plan, or preserve or enhance the predominant character of the Conservation Area.

Relationship to adjoining dwellings:

23. The Boathouse lies in close proximity to No's 1 and 2 Millstream House, Riverside House, and Side Cottage. Although the development would have an impact in terms of visual outlook from these properties, it would not be so significant so as to have an adverse impact on the level of amenity currently enjoyed by these properties.
24. The proposal is also not considered to be significantly detrimental to the current enjoyment of the aforementioned properties in terms of loss of daylight and sunlight due to its orientation and distance of separation.
25. The proposed extension includes two first-floor windows to the north elevation of the property. Although these windows would be visible from the garden of 1 Millstream, they would not result in any overlooking to the property, their outlook being to the north-west: away from the garden of 1 Millstream and across the river.

Other material considerations:

26. The planning history of the site is a material consideration in the determination of the application. It is of note that application B/04/01016/FUL was refused at Development Committee and later allowed on appeal. The proposal incorporated a detached two-storey dwelling to the frontage of Lower Street and a 1½ storey property in the location of the existing bungalow. In the determination of the appeal the Inspector stated that the design of the properties reflected the historic building forms of existing development and were in scale and keeping with the character of the area.
27. As such, it can be considered that the principle of a 1½ storey dwelling in this location is acceptable. However, in consideration of the current application it was found that the scale and form of the proposal differed significantly from this approval and does not suitably reflect the form of surrounding development or the character of the conservation area.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- (1) The proposed development is contrary to saved policies CN01, CN08 and HS33 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (2006). Policy HS33 states that planning permission for extensions to an existing dwelling will normally be granted provided (inter alia) the scale, mass, external materials and architectural details of the proposed extension blend in with those of the dwelling and its wider setting, and the extension reflects and respects the relationship of the site and its setting, and those of adjoining dwellings. Policy CN01 states that all new development proposals are required to be of an appropriate scale, form, detailed design and construction materials for the location. Further to this, policy CN08 provides that developments which have an impact on views into or out of a conservation area should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area and its setting.
- (2) The Boathouse is a modest bungalow located within Stratford St Mary Conservation Area, which is characterised by traditional older style properties with sharp roof pitches and narrow frontages. The proposed first floor extension represents a development that dominates the existing dwelling and is incongruous with respect to the Conservation Area of which it is part. The proposal is not of an appropriate scale to the host dwelling, principally due to the increase in roof height. In addition to this, the extension does not reflect the surrounding properties in terms of its form, mass and roof pitch.

- (3) The proposal, if approved, would, by virtue of its scale, form and design, represent a prominent and incongruous feature to the visual detriment of the existing property and street scene and the historic character of the Conservation Area.