

2.4 REFERENCE NO - 17/503456/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Erection of new roof to front porch, extension of roof & conversion of loft into habitable space with the insertion of rear dormers and front roof lights, insertion of side window and replacement of roof to existing single storey rear extension, as amended by drawing 1408/12 Rev A.		
ADDRESS Woodstock The Street Doddington Sittingbourne Kent ME9 0BH		
RECOMMENDATION - Approve		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Parish Council object and neighbour objections		
WARD East Downs	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Doddington	APPLICANT Mr & Mrs Hansford AGENT Alpha Design Studio Limited
DECISION DUE DATE 28/08/17	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 07/09/17	

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Woodstock is a mid twentieth detached century bungalow on a highway characterised by dwellings of a variety of a styles. The Street at this point comprises occasional traditional dwellings (some grade II listed) with numerous modern infill properties mostly of individual design. Woodstock itself is a small plain post-war bungalow set between modern bungalows to either side. To the left is a bungalow of a similar scale and alignment to Woodstock (this bungalow is named Victoria) whilst to the right, on slightly higher land, two larger detached modern bungalows are set well back from the highway; so much so that the front elevation of the adjacent bungalow Avondale is actually set further from the highway than is the rear elevation of Woodstock. Woodstock itself enjoys a large amenity space to the rear which is accessed by a side gate alongside a detached garage.

- 1.01 The application site is within the Doddington and Newnham conservation area and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is within the built-up area of Doddington according to the proposals map of the newly adopted Local Plan.
- 1.02 Woodstock was originally a very small square footprint but it has been extended to the rear with small single storey rear extensions to the left and right, and with a later conservatory built between the two, Together, these extensions are all attached to one another and run the full length of the original rear elevation. They do not affect the apparent scale of the bungalow from The Street. None of the extensions are affected by the works now proposed.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The application, which has since been amended, is to extend the property by continuing the front roofslope upwards on its current plane, so increasing the ridge height of the bungalow by 0.7m overall. Two small pitched roof rear dormers and two rear rooflights would be installed to light the staircase and the two bedrooms and bathroom created in the extended roofspace. Each new bedroom would also have a rooflight to the front (now reduced in size compared to the original submission) and one bedroom would also have a side window over the driveway. The rear dormer to the bedroom nearest to Avondale has (since original receipt of the application and initial local consultations) been repositioned in the very corner of the bedroom to

minimise any possibility of it affording a view to the front windows of Avondale, and any view here now would be at a very acute angle.

- 2.02 The proposals also involve obscure glazing an existing ground floor side window to allow the room to be converted to a bathroom and en-suite, and to erect a new pitched roof on the existing flat roofed front porch, improving its appearance

3.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty KENT DOWNS

Conservation Area Doddington and Newnham

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 policies DM14 (General development criteria), DM16 (Alterations and extensions) and DM33 (Development affecting a conservation area). Policy DM11 (as referred to below by the Parish Council) does not apply as the property is within the village's built-up area boundary.

Supplementary Planning Documents: Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled "Conservation Areas" and "Designing an Extension".

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.01 When first received, the application was opposed by three local residents on the following summarised grounds;

- The property has already been extended twice in keeping with the property, and a conservatory has been added recently
- The property is set close to the road and its conversion to a four bedroom property (albeit one is shown as a snug) by raising the roof and removing the chimney would fundamentally alter the appearance of the property and make it look out of place, and spoil the conservation area and AONB
- Raising the roof will result in overshadowing of the adjacent property as Woodstock sits directly on the common boundary
- The dormer windows to the rear will look unsightly and will be seen in oblique views from either direction
- The dormers will result in overlooking into the front bedroom and front and rear gardens of Avondale, compromising privacy. Velux windows would be better with less impact on the conservation area and AONB
- The front rooflights will allow views down onto the bedrooms from properties opposite
- Will drainage be adequate?
- There is only parking for two vehicles, which will be inadequate
- Parking for construction vehicles may result in traffic danger as the property is set just past a bend where vehicles travel at great speed from either direction – and opposite a dangerous road junction
- Will scaffolding have to be placed on adjacent properties to effect the raising of the roof?
- Approval would set a dangerous precedent and similar works could not be refused elsewhere

- One wonders where enlargement of this property on such a small plot might end
- 5.02 After the scheme was amended to reduce the impact on neighbours and the streetscene (reduction in front rooflights and relocation of rear dormer) the applicants wrote to their neighbours to explain the changes as follows;

“Dear Neighbours,

We write concerning our Planning Application 17/503456/FULL. You will be aware of the revised plan considered at the extraordinary parish meeting on 14th August, following that meeting the Area Planning Officer has visited Woodstock and Avondale and viewed the plans in situ. As a result of the visit there have been further discussions with the Planners and some further amendments have been made to the plan.

It is now accepted by the Planning Officers that Woodstock has a lower roof pitch and ridge than its neighbours and that the raising of the ridge by extending the plane a further 700mm will still be lower than its neighbours so will not have a disproportionate effect on its appearance nor within its surroundings.

We have agreed to remove the centre roof light and make the other two roof lights slightly smaller and higher in the roof pitch. At the rear it has been agreed to move the rear facing dormer window on the north eastern side as far west as possible – i.e. as far away from the boundary with Avondale as possible to minimise any possibility of oversight.

We do feel we have made significant compromises on the plans and shown our willingness to respond favourably to any reasonable objections, material or otherwise and hope that now we have dealt with all the issues of concern which have arisen.

You may have seen the parish response on the SBC Planning Portal which rather surprised us given the conclusions of the parish meeting, and seems to express concerns already answered. I have addressed these in a response now published on the SBC Planning Portal but summarise for ease here.

- *I am sure Avondale and Eynsford residents will be surprised to see themselves described as being set in a row of small detached bungalows alongside Victoria and Woodstock given the size of their plots, footprint and position so far back from the road.*
- *The description of the lack of appropriate scale and mass denies what is obvious from standing in front of Victoria and Woodstock to see that the roof of Woodstock is much lower than Victoria so that raising the roof pitch on the same plane will only match and not reach or exceed the Victoria height and so will not be disproportionate to its neighbours or surroundings.*
- *From the front view there is no second storey so I fail to how that can be described as a house. At the rear there are dormers in the roof – so more accurately a chalet bungalow of which there are many others in the village and along the Street.*
- *I have declared that I have medical issues which will affect my mobility in future to provide the context for the ground floor changes which are to future proof for that eventuality with a through hallway to open plan level access kitchen/diner/lounge living space with level access rear entry from outside. There will be a ‘wet room’ facility in the bathroom/ensuite to the ground floor master bedroom. So far from losing a bungalow the village gains an accessible and disability friendly chalet bungalow to add to its choice of dwellings.*

- *Lastly we think the comments about on road parking should concern us all. We appreciate the Parish Council have a concern that on road parking in the village generally is a problem but with 5 off road spaces and the front lawn and rear of car port providing another 2 in extremis we cannot see what evidence they envisage that could justify suggesting Woodstock will be the cause of extra on road parking. If a property with 3 / 4 bedrooms is the yard stick by which the Parish Council feels it can discriminate against and suggest the occupants be made to pay for parking prevention measures on top of the precepts already paid to KCC Highways and the Parish then we all have a potential problem and that we should collectively resist this wholly inappropriate suggestion.*

I have enclosed a print of the revised plan and would be happy to meet and discuss the effects of the revisions. We do hope that we have through this last revision addressed all concerns and that the Parish Council will amend its comments in the light of the evidence presented.”

They also attended the Parish Council meeting and responded to the objections as follows;

“Chairman, Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight. I have simply come along to reassure you that I am not some property developer out to make a fast buck but someone who wants to retire to, and, integrate into, this village community. I worked for 30 years in Kent and only left on retirement to arrange care for my mother who had Alzheimers. Our 5 children and 7 grandchildren all live in a 20 mile radius which is why we wanted to settle here on final retirement.

Our only desire to improve our property was to have a master bedroom with ensuite with enough room left for our children and extended family to stay over. With hindsight I would accept it was an error not to have insisted on a ‘pre app’ meeting but we have listened to, and sought to address, all the objections that we reasonable can, both material and non-material to the planning process.

If I can address some of those comments simply to dispel any misinformation and misinterpretations of the plans. In terms of context - Conservation is about the impact of changes upon the nature of a place not simply a change to an individual unlisted building in a street of properties which are individual and diverse in age and design. If you walk along the Street there are terraced cottages, thatched cottages, white washed two and three storeys houses some with dormers, there are more modern brick semi and detached houses, chalet bungalows and single storey bungalows of different height, size and design. There is no single homogeneous look to preserve - but an ambience and fit to surroundings to be achieved which I submit this revised plan achieves with little or no impact on the street scene.

There are some matters I cannot change – historic planning decisions which allowed the next door bungalow to be built so far back from the established building line adjacent to the road that it is parallel with our back garden and its bathroom window overlooks our garden. Neither can I be held responsible for the decision to allow the boundary to be the side wall of my property which means that I cannot clean the window without seeking permission to enter the neighbour’s garden. That existing window was put in by a previous owner and is high up and cannot be looked out of due to our floor height being lower than the neighbour’s garden height. The neighbour of course could walk up to the window from their garden and look straight in if so minded. The only change to this window - which would then become the bathroom window on the plan - was to put in a split frame where an internal partition would go

and glaze it with obscured glass rather than the current clear glass. It was never in the plan to be an opening window as stated in the objections.

Neither can I change that our bungalow sits on lower ground with a two storey house standing on higher ground opposite looking straight into not just our bedroom windows but those of Victoria bungalow and Avondale – we have to use blinds to maintain our privacy. Reading the plans would reveal that the centre roof light (where the proposed dormer was) is there to light an atrium created inside the front door and hallway - you would need to be 15feet tall to look horizontally out of that roof light. The stair access, landing and bedroom are all at the rear, and the other roof lights look to the sky. The rear dormer windows look out over our garden and farmland beyond. The dormer construction screens any side view of the next door property. The use of brick and tile to match the existing construction will minimise impact from any side view.

Drainage matters have also been raised. There are and will be two people living at the address as now. The cesspit and drainage is subject of an Environment Agency licence and annual maintenance plan for the first time in the properties recent history.

Lastly Highway safety matters have now been raised. There are and will only be two cars at the address – the property has a garage, a carport and space for 3 vehicles on the driveway – I make that 5 spaces. Our driveway exits onto the main road not directly into the mouth of the Old Lenham Road junction as does the property opposite. Any danger at the junction would be much improved if the red hatchback car didn't park a few yards into the Old Lenham Road forcing traffic onto the wrong side of the road on a blind bend. Our plans do not affect parking or road safety.

Chair I believe this revised plan mitigates any adverse impact of what is a proposed loft conversion to a bungalow and that we have shown that we have done everything possible to accommodate the reasonable and material objections to this application.

With reference to Planning Application 17/503456/FULL we wish to respond to the comments submitted by the Parish Council on the Swale planning portal citing disproportionate mass of the development, loss of a bungalow provision and being the cause of parking issues.

The issue of proportionality was discussed at the Parish Meeting of 14/8/17 when it was accepted that the next door Victoria Bungalow had a steeper, longer roof pitch and a higher ridge than Woodstock. For clarity the extension of the roof on its existing plane of 700mm would still not be as high as Victoria Bungalow ridge thus maintaining proportion of the bungalow itself and in comparison to its neighbour. Avondale and Eynsford are both larger bungalows with higher rooves standing well back from the established road line on which Woodstock and Vitoria bungalow sit.

The design changes to the dormer windows limit the eastward view and we are quite willing to reposition the window further westward to avoid any likelihood of overlooking the next door property.

As to the matter of loss of bungalow provision this was not fully discussed at the extraordinary Parish Council meeting nor cited as a reason for potential objection so no representation on that matter was made, which I would have done. The representation is relevant to the nature of the application and is of a personal medical nature. I have two medical conditions which will mean that I am very likely to experience an early loss of mobility. Further details have been supplied to Parish Councillors in a confidential email and can be supplied if required.

The proposed works to Woodstock will convert the ground floor which is currently inaccessible for people with disabilities into a fully accessible living space with a hallway leading to the open plan kitchen, dining and lounge area, level access from the rear patio doorway and a 'wet room' level access shower in the ensuite/bathroom to the master bedroom. This will future proof the property for my future needs and create a valuable asset for the village for the future as a fully accessible property.

The loft conversion does provide additional bedrooms but compliments use of the ground floor and does so in the least intrusive way – it does not create another storey to the property when viewing from the front, and so cannot in any sense be described as a house. The ground floor accommodation remains mixed use (living and sleeping) – which defines a bungalow. It will be the same as a chalet bungalow (though not identifiable as such from the front and roadway) of which there are many others in the village and therefore will remain available as an accessible bungalow in the mix of accommodation in the village.

The market will always dictate the occupancy of types of properties on a supply and demand basis unless in state or housing association ownership when their use can be dictated and preserved for specific client groups. There are examples in the village of people buying bungalows as the only available and affordable properties which is likely to remain so unless further bespoke development is permitted.

Finally on road parking is cited in the comments, I demonstrated at the Parish Council meeting that the bungalow has 5 parking spaces with a garage, carport and 3 driveway spaces far more than similar properties. There are two occupants with two cars living at the property. There is no evidence to justify singling out Woodstock as a potentially greater contributor to on road parking than other properties in the village. I do not believe this application incurs section 106 or CIL liability but if all the properties in the Street are equally levied we will happily contribute to highway safety changes in addition to the precept for highway and parish spending already paid.

5.02 Neighbours were re-consulted on the amended scheme but the three neighbours have all written again maintaining their objections with the following new points on the scheme and on the applicants' response to their objections;

- The bungalow was built as a small two bedroom property on a small plot. This proposal will mean losing one of the few smaller properties suitable for the elderly and disabled in the village who need such properties. Although the applicants suggest that the village is gaining a disabled friendly bungalow it is not gaining anything at all through these plans, contrary to Government advice for people to downsize
- The applicant's medical issues do not suggest the creation of new accommodation at first floor level if he is going to be unable to use stairs unless some form of stair lift is incorporated. It would be better to extend at single storey level
- Neighbouring bungalows are built on much bigger plots and have not been extended. The same applies to other larger properties in the village
- The driveway is opposite a road junction and whilst the owner says there are 5 parking spaces I disagree, and the changes will mean more traffic making the situation even more dangerous. Neighbours have sufficient parking for their needs and only the applicant should pay for any new parking restrictions
- The property is built on lower ground and the changes will make the property look out of keeping with its neighbours and have a significant effect upon the appearance of the conservation area; it will call into question the point of having conservation areas
- The resultant "chalet bungalow" will in fact be a four bedroomed house

- The dormers despite being moved will allow people to see into my living room and front bedroom and into gardens, compromising privacy
- The applicants' family circumstances do not require the proposed alterations
- The applicants do not appreciate that not all the village is within the conservation area
- The side bathroom window to Avondale has been in place for many years and is obscure glazed meaning that little of the applicants' garden can be perceived from inside
- The applicants' side window can only be seen into from a step ladder and was added after the property had been extended. It could be filled in to save maintenance problems
- The amendments have made no difference to my initial concerns

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.01 Doddington Parish Council objected to the initial scheme as follows:

“Woodstock is currently a small detached bungalow set in a row of small detached bungalows within the Conservation Area of the village of Doddington.

The provision of bungalows is important in the mix of housing stock in Doddington and Swale. Erosion of that provision by applications such as this where the applicant has bought a bungalow and now seeks to turn it into a two storey house should be resisted to maintain the choice of dwellings for older and single/smaller households in the Borough and particularly within the rural area of Swale.

Policy DM 11 of the adopted Swale Local Plan deals with applications such as this in the second paragraph. In the view of Doddington Parish Council this application fails to be of appropriate scale, mass and appearance in relation to the location because of the sensitive location within a conservation area, the proximity of adjoining bungalows and the setting of those bungalows within the street scene

As an example the proposed second storey windows on the north east face would overlook the neighbouring property with a direct view into the neighbour's bedroom resulting in a serious loss of amenity.

Doddington Parish Council also has grave concerns on the issues that increased parking on the road will cause on the road outside Woodstock, on a dangerous junction with a dwelling with increased occupancy at this location. Should Swale Borough Council be minded to pass this application then a condition relating to a no parking restriction on the road outside Woodstock should be imposed with the applicant funding the restriction.”

6.02 The Parish Council has noted the amended drawing and acknowledge the improvements tabled to address objectors' concerns. However, they remain concerned about the development's compliance with policy DM11 and the potential hazard of uncontrolled on road parking outside Woodstock as per previous submissions, and feels that matters are best considered and weighed in the balance by the Planning Committee.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

Application papers and drawings referring to application reference 17/503456/FULL.

8.0 APPRAISAL

- 8.01 As an extension to a property within the built-up area of the village the principle of the proposal is already in accordance with established planning policy. The Parish Council's references to policy DM11 relate to dwellings outside built-up area boundaries where a policy of modest extension (with a guideline of a maximum 60% enlargement of original floorspace) applies. This is not applicable here and the main issues of concern here are amenity, privacy, design, parking and impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and AONB.
- 8.02 In design terms the alterations are well considered, having very little impact on the frontal appearance of the property – simply a slightly higher ridge line and two rooflights which could be installed today under Permitted Development rights. At the rear a short section of vertical wall will support the rear eaves above which will sit two new pitched roof dormers facing up the garden to the hillside beyond. Between these dormers would be two rooflights serving the bathroom and staircase. These dormers are well designed to accord with our published advice. The proposed new ridge height will be similar to adjacent bungalow Victoria with which Woodstock is seen, and in my view the alterations will have a broadly neutral impact on the conservation area and AONB.
- 8.03 The Parish Council's overriding concern appears to be about loss of a small bungalow, but on a site within the village there are no policies to prevent a householder seeking to extend or improve his property, or to make maximum use of his site, or maximise its value. The market can influence this matter and bungalows can be desirable. However, in this case the changes will not take away the flexibility to use the property as a bungalow in the longer term, either by the applicants or by others. I would advise members that there is no ground for refusal of the application based on these considerations.
- 8.04 The question of privacy features strongly in objections and I have considered this carefully. I cannot see any objection to front rooflights on the basis that the neighbour opposite may be able to see into new bedrooms. However, I did take careful note of the unusual relationship between Woodstock and the adjacent bungalow Avondale which is set well back from the highway. Looking from the front bedroom window of Avondale the rear roof slope of Woodstock can be seen at an angle. Although the initial plans only provided for a fairly acute angle of possible view between the nearer dormer and the front window I did ask the applicants to re-position this dormer on the furthest corner of the new bedroom to minimise the potential for overlooking here, and they agreed. It will now be very difficult to see the front window at Avondale from within the bedroom and the angle of view will be acute, preventing any meaningful opportunity for loss of privacy.
- 8.05 Finally, with regard to car parking I am very conscious that Woodstock face the junction of The Street with Old Lenham Road at a bend in The Street. For a four bedroom property the current Kent parking standard is for at least two car spaces. Two spaces already exist on the driveway plus there is garage and room to park two cars behind gates opening onto the driveway. I see this as more than enough to cater for the reasonable needs of the property even in the proposed extended state.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.01 I have considered all matters raised by the Parish Council and by neighbours, and have visited the immediate neighbour to properly understand their concern over loss of privacy. As a result the scheme has been amended to address all reasonable concerns and I can see no planning objections to it now

10.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The facing materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those on the existing building in terms of type, colour and texture.

Reasons: In the interests of visual amenity

- (3) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

The Council's approach to this application:

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- Offering pre-application advice
- Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.
- As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

Amendments were sought to the design of the proposed alterations to overcome amenity and design issues. Once these were received the application was deemed to be acceptable.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

