

Our ref: DS/Robb

21st March 2024

South Gloucestershire Council
Department for Environment and
Community Services,
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Strategic Planning,
Bristol BS37 0DD

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Dear Sir,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Change of use and conversion of garage/workshop to dwelling at
Edgecombe Garage, Abson, South Gloucestershire, BS30 5TT.**

1. We are instructed by the owner of the above site, Mr Thomas Robb, to prepare and submit this full planning application for the change of use and conversion of the garage/workshop (Class B2) to a dwelling (Class C3) at the above site.
2. Please find enclosed in support of this application:
 - The completed planning application forms and certificates;
 - The Design and Access Statement (this letter);
 - The Location and Site Plan, numbered AR-JH-01;
 - The Existing Elevations and Floor Plan, numbered AR-JH-02;
 - The Proposed Elevations and Floor Plan, numbered AR-JH-03;
 - The Structural Report by BTA, dated 14th March 2024;
 - CIL additional information form; and,
 - The application fee of £578.

Background

3. Edgecombe Garage is located at Abson, between the villages of Wick and Pucklechurch, within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. The garage sits to the south of the settlement. The application site measures some 0.04 hectares (0.1 acres).
4. The garage is set back from the road and consists of the main brick rendered building to the front and an adjoining larger building to the rear. The building has also been extended over the years to the south and the east. These two extensions are used for storage and an office in relation to the car repair business.

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5. Edgecombe Garage is an MOT centre has been a small business run by Mr Robb for many years. He now wishes to retire and convert the garage into a dwelling.

Planning History

6. There is no planning history relevant to this application.

The Development

Design

7. The proposed conversion of the garage/workshop to a single storey 3 bedroom dwelling in an 'L' shaped form, will be created within the existing fabric of the building. The existing lean-tos on the north and east elevations will be removed. These are later add-ons to the original building and are not of high quality build. The canopy on the west elevation will also be removed.
8. The dwelling will be accessed by an existing doorway on the central south elevation, by a half glazed door. The interior will comprise of a utility room, an open plan kitchen/dining/living room, a bathroom, 3 bedrooms one of which has an en-suite. The master bedroom will also have access to the front of the property via bi-fold doors, in place of the original roll down garage door.
9. The current windows will be replaced with new double glazed windows. There will be an additional window inserted in the en-suite on the east elevation, as well as in bedroom 3 on the south elevation. The current sliding door entrance to the garage will be replaced with blockwork finished with render to match the existing, below a three pane double glazed window.

Materials

10. Any materials used on the exterior of the building will match the existing materials, respecting the character of the existing building. As mentioned above, we propose uPVC double glazed windows (frame colour to be agreed) and doors for the dwelling, which is in keeping with the existing and will ensure the dwelling is warm and secure, with the ability to provide ventilation and means of escape.

Parking, access and highways

11. Two parking spaces will be provided at the front of the dwelling in a north/south direction, against the south boundary. This will ensure that vehicles can access and egress the site in forward gear, as there will be ample space for movement to the north of the plot.

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12. Abson Road has a speed limit of 30mph which extends a good distance outside the built up area of the village. There is good visibility when accessing and egressing the site. There is a slight bend in the road to the south, however, there have been no major incidents recorded in this area, to our knowledge. Overall, the change of use from commercial use to a single dwelling will result in a reduction in vehicle movement into and out of the site.

Relevant Planning Policies

13. Under the provisions of section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the current time, the statutory development plan in respect of this application comprises of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revision December 2023), the South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006 - 2027 (SGCS) (adopted December 2013), the South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Policies, Sites and Places Plan (SGPSP) (adopted November 2017) and the Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted March 2021).

National Planning Policy

14. We understand that the NPPF is relevant to new proposals and that the NPPF expects local planning authorities (LPAs) to plan positively for sustainable development. The three objectives to sustainability are economic, social and environmental, these are reflected in the policies of the NPPF as well as local policies.
15. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and explains *for decision-taking this means:*
 - c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or***
 - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:***
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or***
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.***
16. Paragraph 38 says that the LPAs should, ***work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.***

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17. Paragraph 70 states that (inter alia); ***Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.***
18. Paragraph 115 says that, ***Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.***
19. Paragraph 135 sets out the criteria for well designed places (inter alia):
Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
 - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;***
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).***
20. Paragraph 154 discusses exceptions of new development in the Green Belt, the most relevant point to this application is; (c) ***the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.***
21. Paragraph 165 states that; ***Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.***
22. Paragraph 174 states that; ***Applications for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but it should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments set out in footnote 59.***
23. Footnote 59 of the NPPF says; ***A site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving: sites of 1 hectare or more; land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.***

Local Planning Policy

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24. We consider that the relevant policies in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy 2006 - 2027; CS1 High quality design, CS4a Presumption in favour of sustainable development, CS5 Green Belt boundary, PSP7 Development in the Greenbelt and PSP40 Residential development in the countryside, as set out below.
25. CS1: High quality design - ***Development will only be permitted where the highest possible standards of design and site planning are achieved. Information submitted with an application should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of the proposal.***
26. CS4a: Presumption in favour of sustainable development - ***When considering proposals for sustainable development the Council will take a positive approach. It will work pro-actively with applicants to find solutions so that sustainable development can be approved wherever possible.***
27. CS5 Location of development, the relevant part of this policy talks of development proposals within the Green Belt, they must comply with the NPPF and local plan policies in the Core Strategy.
28. PSP7 Development in the Greenbelt - ***Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and will not be acceptable unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm.*** It continues; ***Additions and alterations to buildings in the Green Belt will be acceptable provided they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.***
29. PSP40 Residential development in the countryside, states that development in the open countryside will be acceptable if (in point 4) (inter alia) ***the conversion and re-use of existing buildings for residential purposes where:***
 - i) ***The building is of permanent and substantial construction; and***
 - ii) ***It would not adversely affect the operation of the rural business.***
30. Furthermore, the above is considered ***acceptable where where they do not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside, or the amenities of the surrounding area.***
31. The Traditional Rural Buildings SPD states that; ***To demonstrate a conversion of any traditional rural building is possible, evidence must be provided in the form of a structural survey to demonstrate that the building is structurally sound, large enough and capable of accommodating the conversion. A conversion where substantial rebuilding of the original structure is required (so effectively a rebuild) will be considered a new dwelling rather than a conversion and will not be supported in the majority of cases. Along with there being clear planning policy implications, in such cases where the level of reconstruction is tantamount to a "new build", it will be considered that with the loss of in situ fabric, the architectural and***

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historic interest of the building is lost and with it the justification for the conversion.

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

32. The principle of residential development in the open countryside is considered acceptable with the conversion of an existing building if the building is of permanent and substantial construction. A structural survey was carried out on the building and the report forms part of this application. The report concludes that; *the conversion of these buildings can, in our opinion, be carried out without major reconstruction of structural elements.*
33. The conversion will be carried out retaining the structure of the building, this will not be a re-build. The building is capable of accommodating the conversion and will be large enough to form the 3 bedroom dwelling.
34. The proposal will not adversely impact the operation of the rural business as the applicant is the business owner and would like to retire and the building would be unused. There is no policy requirement to show that the building is no longer required for commercial use. Therefore, the conversion of the garage to dwelling will ensure that the building would not become vacant and run down.
35. Moreover, the proposal will not have a harmful effect on the character of the area as this is a conversion of an existing building which will be sympathetically adapted to form a dwelling. This accords with PSP40 of the SGPSP and the Traditional Rural Buildings SPD. Therefore we consider the principle acceptable.

Green Belt

36. It is well established that the change of use of an existing building in the Green Belt does not conflict with Green Belt policy. The alteration of the building will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building. Indeed, the removal of the extensions to the building will increase the openness of the Green Belt. There will be no extensions to the building and the majority of the original structure remain in situ, in accord with the NPPF and the SGPSP.

Sustainability

37. The development is located within the existing built up area of the village of Abson. The site is located just over 1km from Pucklechurch to the north and

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around 2km from Wick to the south. These villages contain the essential services required by the residents in the village of Abson. The villages can easily be reached by bicycle.

38. Bus number 620 runs between Old Sodbury and Bath, stopping on the main road that runs through Abson at regular periods throughout the day, Monday to Saturday. The bus stops at various towns and villages along the route to and from the city of Bath. This accords with the NPPF and the SGCS.

Access, Highways and Parking

39. The site is located on Abson Road which has a speed limit of 30mph that extends a good distance outside the built up area of the village. There is clear visibility to the north when accessing and egressing the site. There is a slight bend in the road in the southerly direction. However, the site has been used for many years by the applicant and cars relating to the business and there have only been 2 slight incidents, to the south of the bend, in 2005, according to Crash Map.
40. There are grass verges that run along both sides of the highway, which provides a safe walking space for residents to travel by foot between houses or to the village church.
41. The difference in traffic movements for proposed dwelling will be nominal compared to the existing garage use. There will be no unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor will the cumulative impact on the highway be severe.
42. The proposed dwelling is set back from the highway, Abson Road, with ample space to park at least 2 cars in front of the property. Due to the layout of the parking spaces, vertical to the southern boundary with ample space to the north, cars will be able to access and egress the site in forward gear. This meets the requirements of the South Gloucestershire Council Residential Parking Standards (adopted December 2013), which states a minimum of 2 allocated parking spaces should be provided for a 3 bedroom dwelling.

Design, Character and Appearance

43. The proposed dwelling has been designed with minimal alterations to the exterior, thus having very little or no impact to the visual appearance of the building and the character of the area. The only additions will be 3 new window openings, one of which being in place of the existing sliding steel door. The windows are essential to enable light and air into the rooms of the dwelling.
44. There is ample amenity space to the front, rear and side of the property. There will be no negative impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties,

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on the contrary, the change of use to residential will be quieter than some of the machinery used in the garage and the visual appearance of a dwelling will be more attractive than a garage.

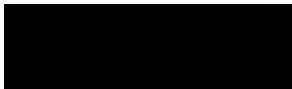
Flooding and Drainage

45. The site, which is less than 1 hectare, is located within Flood Zone 1. Therefore, there is less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers. Surface water will be disposed of via soakaways, as existing.
46. Sewage will be disposed of via mains sewer, as existing.

Concluding Summary

47. We consider that the proposed change of use from garage to dwelling is acceptable in principle. The site is in an existing village, a sustainable location close to essential services, with a regular bus service.
48. The original structure and fabric of the building will remain in situ and the conversion to a dwelling has been designed to be sympathetic to the existing character of the area.
49. The proposed dwelling will include parking to the front of the property and there will be no unacceptable impact on the highway.
50. The proposal complies with the relevant local and national policies.
51. We trust that you have all the necessary information that you require to validate and determine this application and if the officer does require any information or clarification on any element of the proposal we invite a discussion during the determination process.

Yours faithfully,



Debbie Silver