

**PLANNING (SITE VISITS) SUB COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013**

**ENVIRONMENT SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING – N. PEARCE**

**PART 1 – PSVS-250413-REP-EN-NP**

**SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION**

**1. PLANNING APPLICATION RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL**

<b><u>ITEM 1</u></b>	
<b><u>APPLICATION NO:</u> P/2012/484</b>	<b><u>DATE:</u> 25/02/2013</b>
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	<b>Single storey front and side extension</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>81 Graig Road, Gellinudd Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 3DS</b>
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	<b>Mr Nicholas Long</b>
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>Householder</b>
<b>WARD:</b>	<b>Rhos</b>

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Background**

This application has been deferred for a site visit to assess the siting of the property in relation to the surrounding area, and to assess the impact of the extension upon the dwelling house to which it relates and the attached dwelling houses.

This application was originally reported to committee at the request of the ward member, to assess the impact of the proposal on the primary elevation of the dwellinghouse.

**Publicity and Responses (if applicable)**

Cilybebyll Community Council – No Objection

The application was advertised on site and 2 neighbouring properties were consulted – No response

**Description of Site and its Surroundings**

The application property was originally one large two storey house which has been extended and sub-divided to form three dwellings. The application property is the western wing of the original building, and has itself been extended in the form of a two storey side extension on its northern elevation. The property is set within large grounds to the front and side of the dwelling and the applicant owns the field to the north of the application site. The property is accessed off a long driveway via the highway layby at the top of Alltwen Hill.

The existing application property is constructed with a pitched roof finished in slate, the elevations are finished in render painted a sand colour and the fenestration is white.

The application site is located outside the settlement limits as defined within Policy H3 of the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

**Brief description of proposal (e.g. size, siting, finishes)**

This application seeks full planning permission for a single storey front and side conservatory extension.

The conservatory will be 'L' shaped in footprint extending from the side elevation of the dwelling and wrapping around the front elevation. It measures 7 metres in length and 2.4 metres in width along the north-south section and 6.6 metres in length and 2.4 metres in width along the east-west section. The conservatory will be 2.7 metres to the eaves rising to a height of 3.5 metres to the top of the mono pitched roof.

The conservatory will have a polycarbonate roof, with the elevations comprising of dwarf walls with windows above and a door on both of the

two elevations. The dwarf walls on both side elevation range from a height of between 1.4 metres and 1.8 metres. There will be steps leading down from the front and side doors and there will be a further set of steps at the end of the conservatory leading to the path at the front of the dwelling.

The dwarf wall will be finished in render which will be painted to match the existing dwelling, with white Upvc fenestration and a polycarbonate roof.

### **Material Considerations**

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the impact upon the amenities of residents within neighbouring properties, and the impact upon the highway and pedestrian safety.

## Policy Context

Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan:

GC1 New Buildings/Structures and Changes of Use  
ENV17 Design  
ENV1 Development in the Countryside  
ENV8 Developments in the Countryside

### Household Extension Design Guide

## Visual Amenity

Whilst the principle of an extension to an existing dwelling within the open countryside is generally acceptable, the guidance note contained within paragraph 8.12.5 of Policy ENV8 states that “proposals for replacement dwellings and for conversion to and the extension of existing dwellings will be expected to enhance the countryside. They should take the opportunity to provide a design which may be innovative, but which respects the design, scale and layout of dwellings in the local countryside. The size and bulk of the proposed building is likely to have a major influence on its visual impact, and proposals should not normally exceed the footprint or cubic content of the original building by more than 20%”.

It has been calculated that the footprint of the existing dwellinghouse as extended is as follows:

<b>Existing</b>		<b>Total</b>
Original house	13.0m x 4.5m =	58.50m <sup>2</sup>
Previous Extension	5.0m x 4.6m =	23m <sup>2</sup>
	Total =	81.5m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Proposed</b>		
Original house and Previous Extension		81.5m <sup>2</sup>
Conservatory	6.98 m x 2.4m & 4.2m x 2.4m =	26.83m <sup>2</sup>
	Total =	108.33m <sup>2</sup>

It can therefore be seen that the floor area of the proposed conservatory together with the floor area of the existing extension amounts to an area of 49.83, which is a percentage increase of 85.18% over and above the floor area of the original dwellinghouse.

The previous extension was approved back in 1989, as it was considered that the extension would provide space to create a more modern standard of living accommodation for the applicant and the majority of the additional massing was viewed against the existing dwelling, so taking this into consideration and taking into consideration the design and materials of the proposal the extension was deemed to be acceptable. It should be noted that planning policy has changed significantly since that date.

This proposal seeks to extend the property further and even though the proposal is a single storey 'L' shaped conservatory, its scale together with its siting, wrapping around the front (Primary) elevation of this property dictates that it will undermine the traditional design and proportions of this dwellinghouse, in addition to dominating and unbalancing this primary elevation, to the detriment of its overall visual amenity, and the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

It is noted that other properties in the vicinity of the site have previously been extended but it should also be noted that all applications must be considered on their individual merit and planning policy and guidance specifically in relation to design have changed over the years whereby there is a greater emphasis now placed on design. Furthermore the fact that there are other extensions close by which are unattractive does not justify the approval of further unacceptable developments.

In terms of design, TAN 12 states that developments should be well designed, and if the design of proposals are inappropriate in their context, or fail to grasp opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area or building, they should not be accepted, as they could have a detrimental effect on existing communities.

Discussions have taken place with the applicant when the concerns regarding the scale and siting of the conservatory, wrapping around the front elevation were explained. It was also suggested that if the proposal was amended to remove the element of the conservatory which extended

across the front elevation of the dwellinghouse, thereby restricting it to a side conservatory only, it was likely that the proposal would be supported. This was on the basis that its reduced scale and siting only on the side elevation would no longer dominate or adversely affect the proportions of the dwellinghouse. Despite this advice, the applicant wishes the application to be considered in its current form.

It is therefore considered that the location of the application site within the open countryside, together with the size and siting of the proposed conservatory wrapping around the front (Primary) elevation of the dwellinghouse would dominate and unbalance the appearance of the original dwellinghouse in terms of scale, design and proportions to the detriment of its character and appearance and also the visual amenity of the surrounding rural area.

This view is underpinned by a recent planning appeal (APP/2089772 on application P2008/438). In his decision the Inspector noted that the proposed extension would result in the removal of certain unattractive features relating to the existing building. However, he felt the addition of a large extension approximately 100% of the size of the existing dwelling would significantly change the proportions of the building, and as such would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In dismissing the appeal, he also considered that the removal of the unsightly elements did not outweigh the additional harm created by the proposed extensions. Whilst it is accepted that each application must be considered on their merit, this appeal decision demonstrates the fact that Planning Inspectors are supporting the Authority's policy on extensions to dwellinghouses outside settlement limits.

### **Residential Amenity (e.g. Overlooking, Overbearance, Overshadowing)**

The extension will be an 'L' shaped extension which will extend up to the boundary of the neighbouring property (No 85), the applicant has served notice on the owner of this property and has submitted certificate B as part of the planning application. Due to the orientation of the dwellings, after the subdivision of the original dwelling, this neighbouring property has first floor windows overlooking the proposal, however as the application is only single storey and as the side wall of the conservatory which faces towards this neighbouring property is a solid wall, it is

considered that the proposal would not create any unacceptable overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing issues.

With regard to the neighbouring property (No 83), as this property is sited at the far southerly end of the application site the proposal will end approximately 7 metres from the boundary with this neighbouring property, which is considered a sufficient distance to ensure that the development would not create any unacceptable overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing issues.

It is considered therefore that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing. As a consequence, the amenities of neighbouring residents will be safeguarded.

#### **Highway Safety (e.g. Parking and Access)**

There is adequate space with the application site to provide adequate off-street car parking for the dwellinghouse as extended. As a result it is not considered that the development will adversely affect highway or pedestrian safety.

#### **Others (including objections)**

None.

#### **Conclusion**

It is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon the amenities of residents within nearby dwellings or upon highway and pedestrian safety. However, it is considered that the scale of the proposed conservatory and its siting wrapping around the front, which is the primary elevation of the dwellinghouse, will result in the introduction of an extension which dominates the primary elevation and further detracts from the original scale, together with the traditional design and proportions associated with the original dwellinghouse. Policy ENV 8 identifies that extensions to properties outside settlement limits should not exceed 20% of the floorarea of the original dwellinghouse unless it protects the scale and proportions of the dwellinghouse. In this case the extension when

measured with the previously constructed extension significantly exceeds the 20% threshold and does not protect the scale, design and proportions of this traditional property. It is therefore considered that the proposal would result in the addition of an incongruous and unbalancing addition to the property on the primary elevation of the dwelling, which would adversely affect its overall appearance to the detriment of the open countryside. Hence, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies GC1, ENV1, ENV8 and ENV17 of the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan, together with the objectives of the design guide for household extensions.

### **Recommendation**

Refusal

### **REASONS FOR REFUSAL**

(1) It is considered that the excessive size of the proposed conservatory together with its modern design and siting which wraps around the front elevation of this traditional dwellinghouse, will introduce an incongruous and unbalancing feature on the front elevation. This will in turn undermine the design, scale and proportions of the original dwellinghouse to the detriment of its visual amenity and the character and appearance of its rural setting. Hence, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies GC1, ENV1, ENV8 and ENV17 of the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan, together with the objectives of the Household extension design guide.