

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Wendy Ormsby

Parish: South Pool

Application No: 48/1099/15/F

Agent/Applicant:

Richard Atkinson
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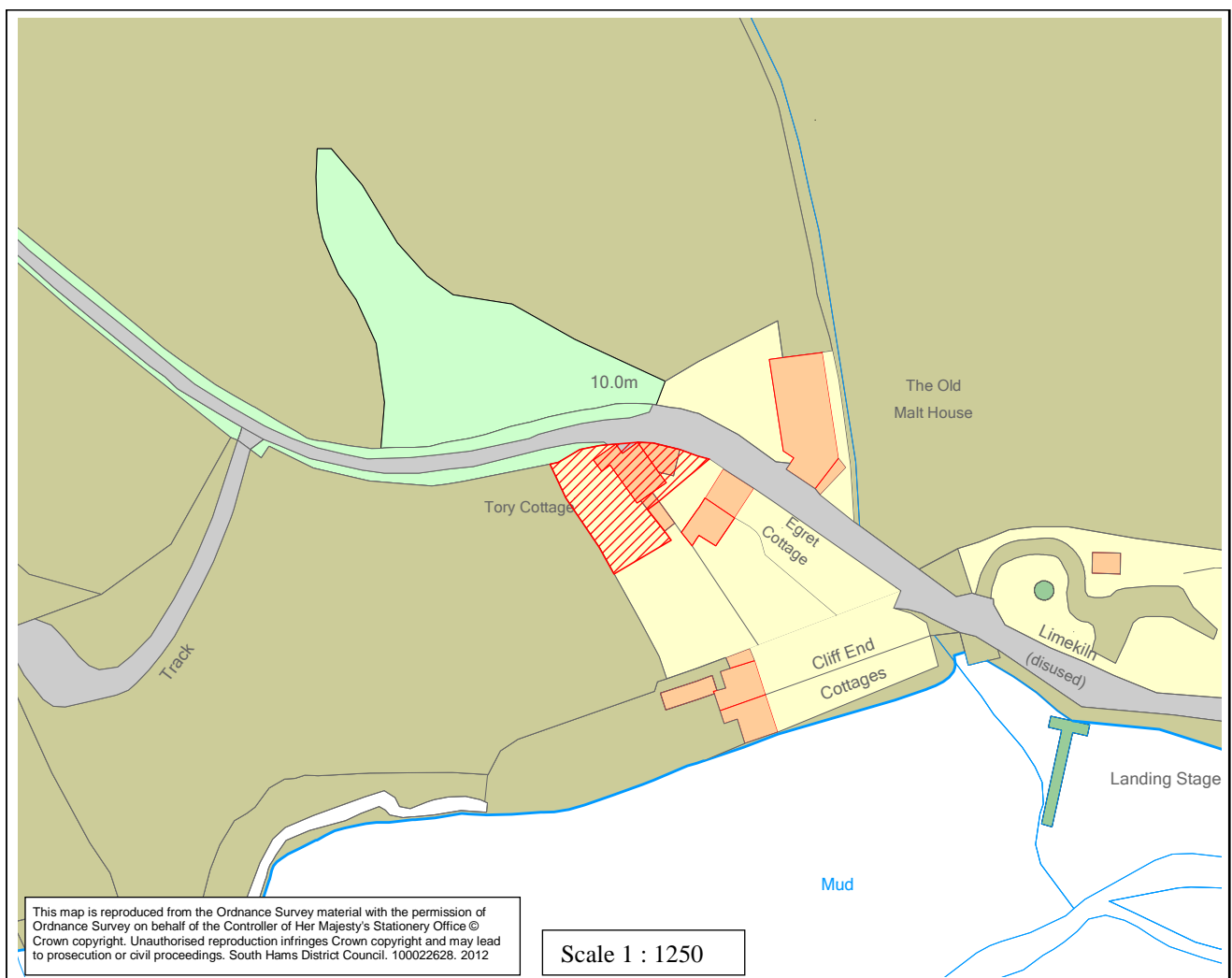
Applicant:

Mr C Cameron
The Sail Loft
South Pool
Kingsbridge, TQ7 2RZ

Site Address: The Sail Loft, South Pool, Kingsbridge, TQ7 2RZ

Development: Householder application for refurbishment of dwelling including single storey extension, new two storey link between main house and new extension and new landscape and patio to garden (resubmission of application 48/0409/15/F)

Reason item is being put before Committee: Having regard to the objections from the Conservation Officer and the recommendation for approval being at odds with this specialist advice it is considered appropriate for this application to be considered by Committee.



Recommendation: Conditional Approval

Conditions

Time

Accords with plans

Samples of materials to be agreed including stone samples.

Window on north east elevation to be maintained as high level.

No windows to be inserted in north west elevation.

Details of hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatment.

Tree protection scheme to be agreed and implemented.

Unsuspected contamination

Site Description:

The Sail Loft is a traditional 19th century two storey building that has been modified over time with the addition of a car port at the front and a small side extension. It is set into sloping land so has bedrooms on the ground floor, with living accommodation above. The living accommodation has access to the rear garden which is level with the eaves of the building. The upper part of the building is painted render, the lower part is stone. The roof is fibre cement tiles.

The property fronts the road and is the last property as you leave the village, with farm land adjoining to the north. Access is from a narrow rural lane; this lane is bordered by an old stone wall and trees as it travels west from the application site. The property is part of a cluster of buildings sited at this north western end of South Pool. The building, set behind a pair of cottages is visible from only a limited number of locations. It is not visible from the main village of South Pool.

The Sail Loft is located within the north western corner of the recently extended South Pool Conservation Area and is within the South Devon AONB

The Proposal:

It is proposed to add a single storey rear extension with a link to the main house, to refurbish the main house and to provide a patio and landscaping in the garden. The main house will be re-furbished to provide three bedrooms and three bathrooms plus an additional W.C. The single storey extension will provide an open plan kitchen/dining/living room.

The Sail Loft is built into a hillside. The rear garden, currently accessed by steps from the rear of the house, is at eaves level with the rear of the house. This change in levels has led to an unusual relationship between the extension and the main house in that, despite the fact that it is only a single storey extension that is proposed, the extension will be level with the roof ridge of the main two storey house.

The extension will be cut into the existing ground level to keep it down to roof ridge height. It is a contemporary angular design with a flat roof but uses traditional materials of stone and cedar shingle cladding. High level windows are proposed on the side elevations and glazed doors are proposed in the south east elevation, facing South Pool Creek. These doors will open onto a new patio.

An enclosed stairway between the house and the extension will link the two parts. This has been designed to step downwards in height to reduce the bulk of the building at this point.

The existing car port at the front of the building will be re-roofed with PVC coated metal. The existing side extension will be removed.

The old stone wall that runs along the northern boundary with the road will be rebuilt and the crooked tree on this boundary will be removed. No other trees will be removed.

Consultations:

- County Highways Authority - standing advice
- Environmental Health Section - recommends unsuspected contamination condition
- Town/Parish Council – objects for the reasons summarised as follows:
 - Overdevelopment of the site
 - Detrimental to the whole area of South Pool Creek
 - Neighbour concerns regarding overloading of the sewage system
 - The site is within the extended conservation area, AONB and SSSI
- Conservation Officer – Objects – detailed comments as follows:

I visited the site on 17 June. While the site is generally well screened from public views, there are two points from which it will be clearly visible: a long view from across the river – viewpoint was a field gate immediately below the entrance to Gullett Farm – and from the road immediately to the north of the site. Based on the applicant's submitted photos it appears likely that there are other views from the water's edge along the creek where at least part of the proposed building would be visible.

The Sail Loft, which appears to have been formerly known as Tory Cottage, is one of a small group of vernacular buildings clustered around the area known as Cliff End. The recent conservation area appraisal (adopted 18 March 2015) identifies this cluster of vernacular buildings as being of sufficient importance to the historic character and appearance of the area for them to be included in South Pool conservation area. It is clear that the Sail Loft originated as an outbuilding associated with Egret Cottage, and the two buildings are linked by a courtyard and are enclosed within the same historic boundary wall. The conservation area appraisal states that the Sail Loft / Tory Cottage was formerly a carpenter's workshop.

This part of the conservation area is characterised by the cluster of 18th/19th Century buildings, which are informally positioned to focus on the river slipway. It is an inward-looking, intimate and small scale streetscape, which nestles into the steep slope of the hillside. Boundaries are generally characterised by rubble stone walls, which give way to hedgebanks as one moves away from the houses.

The conservation area management plan, adopted at the same time as the appraisal, devotes a paragraph to extensions and new outbuildings in the conservation area. I include it here for clarity:

Broadly speaking, development applications in South Pool endeavour to be sympathetic to the special environment but there has been a trend in recent years to increase the size of properties disproportionately and incorporate new outbuildings that are inappropriate in size and to their setting. This is especially the case along the Creek where development proposals may seek to enhance a property's views outwards but in doing so impact on the views inwards towards the property as seen from the road or more especially from the water on coming up the Creek.

Since the views to and from the Creek are so central to South Pool's landscape and the purpose of the Conservation Area designation (including the proposed extension – see below) the Council will always take views into consideration where there development proposals would affect them.

The conservation area appraisal and management plan have been formally adopted very recently following public consultation.

In my view, the proposed development would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. The proposed building will not sit comfortably in the streetscape, it does not nestle into the steeply-sloping hillside and it is not positioned to relate to the existing buildings.

The footprint of the proposed extension is almost the same as that of the existing house, and the flat roof will be at the same height as the ridge of the existing roof. The flue will be taller than the chimney on the main house. When viewed from the road to the north of the site the building will appear overdominant and out of place.

The linking section does not relate well to the eaves line of the existing building, and the two sections of pitched roof appear particularly awkward on the north elevation. The introduction of a new glazed door and a flight of steps to the road will fundamentally alter the character of the boundary and harm the character of the streetscape here, which at present is very quiet and draws the eye down the hill toward the slipway and the river.

I have no objection in principle to a contemporary design here, and in my view if anything is to work here, it will be a high quality contemporary design. If the proposed building were considerably reduced in size to respect the north gable of the house, dug into the ground such that the flat roof were approximately at the eaves height of the existing building and the floor height in line with the existing first floor of the building, if the link section were dramatically simplified and pared down, and if the north boundary treatment were amended to provide screening from the road, then it may be possible for a contemporary building of the type proposed to be sited here without harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

As the application stands at present, I could not recommend approval.

Representations:

Seven letters of objection have been received which can be viewed in full on the Council's web site. The reasons for objecting are summarised as follows:

- Out of keeping with the architecture of the village
- Contrary to Policy

- Too large
- Too modern
- Excessive glazing – will infringe dark sky policy
- Does not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area
- Shared septic tank does not have capacity for more intensive use of site
- Overlooking to The Old Malthouse
- Yennadon stone is the wrong stone type for the area
- General conservation advice is that it should be considered if it is appropriate for a site to be developed at all.

Relevant Planning History

48/2331/14/PREHH – Pre-application enquiry for single storey extension

48/0409/15/F – Refurbishment of dwelling, including single storey extension, new staircase link between main house and new extension and modification to garden and patio -
Withdrawn

Background

The applicants submitted a pre-application enquiry in 2014 to discuss an extension of the property. Various schemes were proposed and initially a contemporary flat roofed extension was preferred by the applicant. Due to concerns raised by the Parish Council this contemporary design was changed to an extension with a tiled, pitched roof. This was a taller, bulkier design. This was then submitted as application ref 48/0409/15/F. Local residents objected to this application on a number of grounds including height, bulk and overlooking. The Parish Council objected despite the more traditional design.

This application was withdrawn and in discussion with Officers a revised scheme was drawn up, reverting to the applicant's preferred flat roofed contemporary design which reduced the bulk of the extension. The revised scheme has a smaller footprint and is set at a lower level, incorporating sliding shutters to reduce the impact of the glazed patio doors.

Due to changes in staff at this Council there has been change in the Officers dealing with these negotiations. A number of Conservation Officers and Planning Officers have been involved in the pre-application advice and subsequent negotiations, including the Conservation Officer involved in the extension to the South Pool Conservation Area. Matters of design detail were discussed but no objection in principal was raised against this application by Officers.

Due to staff illness a further Conservation Officer has become involved in this application who has objected to the application as detailed above

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development/Sustainability:

The site is located within the countryside where South Hams LDF Policy DP17 states that proposals to extend dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where there will be no detrimental impact on the character, appearance and amenities of the site and surroundings. Extensions should be subordinate in scale and proportion to the original dwelling

Design/Impact on the Conservation Area:

The topography of the land around the Sail Loft has led to an unusual development proposal, where a single storey extension will be level with the roof ridge of a two storey house.

Normally officers would encourage an extension to read as a subordinate but integral part of the main house. In this instance however, it is the officer's opinion that the proposed extension will sit well in the site reading as a garden pavilion rather than as an extension, this is due to its size, design and location relative to the main house. Having regard to the fact that there are very limited views of the extension and the main house together this is considered appropriate in this context. For this reason the link between the extension and the house has been stepped down to allow visual separation between the extension and the main house.

As indicated in the Conservation Officer's report above, a contemporary design that will demonstrate how the building has evolved over time is more appropriate than a pastiche copy of the original. This contemporary design with a flat roof also minimises its bulk. The use of traditional materials of stone and cedar shingle cladding will tie the contemporary shape into its surroundings.

It is relevant to note that a stand-alone garden building of similar proportions to the application proposal could be built in the garden of the Sail Loft as Permitted Development.

As acknowledged by the Conservation Officer there are limited viewpoints to Sail Loft – there are distant views from the road running out of South Pool on the other side of the Creek and it is visible directly from its road frontage. It would be visible from any boat using the Creek. The property is not visible from the main village of South Pool.

The distant views from across the creek include a backdrop of tall mature trees behind the Sail Loft. The extension would not be prominent in the landscape; it is relatively small scale and uses natural materials that will blend into the landscape. It would not materially alter the character of the Conservation Area or adversely impact on the South Devon AONB.

The Conservation Officer's concerns focus on the impact of the extension on the street scene as you approach the site from the North West. However, the stone wall on this boundary is to be rebuilt to retain the narrow, rural character of this lane. Only one corner of the extension reaches the northern site boundary and the extension is set at an angle from the road, parallel with the main house, so will not be seen head on as you travel down this curved lane. It is this officer's opinion that the extension will not be unduly intrusive in the street scene and will not adversely impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Due to the siting of the extension it is unlikely that it will be visible from any other location except by users of the Creek, from where, set with a backdrop of mature trees and using natural materials that will blend into the surroundings, the visual impact is considered to be acceptable.

Residents have raised concerns about the amount of glazing on the front of the extension. The scheme includes a pair of sliding, slatted screens in front of the patio doors which will significantly reduce the amount of exposed glazing. There are very limited locations where this elevation will be visible from.

The proposed set of narrow stone steps from the road to provide access to the garden are of an appropriate design and scale, using traditional materials. They will not be out of place in this rural lane.

Whilst special regard must be had to development proposals within Conservation Areas, this designation does not preclude change. Illustrations provided as part of this application show how this part of South Pool Creek has gradually evolved over time and provides useful illustrations of how the development proposal will fit into the landscape.

The comments of a Conservation Officer are not lightly put aside, but in this case it is considered that the proposed extension will adequately preserve the character of the Conservation as required by Policy DP6 of the South Hams LDF.

Neighbour Amenity:

Concerns have been raised by occupants of The Old Malt House that overlooking of their property will arise from the window in the north east facing elevation.

This is a high level window set at an oblique angle to the Old Malt House which is located on the other side of the road to the east. It is considered that no significant overlooking of this property will result. Conditions will ensure it is retained as such.

Due to the location of the extension and the topography of the land there will be no significant overlooking of properties located to the south of the Sail Loft.

Highways/Access:

There is no change to the vehicular access and there is adequate on site parking

Drainage

Neighbours have raised concerns about increasing the size of the Sail Loft having regard to the capacity of a shared septic tank. The Sail Loft shares a septic tank with neighbours and it is located within the grounds of Egret Cottage. It is understood that there is an agreement between the properties using this septic tank to pay for its maintenance.

The proposed development will result in one additional bedroom at the property which will have a limited impact on the volume of foul waste, if at all. The application includes a statement from a drainage engineer confirming that foul drainage currently runs to a shared septic tank and recommends this arrangement continues. Should at any time the septic tank require upgrading this would be a civil matter between the interested parties.

Trees/Landscaping

The application has been amended so that, with the exception of a crooked tree emerging from the boundary wall, existing trees on site can be retained, in response to comments on the previous application from the South Pool Tree Warden. A condition will address this further.

This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Planning Policy

NPPF

South Hams LDF Core Strategy

CS1 Location of Development

CS7 Design

CS9 Landscape and Historic Environment

Development Policies DPD

DP1 High Quality Design

DP2 Landscape Character

DP3 Residential Amenity

DP6 Historic Environment

DP7 Transport, Access & Parking

DP17 Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.