



## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Item Number:**  
**Application Number:**  
S/HOU/19/1799/CLWO

**Ward:** Blunsdon And Highworth  
**Parish:** Castle Eaton

**Proposal:** Conversion and extension of garage into habitable space.

**Site Location:** Rivermead, The Street, Castle Eaton, Swindon.

**Case Officer:** Mrs Clare Wood

**Agent:**  
Mr Rob Spurr  
Sun Design & Consultancy Ltd  
Southview  
22 Ham Road  
Wanborough  
SN4 0DF

**Applicant**  
Mr & Mrs Read  
  
c/o agent

### Officers Report

#### Background:

This application has been brought before the Planning Committee at the request of Castle Eaton Parish Council, (PC) due to concerns that the proposal does not enhance or preserve the character, appearance or setting of the Castle Eaton Conservation Area. The PC consider that previous alterations to the property have been incongruous and detrimental to the appearance of the property and the area, and this proposal would exacerbate this harm. The PC also considers that the proposal would have a negative impact on the neighbouring listed buildings.

#### Summary of Recommendation:

1. Planning permission be **GRANTED** with conditions.

#### The Proposal:

2. The proposed development would involve an extension to the existing garage in order to facilitate a workshop/hobby area on ground floor, alongside the conversion of the resulting roof space into a further bedroom. The proposal would extend the front elevation of the existing garage forward by 2.2 metres, and would increase the height of the garage by 1.6 metres. The resulting garage would be set down 1.6 metres from the ridgeline of the main

dwelling, and would be set back 1 metre from the front elevation of the main dwelling.

3. The proposal includes the installation of four roof lights, one to the front, one to the rear, and two to the side of the garage roof. An additional window will also be installed to the front gable, and one to the rear gable of the garage. Materials would consist of timber windows and a stone slate roof with matching imitation stone to the walls.

### **Site and Surroundings:**

4. Rivermead is located within the Castle Eaton Conservation Area on a corner plot set back from The Street. The existing dwelling is a two-storey detached property dating from the 1970's and is of a design typical of its period. The building is located within a sensitive area of the historic core of the village, and is positioned on a corner site at the intersection of The Street and the main access to the village from the north which leads to a bridge that crosses the Thames. The building is located opposite Bridge Cottage (Grade II), Bridge House (Grade II), and lies adjacent to 1 & 2 The Street (Grade II), and is within an Area of Distinct Identity.

### **Site History:**

5. There have been various applications to alter the dwelling Planning permission was granted for the two-storey side extension in 2002 (S/02/1140). The front façade of the porch was altered in 2014, but retains the original footprint.

### **Representations:**

6. Neighbours: Five letters of objection, and one letter of support received.

Two objections received from Bridge House raising concerns regarding the following matters:

- The existing dwelling already has a significant detrimental impact to the character of the Castle Eaton Conservation Area recently made worse by the erection of the prominent portico to the front of the building. The proposal would exacerbate this detrimental impact.
- The proposal would obstruct views of the Thames and countryside to the North of the property. Such views are an important part of the character of the area.
- The proposed extension will significantly increase the height of the existing roofline above and bring forward the face of the existing garage.
- The token use of natural stone roofing materials will not ameliorate the impact of the extension. The 2002 extension remains a different colour to the original and the proposed extension would present an imposing and lurid 3-colour frontage and 2-colour roof to the street.
- Castle Eaton's Conservation Area still retains some of its historic character despite the imposition of more recent inappropriate modern development.
- The house is surrounded by listed buildings and key buildings of interest. The proposals have a significant negative impact upon the setting of these buildings and the views from them.

One objection received from Greenaways Cottage raising concern regarding the following

matters:

- The property has already been over developed from an external perspective and has an incongruous façade. Further height to the development will be visible on what is a scenic approach to the village, detracting from the Grade II listed buildings in the immediate vicinity.

One objection received from The Old Post Office raising concern regarding the following matters:

- The house is in a conservation area where most of the other dwellings are either listed or of historical importance and it already stands out as not fitting in.
- Not long ago a large portico entrance was built which is not in keeping with the rest of the neighbourhood.
- The proposed extension only compounds the lack of sympathy to the surroundings and the façade which is being proposed is neither fitting in with the current dwelling nor will help mellow the building in with the other houses nearby.

One objection received from Bridge Cottage raising concerns regarding the following matters:

- Rivermead House is already extremely out of character with the surrounding historic houses of The Street, Castle Eaton. The front roadside aspect of the house is already a mishmash of different styles, none of which are attractive nor in keeping with the surrounding buildings, nor in keeping with that which would be expected acceptable within this key conservation area location on the River Thames.
- If this application were to be approved in its current state then this would further add to the un-attractive multiple un-matching styles appearance of the front roadside aspect of Rivermead House.
- Bridge Cottage believe that this planning application is an opportunity for the whole frontage of Rivermead to be improved in terms of its uniformity and style. However, at this stage there seems to be no effort demonstrated within the planning application to rectify this current flaw and the new extension will only significantly add to the un-attractiveness of Rivermead's front aspect in this way.

One letter of support from Maroubra Waters:

- This type of conversion will make little difference to the village outline, but will enhance the overall view of the building and should be encouraged.

## 7. Castle Eaton Parish Council: Objection.

- The PC advises that the site has been extensively developed to the point of being over-developed, and even more out of character than noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal 2002. It is already regarded as detrimental to the amenities of the neighbouring properties and immediate neighbours.
- The PC advises that the proposed development does not enhance or preserve the conservation area and is contrary to Policy EN10 of the Local Plan 2026.

- The current planning application will further exacerbate the statement that the property is 'out of character' with the Conservation Area and will severely damage the appearance of the Conservation Area, situated as it is to one of only three gateways to it.
- Although the property subject to this planning application is not a listed building, its neighbours are, and the current proposal will have a negative impact on these neighbouring properties, contrary to Policy EN10 of the Swindon Local Plan 2026.

8. Conservation Officer: No objection.

- On balance, the scheme is appropriate from a historic environment perspective subject to a roof light condition, ensuring that the roof lights are of a 'conservation type' which finishes flush with the plane of the roof in order to preserve the character of the conservation area.

### **Relevant Policy:**

#### **9. Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (2015)**

- Policy DE1 (High Quality Design)
- Policy EN10 (Historic Environment & Heritage Assets)
- Policy TR2 (Transport and Development)

#### **Material Planning Considerations**

- Adopted SPD Residential Extensions and Alterations (2011)
- National Design Guide 2019
- Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment: English Heritage (2008)
- Historic environment Good Practice Advice Notes 2, and 3
- Castle Eaton Conservation Area Appraisal
- Adopted DCGN Technical Guidance on Parking Standards (2007)

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (2018)**

### **Planning Considerations:**

10. The main issues to be considered are the design and appearance of the proposal in relation to the host dwelling, surrounding conservation area, nearby Listed Buildings, and the impact upon the neighbour's amenity.

### **Design:**

11. Policy DE1 (High Quality Design) of the SBLP seeks to ensure that there is a high standard of design of any development which is also sympathetic to the local context and character. Development should also be acceptable in terms of scale, mass, and siting and have an acceptable appearance. The proposed alterations at Rivermead are considered appropriate in size and style in order to retain the character of the property. Whilst the proposal will result in a larger and higher garage, the retention of a suitably sized set back from the front elevation of the dwelling, and set down from the main ridgeline of the dwelling will ensure that the garage remains a subordinate element of the dwelling. This accords with

guidance set out within the Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD in order to ensure that proposed extensions and alterations do not harm the integrity of the original dwelling. Overall, the proposal is deemed to be acceptable in design terms and is not considered to cause harm to the character or appearance of the host property in accordance with Policy DE1 and the SPD.

### **Residential Amenity:**

12. Policy DE1 also seeks to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties in respect of light, outlook, privacy, noise, disturbance, privacy and smell. The Adopted Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD states that the effect of an extension will be assessed with regard to the impact upon residential amenity to ensure there would not be unacceptable harm by reason of light, visual intrusion, privacy or nuisance (paragraph 2.7). The positioning of the proposed garage extension is at a suitable distance from neighbouring dwellings in order to ensure that there would not be any harmful impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents. The garage is positioned on the north-east elevation of the dwelling which sides onto a road.

### **Conservation/ Heritage Assets:**

13. In determining any planning application, the local planning authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas as set out in section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Regard should also be given to the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 127 and 184-202, alongside Policy EN10 (Historic Environment & Heritage Assets) of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026. Castle Eaton Conservation Area Appraisal is also relevant to this application.

14. As required by the relevant requirements policy and guidance, when assessing proposals to extend and alter a property, the LPA must also consider whether any harm is caused to the setting of a listed building or the character and appearance of the conservation area.

15. Whilst the proposed extension does increase the height of the existing garage, and also the forward projection, the scale and massing of the development is considered to appear appropriate in its context. The building is set back from the frontage and this helps to reduce the visual impact of the extension from the street scene. The roof lights would be conditioned as 'conservation type' which would finish flush with the plane of the existing roof and avoid unnecessary clutter. The Conservation Officer advises that the scheme is generally appropriate from a historic environment perspective. Natural stone slates are proposed.

16. In relation to the Conservation Area, the relevant elements of its significance include the historic layout and predominantly linear street pattern of the village; the setting of the village in a flat riverside pastoral landscape with significant views to surrounding countryside; the architectural and historic interest of the village's buildings and other structures including 17 listed buildings; the presence of the River Thames and the village's location on the Thames Path; prevalent use of local building materials, notably local stone which gives the area a distinctively Cotswold appearance; and trees, hedges and other vegetation especially were

these bound a road or footpath.

17. The Conservation Officer notes that whilst the development will increase the amount of built form to the dwelling, particularly when viewed from the key vantage point into the village from the bridge crossing the Thames, the effect is relatively minor with the scale, massing and setback of the existing building contributing to a subservient appearance. Taking this into account, it is considered that the scheme would cause neutral harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the associated area of distinct identity. The appearance and character of the conservation area will be preserved.

18. The Conservation Officer highlights that the surrounding listed buildings are experienced together along The Street and have a distinct identity which has contributions from their materials, design, construction and placement and group association with the foundations of the settlement. There is a positive contribution that the buildings have to the setting of the area, particularly views into the conservation area with the listed Bridge House and Bridge Cottage at the terminus of the road when travelling from the bridge that crosses the Thames. It is noted that there are improvements made to the materials proposed and that the site is relatively detached from The Street due to its setback.

19. Consideration and special attention has been paid to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the special regard given to the historic and architectural interest of the listed buildings which includes their setting. On balance, the scheme is considered appropriate from a historic environment perspective and would not harm the Castle Eaton Conservation Area or the setting of the nearby listed buildings, which is preserved..

### **Highways:**

20. Policy TR2 requires parking is provided in accordance with the Parking Standards (2007). The proposal demonstrates 3 no. off road parking spaces which complies with the Parking Standards (2007) requirement of 3 no. parking spaces per single family dwelling with 5+ bedrooms. As such, the proposal accords with Policy TR2.

### **CIL:**

21. The proposed development would be minor for the purposes of CIL legislation due to the proposed extensions floorspace falling below 100 sqm GIA. Therefore, no contribution towards CIL would be required.

### **Concluding Comments:**

22. The proposed extension is acceptable in design terms and is not considered to cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policy DE1 and the Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD. The proposal is also acceptable in terms of the impact it will have upon the Castle Eaton Conservation Area and surrounding heritage assets. The proposal would cause neutral harm to the significance of the heritage assets and is appropriate from a historic environment perspective, and is therefore in accordance with Policy EN10 and the Castle Eaton Conservation Area Appraisal.

### **Recommendation:**

23. That planning permission be **GRANTED** with conditions

### **Conditions**

1. This approval shall be in respect of drawing no. 001 02/11/2019, site location plan (1:1250), Block Plan (1:500) and Planning/Design & Access Statement received by the Local Planning Authority on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Reason: To define the scope of the development hereby permitted, in accordance with section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed using external facing materials that match and correspond with those of the existing building. Such facing materials shall be retained thereafter in their approved form.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory.

3. The proposed rooflights shall be of 'conservation type' which finishes flush and does not protrude from the plane of the roof.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and avoid an unsatisfactory appearance of clutter to the roof.

### **Informatives**

1. CIL - Reg. 42 Exemption for Minor development: Whilst the development generates a net gain in floor space and is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable, it is exempt from CIL liability under CIL Regulation 42, as it constitutes minor development for the purposes of calculating CIL liability because the proposed extensions floorspace is below 100 sqm GIA.

2. The granting of planning permission does not authorise you to carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent.

End of Report