

## Combroke Parish Council

### Consultation for Planning Application 19/00792 /FUL

**Proposal:** Two storey extension to first floor flat over detached garage block, change of land use designation from 'agricultural' to 'residential',

**at:** The Loft, Green Farm, Combrook, Warwick, CV35 9HP.

### Representation

The Parish Council **supports** the grant of this application on the grounds of Policies CS1, CS5, CS9, and CS20. In the view of the Parish Council, and echoing the words of a previous Planning Inspector attending this site, it will do no serious harm.

#### 1. Planning Background

1.1. The Parish Council's Representation for a previous application, 18/01851/FUL, provided detailed planning background at section 2 and this remains relevant. In particular the Parish Council is mindful of the reasoning and decisions within the Report of the Planning Inspector for the Appeal in 1990<sup>1</sup> which approved the retention of the existing building as constructed and the use of the then converted roof space as a flat.

#### 2. The removal of the raised decking

2.1. It is noted that the applicants have acknowledged that the existing raised decking, added at first floor level and built some 4 years ago, was a mistake on the applicants' part in that it had been constructed without the grant of planning permission. This proposal to remove the decking is welcomed and its removal will have a positive impact on the wider landscape. (CS 5)

#### 3. The Proposed Extension

3.1. The removal of the decking will allow the construction of the extension on the same previously used footprint.

##### Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

3.2. Whilst not subservient in height, the proposed extension to the building will in effect be cut *into* the rising ground level. So the extension from the wider landscape to the east will appear lower. It is a common feature for buildings across Combrook to be cut into the ground to accommodate the valley setting and both traditional and some modern building of significant size nestle comfortably in the landscape<sup>2</sup>. (CS5)

3.3. The applicants' stated design principle is to extend the existing building without alteration to the visible details and thus maintain '*visual continuity*' of the existing building. The Parish Council supports the simplicity of this approach noting that the existing building is '*well related to the adjacent development and of sympathetic design and appearance.*'<sup>3</sup> (CS9)

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Application 89/01759/FUL

<sup>2</sup> refer para 25.3 Combroke Village Design Statement 2007

<sup>3</sup> extract from Planning Inspector's Report granting the Appeal in 1990

- 3.4. The proposed extension of the "outbuilding form" to maintain visual continuity of the existing building is not dissimilar in concept to that approved in 2000,<sup>4</sup> for an extension to lengthen an outbuilding, at the northern bottom end of the village opposite the Grade II listed terrace of 4 stone and thatched cottages. There has been no serious harm on the character of the area and Conservation Area.
- 3.5. The SDC Guideline 'Extending Your Home' advises '*home extensions should appear as extensions*', and the Parish Council would generally agree. However in this case the Parish Council believes the aesthetic argument for the design principle as proposed for this application merits the interpretation of paragraph 3.4, '*These guidelines are not cast in stone. In some cases there may be good reasons why they should not be followed.* (CS9)
- 3.6. At the 1990 Appeal the Planning Inspector considered the impact of the current garage building on both the character of the area and Conservation Area, including nearby Listed Properties, and found, '*the scheme would not be seriously out of place within its surroundings.*' The Planning Inspector noted that the existing garage building is finished in local '*stone and incorporated traditional design elements.*' This same design approach is maintained for this proposed extension.
- 3.7. In the opinion of the Parish Council the proposals for this extension preserve the character and appearance of the area including the Conservation Area and nearby listed properties.<sup>5</sup> (CS5, CS8, CS9)

#### **Impact on amenity of neighbours**

- 3.8. It is noted that the position of the existing building exceeds the required separation distance between front facing properties. Also, the proposed addition of ground floor windows on the front SW elevation are restrained in size and set high above floor level.
- 3.9. Although separation distances are exceeded with regard rear / side facing properties, it is understood that the applicants intend to review the position of the proposed lower ground floor window on the NE elevation in response to a neighbour comment.
- 3.10. The Planning Inspector judged that the existing building did not '*subject neighbouring properties to a substantial loss of amenity due to overshadowing or poor outlook*', and noted that the position of '*the roof lights do not provide a direct view of neighbouring property.*' In the opinion of the Parish Council the proposed position of the extension and its design will not significantly affect this overall judgement. CS(9)

#### **4. Change of Use of Agricultural Land**

- 4.1. The proposed extension is largely positioned on agricultural land and approval of this application will include a change of use. Although for some years this land has in part been in use for 'mixed purposes' -both residential and agricultural- more so since the Flat has been occupied full time in recent years.
- 4.2. The Parish Council would not generally support encroachment onto agricultural land.

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<sup>4</sup> Planning Application 00/01304/FUL

<sup>5</sup> No 8 & 9 are listed Grade II and also the Farmhouse at Green Farm is listed Grade II, this does not include the barn conversions.

- 4.3. None the less Policy CS20 recognises that modifications, such as extensions, enable homeowners to adapt their homes to changing needs and improve the quality of their lives without leaving the community (ref 5.6.3). The Village Design Statement also echoes the importance of policies which enable younger generations who have grown up in the village who wish to live and stay in the community. This is a key factor for the Parish Council, it supports the maintenance of a diverse age and family profile across the village population. This contributes to a strong and vibrant community.  
(NPPF p 8b; CS1 (social strand); CS20)
- 4.4. Paragraph 27 of the Village Design Statement<sup>6</sup> identified a growing concern that Combroke's stock of medium sized homes was disappearing as properties have been enlarged and semi-detached cottages knocked into single dwellings. This trend has continued and more recently the new-build development at the west entrance to the village was permitted to become large 5 -bed properties. The Parish Council would not be supporting this change of use if the proposal was for over-development of this edge of village site. The Parish Council would want to ensure that permitted development rights remain removed, as currently.
- 4.5. The Parish Council also acknowledges and welcomes the applicants' evident wish to avoid extension of the building on the NE elevation, across the rear garden belonging to the flat. Such development might be considered unneighbourly towards the residents on the main street who look out across the garden land from the rear of their properties. And in the view of the Parish Council, an extension on this NE elevation across the garden would have a harmful impact on the diffuse character and appearance of the village edge; the Parish Council has previously sought the removal of permitted development rights on this particular garden land.
- 4.6. Finally, it might be noted that the applicants operate a small free range egg business from their home - utilising the paddock land. The availability of local free range eggs is also appreciated by Combroke residents. This might merit support under policy AS 10 (mixed residential/business) and also CS1 (economic and social strand).
- 4.7. For all the above reasons, and on balance, the Parish Council supports the limited change of use of agricultural land to enable the proposed extension on the southeast elevation to proceed. In the context of these particular and very specific material circumstances, the Parish Council is satisfied that the grant of permission for change of use need not set an irresistible precedent for any unacceptable development elsewhere.

## 5. **In conclusion,**

- 5.1. The Parish Council supports this scheme for this proposed extension to the Loft, for all the policy reasons described above. It will do no serious harm.
- 5.2. The Parish Council would hope that a planning condition is included, to ensure that permitted development rights are removed, as established under 10/02702/FUL, to continue to protect the building and both the existing garden land to the flat and the small area of additional garden land to be incorporated under a change of use.

24 April 2019

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<sup>6</sup> Combroke Parish Plan and Village Design Statement (2007)