



Mr James Leaver

Melrose

Logmore Lane

Westcott

Dorking

Surrey, RH4 3JY

jamesandfrancesca@hotmail.co.uk

Planning Department

Mole Valley District Council

Pippbrook

Dorking

RH4 1SJ

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Dear Sirs

MO/2021/0361

Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ

Extension of existing garage and convert to ancillary workshop and storage for the main dwelling

I write in my capacity as planning lead for Westcott Village Association (WVA). WVA occasionally makes representations on behalf of the Westcott community

WVA is aware of the complex planning history relating to Mill House. This fresh application is of concern to us and we are writing to object.

The Property

The property comprises two parcels of land either side of Pipp Brook. The current application MO2021/0361 is for the extension to the existing triple garage to provide ancillary workshop/storage for the main dwelling, Mill House.

In the aerial image below the existing triple garage (with three vehicles parked outside it) is to the right/ east of Pipp Brook and Mill House is to the left/ west of Pipp Brook. The summer house is in the south west corner to the west of the lake.



Planning History

The most recent planning history in MVDC's records is as follows:-

Ref No	Description	Location
MO/2004/0858	Add single storey conservatory to summer house.	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2010/1031	Erection of first floor extension with undercroft parking.	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2011/0417	Erection of first floor side extension.	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2011/0480	Erection of triple bay garage following demolition of existing garage and car po	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2011/0499	Erection of first floor extension with undercroft parking.	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2011/1312	Erection of first floor side extension.	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2017/1563	Erection of single storey side extension to facilitate conversion of barn to 1 N	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2019/0312	Retrospective application for the retention of a rear extension, raised decking	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ
MO/2021/0361	Extension to existing garge and convert to ancilliary workshop/storage for the m	Mill House, Rookery Drive, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LQ

This planning history will appear somewhat benign until one reviews the repeated attempts to secure various consents to enable the site of the existing garage to be ultimately carved off, presumably as a separate dwelling or entity.

In 2004 a single storey conservatory was added to the summer house (behind Mill House). 35.04 sq m was consented and 35.7 sq m built. By volume 106.42 cubic m was consented and 110.67 cubic m was built.

In 2010 an application for a side extension to Mill House with under-croft parking was withdrawn.

In 2011/0417 an application for a first floor side extension was refused and dismissed on appeal.

In 2011/0480 the triple bay garage was consented with conditions and it was built in 2012. 48.51 sq m had been consented but 53.96 sq m was built. By volume 127.23 cubic m consented and 167.03 cubic m was built.

In 2011/0499 a further application for the side extension with under-croft parking was refused.

In 2011/1312 a further application for a first floor side extension was refused and dismissed on appeal.

In 2017/1563 an application for the erection of single storey side extension to facilitate conversion of barn to a dwelling was refused and dismissed on appeal.

2019/0312 a retrospective application for the retention of a rear extension, raised decking to the rear and side of the property and entrance gates off Rookery Drive was consented with conditions. These entrance gates which now lead to a separate hard area adjacent to Mill House are pictured below. This might have been a more sensitive and convenient location for a garage in the 2011 planning application. Note the summer house in the background.



The Existing Garage

The photograph below shows the existing garage to the left (behind two pairs of new gates) and Mill House to the right (on the other side of Pipp Brook). And a second angle.



In the letter from the agent there appears to be an amnesty within the application which confirms the additional floor area and volume already built. The agent states that the extra 30% by volume in the garage block, is because the building is one metre longer than consented and also by raising the rear eaves.

It should also be noted that the materials used, for example a thatched rather than clay tile roof does not appear to comply with the consent either.

The Proposed Extension

The agent has provided further floor areas and calculations which enable us to assess the impact of this application.

Part of the solution involves trading c. 35 sq m (112 cubic metres) of conservatory area from behind Mill House to the garage extension.

To put this in perspective the extension proposes the following increases:-

- Floor area by 36% from what was built in 2012 (but 85% larger than the 2011 consent)
- Volume by 67% from what was built in 2012 (219% larger than the 2011 consent)

WVA believes the bulk and massing of the garage building is already at the top end of what is acceptable as ancillary space some distance from the main house and, given the planning context, additional floor area and volume would be inappropriate in this location.

Designations and Policy Context

The application site is in the Green Belt Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value.

The agent has quoted from Policy RUD7 – Extension of dwellings in the countryside without referencing it.

POLICY RUD7 - EXTENSION OF DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

In the countryside outside boundaries of the villages defined in accordance with Policies RUD1, RUD2 and RUD3, proposals for the extension of dwellings will be permitted where they would not:

1. result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling;
2. detract from the appearance and character of the existing dwelling or the rural character of the area;
3. by itself or together with the existing building create a dwelling which is readily capable of conversion into more than one dwelling.

With regard to RUD7 WVA believes this application fails on all three criteria given the bulk and massing of the proposed extension relative to Mill House.

WVA believes the agent should also have had regard to RUD9 – Garages and other ancillary domestic buildings in the curtilage of dwellings in the countryside

POLICY RUD9 - GARAGES AND OTHER ANCILLARY DOMESTIC BUILDINGS IN THE CURTILAGE OF DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Where planning permission is required, new garages and other ancillary domestic buildings in the countryside outside the settlement areas of the villages identified in Policies RUD1, RUD2 and RUD3 will normally be permitted provided they:

1. are not excessive in size having regard to the size of the dwelling they are to serve;
2. do not constitute a dominant feature, having regard to the scale of the existing dwelling nor detract from the rural character or appearance of the locality;
3. are not readily capable of subsequent conversion to residential accommodation;
4. are not to replace an existing garage that has been converted to residential use;
5. are for ancillary domestic purposes only.

WVA believes that the application fails on criteria 1,2,3 and, given the full planning history with this property, there is a risk of leaving the potential exploitation along the lines of criteria 4 and 5 in the future.

WVA believe the scale, massing and setting of the existing detached garage and other consents granted in recent years has maximised the level of appropriate development at Mill House. Further extension would be inappropriate and detrimental to the openness of this site in Green belt, AONB and AGLV.

We would therefore strongly urge MVDC to **refuse** permission for this application.

Yours sincerely,

James Leaver

Planning Lead, Westcott Village Association