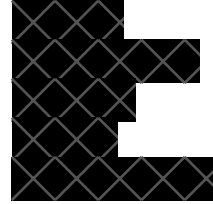




WESTCOTT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Mr James Leaver



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Planning Department
Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook
Dorking
RH4 1SJ

7 December 2024

Dear Sirs

MO/2024/1956/PLAH

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

Convert and extend the existing garage block to provide a new Annex following the removal of the existing summer house and conservatory.

We write to object to this application which we believe is inappropriate development in Green Belt, Surrey Hills National Landscape and an Area of Great landscape Value.

We are aware of the extensive planning history for Mill House, specifically attempts to secure consent for ancillary residential accommodation in a garage extension under a certificate of lawfulness in 2022 (MO/2022/0902). This was refused and dismissed at appeal.

A previous certificate of lawfulness in 2021(MO/2021/1547) was consented. This application was to regularise the size of the buildings which had been built

considerably larger than consented. This application was approved by MVDC and the appraisal in the Officer's Report stated:-

“In order to grant the certificate, the buildings need to have been in situ for a period of more than 4 years. It’s clear from the history of the property that the garage was granted planning permission in 2011. The conservatory on the summerhouse was granted planning permission in 2004. Both these structures were built bigger than granted.

However, it is concluded that as the structures, as built, have been there for more than 4 years, the certificate should be granted. There have been applications to try to convert the garage building into a dwelling, however these have been refused so the current use as an ancillary domestic outbuilding would still stand.

As this is an application just to regularise the garage and conservatory that were built larger than their respective planning approvals, it is considered that there is enough evidence to state that on the balance of probabilities both structures have been in situ for more than four years. Any use of either building as a separate dwelling would require planning permission”.

A previous application for the extension to the existing triple garage to provide ancillary workshop/storage for the main dwelling, Mill House (MO2021/0361) was refused by MVDC on the following grounds:-

“The proposed extension to the garage building would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, which would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, in conflict with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, and Mole Valley Local Plan policy RUD9. There are considered to be no very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

The site is situated within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as designated under Section 87 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 2000 and the proposal would fail to conserve and enhance the existing special landscape qualities and harm the landscape character and appearance of the area in conflict with Mole Valley Core Strategy policy CS13, policies P1 and P2 of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan 2020 -2025”.

We now have the new Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 where the thrust of Green Belt policy reflects the NPPF and National Parks policy. The proposed ancillary accommodation is in a building which is in open landscape setting on the other side of Pipp Brook from the host property, Mill House. We believe the conversion and extension of the existing garage from its non-residential to residential use, together with new fenestration and associated residential paraphernalia, is inappropriate in this landscape and dark sky location, particularly as it is removed from the host property.

We do not therefore believe that very special circumstances have been demonstrated for this proposal in accordance with the following Policies in the new Local Plan:-

Policy EN1 – Green Belt. The proposal fails to comply with paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 a-e;
Policy EN4 - Character and Design - relationship to the existing built development and features. In particular, paragraphs 3 f-h;
Policy EN8 - Landscape Character.

If MVDC is minded to approve this application, WVA request that it should be conditioned that the demolition of the summer house and conservatory must be evidenced prior to any extension and conversion of the garage building. We would also request MVDC to condition landscaping and outdoor lighting proposals to limit the negative impact of the annex on the open landscape and to prevent light pollution.

We nevertheless strongly urge MVDC to refuse permission for this application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Leaver', written in a cursive style.

James Leaver
Planning Lead, Westcott Village Association