

**4/02116/11/MFA - RETENTION OF CLOCK TOWER ON APPROVED CLUB HOUSE
(APPEAL DECISION APP/A1910/A/09/2118614 ON PLANNING DECISION
4/02806/07/MFA).**

**STOCKS GOLF COURSE & LAND ADJ. WESTLAND FARM, STATION ROAD, ALDBURY,
TRING.**

APPLICANT: STOCKS ESTATE MANAGEMENT LTD.

[Case Officer - Nigel Gibbs]

[Grid Ref - SP 95792 13084]

Summary

The application is recommended for approval.

The clubhouse is subject to an allowed appeal. The clock tower is unauthorised and due its white painted finish is detrimental on the wider landscape character of the AONB being too dominant and strident. The staining of the woodwork of the clock tower in a black matt finish to match that of the existing weatherboarding of the building overcomes this objection which has been agreed with the applicant. The black finish will significantly subdue the visual impact.

Description

Stocks House is a Grade II listed building located on the site of Stocks Road. Originally built as a dwelling house it has reverted back to this use under PP 4/01601/05/FUL. The setting of Stocks House is complemented by its associated Grade 2 listed 'gatehouse' known as Stocks Lodge. In 1991 the DCC granted planning permission for the provision of an 18 hole golf course on the adjoining agricultural land.

The golf course is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Landscape Character Area Nos 115 and 116 and an Area of Archaeological Significance No. 26. This includes part of Ancient Monuments 27, 196 and 27 197, forming part of Grimms Ditch. The golf course's ecological value relates to its grassland. The Golf Course is intersected by footpaths/ bridleways

An appeal was allowed for a clubhouse, greenkeepers facility, access road, access from Stocks Road, car park and buggy park. A white painted timber clad clock tower incorporating a copper top has been installed on the clubhouse roof.

At the Appeal Hearing the Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) confirmed that the clock tower did not form part of the refused plans. The clock tower was shown by the originally submitted plans, but the revised informal plans showed its removal and formed the basis of the LPA's decision which was a misunderstanding. The Planning Inspector (PINS) addressed this issue in the decision notice. Para 2 noted:

'.. whilst this confusion is regrettable, the Council were clear as to which plans they had considered and in these circumstances I must similarly consider the plans upon which they based their decision'.

Therefore PINS decision excluded the clock tower.

Proposal

This is for the retention of the existing clock tower. Following discussions between officers and the agent the clock tower's white painted woodwork cladding will be stained in a black matt finish to match that of the existing weatherboarding of the building. The white clock face is to be retained. The copper top will be unchanged.

Referral to Committee

The application is referred to the Development Control Committee due to the contrary views of Aldbury Parish Council.

Procedural Issues

Application Description

When the current application was submitted the form confirmed that this was for the provision of the unbuilt clock tower. The application was registered on this basis and consultations carried out. The LPA was soon informed that the clock tower had been constructed at the club house. The LPA immediately contacted the agent who checked the situation. This resulted in a change to the application form and description to 'retention'. A fresh round of notification/publicity for the application was then undertaken to highlight this change

Consultation with Aldbury Parish Council

During the initial consultation there was no notification of Aldbury Parish Council. This was an administrative oversight which once confirmed was rectified. The Parish Council was subsequently correctly re-consulted on the revised description to 'retention'. Also the site notice installed by the LPA at the site was found to be missing a few days after it was displayed. A fresh replacement site notice in a slightly different location was subsequently displayed.

The Parish Council Chairman has been informed that the applicant has agreed to the repainting of the clock tower in black and the retention of the white face and the DCC date.

Policies

National Policy Guidance

PPS 1 PPS7, PPS 5 and PPG 13

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Note: Existing PPG's and PPS's remain in force until formally superseded by the NPPF

East of England Plan

Policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV6 and ENV7

Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 11, 78, 96, 97 and 98

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum

Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment

Pre-Submission Core Strategy (October 2011)

Policies CS7, CS10, CS12, CS13, CS16, CS24, CS25 and CS27

Representations

Aldury Parish Council

Object. A number of members of public expressed their objections to the Parish Council and are/or have made individual objections.

Conservation & Design

Initial Advice

Further to the joint site inspection with the Case Officer there is no major design or conservation objection in principle.

The visual impact and overall design of this building was upheld by appeal decision APP/A1910/A/09/2118614 and as such this freestanding isolated building in the AONB was allowed.

Having assessed the building within the locality there are traditional buildings which have roof features on their ridges, such as dovecots. As such it is not considered unreasonable for the building to have the proposed roofscape feature, particularly as the focus of the building is as an eye-catcher in the landscape.

The concern however relates to the colour of the clock tower and the detrimental impact of the colour on the wider landscape character. The traditional roof features in the locality are mute in colour and are normally wood or wood stained. The white gloss paint finish of the proposed clock tower is too dominant and strident within the landscape. Subject to agreement of a dark wood-stain finish to the clock tower there is no objection to the retention of the proposed feature.

Further Advice

The revised treatment is acceptable.

Chilterns Conservation Board

It will not be commenting on the planning application. The application is not one on which the Board would generally comment. It limits its input on planning applications to commenting on those which are considered to be of the most significant type (either in scale or potential impact on the AONB) or which would set a dangerous precedent.

In all cases, however, the principles detailed in the Chilterns AONB Management Plan, the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns Building Materials (Flint, Brick and Roofing Materials) should be applied as necessary.

The Chiltern Society

The clock tower does not look too intrusive on the landscape. No comment as don't have strong feelings either way.

Aylesbury Vale District Council

No response.

Response to Neighbour Notification / Site Notices / Newspaper Advertisements

Five objections to the application have been received raising the following issues:

Already Built: This is an attempt to circumvent the correct procedure. This is a flagrant abuse of planning rules. The application should be refused and the Council order its immediate removal. A cynical further attempt at further 'extending' the consented scheme.

Adverse Impact upon the AONB/ Landscape: It adds considerably to the building's height and in doing so makes it visible from a wide range of surrounding locations where it would otherwise not be seen and from other locations where the clock tower draws attention to the building. These areas are the Conservation Area and AONB. The style of the tower is not sympathetic to its location being bright white and copper, again drawing the eye to it. It is totally out of keeping with the building and the most intrusive part of it creating an incongruous impact, looking like a modern supermarket has been built.

No Need for the Clock Tower

Criticism of the Council: Many objected to the original development. Dacorum took no notice of local views. Do not pretend that this representation or any other Aldbury resident's opinion will have any influence in deciding the outcome of this or any other planning application.

Considerations

Policy and Principle

In the context of PINS decision to allow the appeal the fundamental issue is whether the clock tower is architecturally compatible with the approved building within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the expectations of DBLP Policy 97. The prime planning consideration in the AONB is the conservation of its beauty with regard to the following expectations:

- Any development proposal which would seriously detract from this will be refused.
- Wherever development is permitted it will be on the basis of its satisfactory assimilation into the landscape.
- Every effort will be made to discourage development and operations that would adversely affect the beauty of the area.
- The Council will adhere to the guidelines whenever considering planning applications.
- **New Buildings and Other Development.** Development must not be intrusive in terms of noise, disturbance, light pollution, traffic generation and parking.
- Building, plant and structures must be sympathetically sited and designed, having regard to natural contours, landscape, planting and other buildings; there should be no adverse effect on skyline views.
- Colours and materials used for a development must fit in with the traditional character of the area.

PINS Decision

The Planning Inspector observed in the decision notice:

'I consider that the design of the club house strikes an acceptable balance between the vernacular characteristics of the buildings in the locality and the need to accommodate requirements of the golf club. Any requirements to emulate the appearance of an agricultural barn I find to be unnecessary, taking into account the golf course context.'

Overview

The clock tower's agreed revised finish in black will ensure that it appears far less assertive and strident within the AONB's landscape and complements the appearance of the building. Given PINS full support for the clubhouse building's design in this prominent AONB setting and the agreed black finish there are no objections to the retention of the clock tower. There is no associated exterior or interior lighting.

Other Material Considerations

There are none.

Conclusions

The retention of the clock tower is acceptable subject to the staining of its woodwork in a matt finish to match that of the existing weatherboarding of the building.

RECOMMENDATION - That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons referred to above and subject to the following conditions:

- 1 All of the existing white painted timber cladding for clock tower shall be stained in a matt black finish within the six weeks of the date of this decision and thereafter it shall be maintained in this colour. The clock face shall be painted white at all times and the copper top shall not be changed in colour.**

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:**

MP01 ,MP04, 5183/PL09 Rev B, 5183/PL07 Rev B, 5183/PL08 Rev B, 5183/PL10 Rev B, 5183/PL11 Rev B and 5183/PL12 Rev B.

Reason: To safeguard and maintain the strategic policies of the local planning authority and for the avoidance of doubt.

NOTE 1:

This decision to grant planning permission has been taken for the following reason, having regard to the policies and proposals in the development plan set out below, national planning policy/guidance, regional policy, to all other material planning considerations, including relevant supplementary planning guidance, the imposition of conditions and the expert advice of the technical consultees, the response to neighbour notification/publicity and consultation with Aldbury Parish Council.

The site is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The clubhouse is subject to an allowed appeal. The existing clock tower is unauthorised and due its white painted finish is detrimental on the wider landscape character of the AONB being too dominant and strident. The staining of its woodwork in a matt finish to match that of the existing weatherboarding of the building overcomes this impact. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies 11 (Quality of Development) , 78 (Golf

Courses), 96 (Landscape Strategy) and 97 (AONB) .

NOTE 2:

The following policies of the development plan are relevant to this decision:

Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 11, 78, 96, 97 and 98

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum

Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment

Pre-Submission Core Strategy (October 2011)

Policies CS7 ,CS10, CS12, CS13 CS16, CS24, CS25 and CS27