

Officer Report On Planning Application: 20/01567/HOU

Proposal :	The erection of a single storey extension to dwelling	
Site Address:	Welham Barn Wellham Farm Lane Charlton Mackrell	
Parish:	The Charltons Parish Council	
NORTHSTONE, IVELCHESTER & ST MICHAEL'S Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr A Capozzoli Cllr C Hull Cllr P Rowsell	
Recommending Case Officer:	Tel:01935462198 Planningtechnicaladmin@southsomerset.gov.uk	Email:
Target date :	3rd August 2020	
Applicant :	Mr J King	
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Daniel Witcombe Putt Cottage Drayton Farm Lane SOUTH PETHERTON TA13 5LR	
Application Type :	Other Householder - not a Change of Use	

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is referred to Ward Member for determination under the Council's scheme of delegation procedures as observations have been received that are contrary to the officer recommendation.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

Site Context/Description: Welham Barn is a two storey detached dwellinghouse constructed of blue lias stone with a tiled roof, the building is a former agricultural barn which was converted into a residential dwelling in the late 1980s, during which a single storey extension was added to the original two storey barn. Welham Barn is situated among a group of six barn conversions located in the open countryside approximately 1.65 kilometres west of the village of Charlton Mackrell, remote from any established settlements or development areas. The site does not fall within an Area of Special Designation and there are no Listed Buildings in the immediate vicinity, however the building has been recognised as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset owing to the age and character of the structure.

The application seeks consent for the erection of a single storey extension to the south of the existing dwellinghouse.

UPDATE: During the Area East Planning Committee on 9th September 2020 the determination of the application was deferred so that the applicant could submit an amended design for the proposal. A set of amended plans were received and all statutory consultees were notified of the amendments on 5th October 2020.



Neighbours/consultees correct: Yes

History

882552 - The conversion of two barns into two dwellings. Application permitted with conditions

13/03/1989

Policy

South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028:

Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
Policy EQ2 - Design And General Development
Policy EQ3 - Historic Environment
Policy TA5 - Transport Impact On New Development
Policy TA6 - Parking Standards

NPPF 2019:

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Chapter 11 - Making effective use of land
Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning Practice Guidance:

Design: Processes and Tools 1st October 2019

Additional Guidance

National Design Guide - 1st October 2019
Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (September 2013) and Standing Advice (June 2017)
South Somerset District Council Supplementary Guidance - Extensions and Alterations to Houses - A Design Guide

Town/Parish Council

The Charltons Parish Council:

The PC considered the above application at its meeting on 21st July 2020. Neighbours were consulted and no objections had been received. Councillors were pleased to note that the Applicant has followed recommended planning procedures and sought pre-application advice. Mr Millar, Planning Officer stated 'it would likely be looked upon favourably, given the proposed extension is of modest size and would use matching materials'.

The PC agrees with Mr Millar, having received assurance from Mr King that the proposed extension would be built in the traditional manner with materials to match the 200 year old building, as stated in the Design and Access Statement.

The extension cannot be seen by neighbours and would improve the heat efficiency of the dwelling, being in a particularly cold area of the house that is in need of renovation.

Councillors agreed that the proposed work would be an improvement to Welham Barn.

PARISH COUNCIL RESOLUTION

The PC agreed unanimously to recommend that the application be APPROVED.

UPDATE: Following the deferral of the application and the submission of an amended design and reconsultation of the proposal, it was advised on 21st October 2020 that the parish council agree to continue to recommend approval.

Other Consultees

Highways Authority: Standing Advice Applies

Highways Consultant: No highways issues - no objection

SSDC Conservation Officer: I have been asked for a view on this scheme. The building is not listed or in a conservation area but it does have heritage merit. I would consider this as an undesignated heritage assets as described in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework due to the age and character of the structure

The building is a former agricultural barn which was converted into a residential dwelling in the late 1980s, during which a single storey extension was added to the original two storey barn. This extension was supported because it was sympathetic to the host barn and retained its privacy.

The new proposal is now to add a further extension that runs across part of the front elevation of the barn. The policies are as follows:

The National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' requires us to assess the impact that development will have on a heritage asset.

Paragraph 189 states:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 192 states:

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 states:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

In particular Paragraph 197 states:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Local Plan Policy EQ3 reflects the NPPF guidance. Heritage assets must be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. In addition Policy EQ2 requires all new development proposals to be designed to achieve a high quality which promotes the District's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the District.

In this case it is considered that the proposed protection will cause 'less than substantial' harm

to the undesignated heritage asset. This is in the medium to high range of this category, but must be balanced against the lack of formal designation. On balance I must formally object to the proposals. The loss of the integrity of the original barn is unacceptable and will fundamentally change the character.

I would urge the applicant to commission a statement of heritage significance so that we can engage in pre-application negotiation and find a less harmful way to extend the building.

Neighbour Comments

Five neighbours notified - One objection received from a neighbour. The full representation may be viewed online but is summarised as follows-

- o Parking arrangements are not wholly on land belonging to Welham Barn and the 2.4m x 4.8m parking space encroaches onto land belonging to Long Barn
- o In order to reach the proposed parking space a vehicle would have to travel across land belonging to Long Barn
- o This has been brought to the attention of the applicants but they do not wish to change the plans
- o If the parking space was removed from the proposal there would be no objection

Case Officer response to objection: The neighbour comments are noted however concerns regarding land ownership and rights of access are a civil matter and not a planning consideration, the objection therefore does not have bearing on the application.

Key Considerations

Principle of Development

The principle of any extensions or alterations to a converted barn must be considered very carefully, in particular it is imperative to ensure the retention of barn's original agricultural character and that any development is not to the detriment of the setting, that is not to say that all alterations relating to barn conversions are unsuitable but that any developments of this nature must be assessed very closely.

The remaining issues relate to the visual impact on the character of the existing building and on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings, in addition to the potential impact to the highway, these matters are discussed below.

Design/Layout/Materials

It is important to recognise that the grant of consent for living accommodation on the site was in the form of a barn conversion, it is therefore vital to ensure that the building's appearance as a barn is retained when considering any alterations or extensions so that no detrimental impact on the character of the building or its setting is allowed to occur.

It is considered that the existing layout and appearance of the dwelling clearly reflects its former function as an agricultural barn and that the erection of an extension that fails to respect the established layout and appearance of the building would detract from this.

The proposed extension would be attached to the southwest corner of the original barn and the southern face of the single storey wing extension which was erected as part of the original conversion of the barn. It is considered that the extension would protrude from the dwelling in a manner disruptive to the simple and linear form of the original building, imposing a more domestic appearance on the former barn. The siting of the extension is thus considered unsympathetic to the agricultural character of the site.

During the course of the application, the applicant was advised that any extension to the south of the dwelling would not be appropriate due to the limited ground area available. It was suggested to the applicant that a perpendicular extension to the north side of the building would be more appropriate by virtue of replicating the L-shaped layout which is characteristic of historic agricultural buildings. Such an adjustment to the siting was declined by the applicant.

The design and materials of the extension are considered inappropriate to the character of the original building. The application proposes the use of white render to the south elevation wall in addition to a glass reinforced plastic (GRP) flat roof with a lantern rooflight. Such a design would be evidently modern in appearance and is wholly uncharacteristic of a historic agricultural building.

Furthermore, the original conversion of the barn included the installation of a substantial amount of high quality glazing to the south elevation, such treatment is conventional practise for conversions of old agricultural buildings. The proposal would conceal a significant proportion of this glazing which would be replaced by a white rendered wall with two windows of a more domestic appearance. It is considered that this would be detrimental to the well-designed fenestration of the existing building, thus resulting in additional harm to the appearance of the dwelling.

It is noted that the extension would be partially screened from the view of the surrounding dwellings by virtue of its sequestered position between the host dwelling and the north elevation of the adjoining neighbour. Nonetheless, each neighbouring dwelling in the vicinity shares the context of a former agricultural building. As such, it is considered that in failing to respect the agricultural character of the original dwelling, the proposal would therefore be harmful to the visual amenity of the surrounding dwellings which are of the same historic character.

It is observed in paragraph 197 of the NPPF that *The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.* The SSDC Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and the original building has been recognised as a non-designated heritage asset following from the consultation. As the extension is considered detrimental to the quality and character of the existing dwelling the harm to the historic environment must also be taken into account.

UPDATE: Following the deferral of the application at the Area Committee, amended plans were submitted by the application to add a dual-pitched roof to the extension and to alter the south facing wall from render to blue lias stone.

Whilst the amendments to the materials are more favourable than the initial proposal, it is nonetheless considered that the position and massing of the extension still fails to respect the simple form of the original building. The layout which would result from the addition to the former barn is not considered in keeping with the historical characteristics of this former agricultural building. It is still considered that the erection of an extension to the south of the site obscures the original fabric of the building and the high quality of the previous conversion of the barn to an unacceptable degree.

As such, the case officer maintains that, despite the recent amendments to the application, the scale, siting, materials and design of the proposed extension would continue to be unsympathetic to the established character and appearance of the existing dwelling and would be harmful to the visual amenity of the surrounding dwellings. As such the development does not accord with Policies EQ2 and EQ3 of South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

It is not considered that the proposed extension would give rise to an undue level of overlooking or overshadowing to neighbours, nor have an overbearing relationship with the surrounding dwellings and so would not be considered to have a demonstrable harmful

impact on the residential amenity of the neighbours.

Highways

There are no highways issues associated with this application.

Summary

Representations have been received that are contrary to the Planning Officers recommendation. The proposed extension is considered harmful to the agricultural character and visual amenity of the application site and surrounding dwellings. The recent amendments do not mitigate previous concerns with regards to the disruption of the original layout of the site. The application is therefore referred to the ward members under the scheme of delegation.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reason:

01. The proposal, by reason of its scale, siting, materials and design would have an adverse impact on the character and quality of the dwelling and would be harmful to the visual amenity of neighbouring dwellings. As such, the proposal is contrary to policy EQ2 and EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 and the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019