

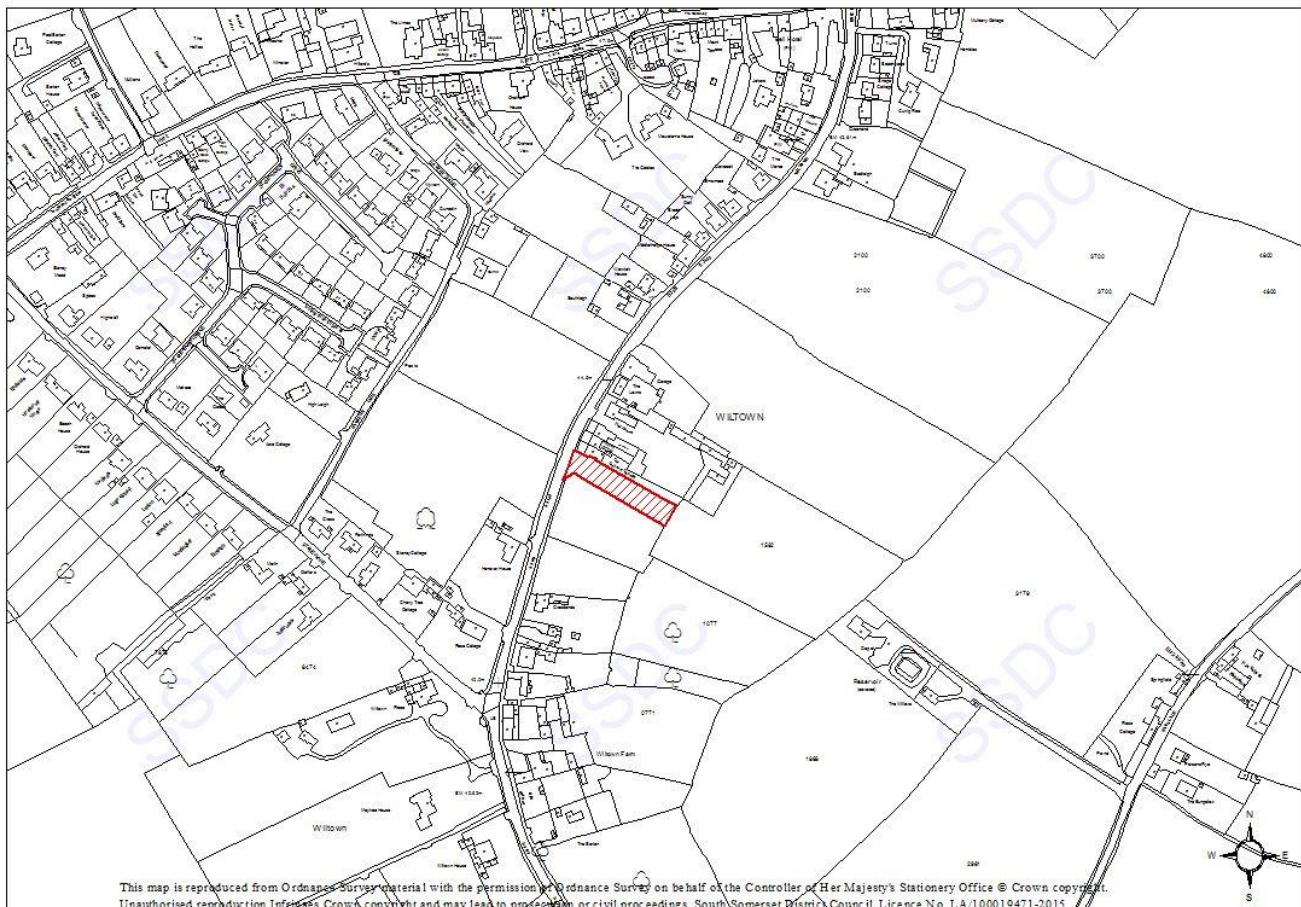
Officer Report On Planning Application: 17/00520/FUL

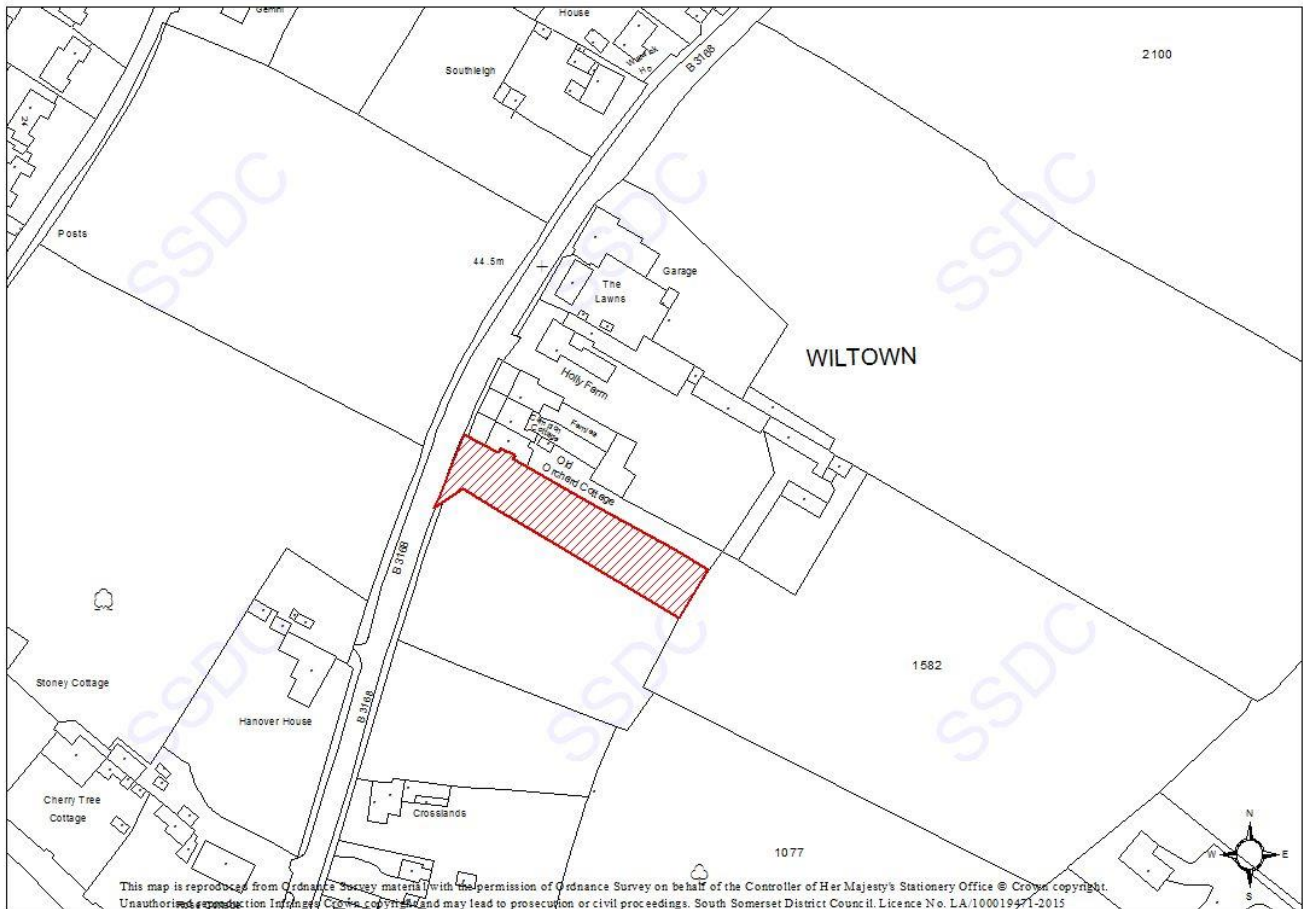
Proposal:	Remove and replace part single storey and part two storey rear extensions. Replace existing garage with new garage.
Site Address:	Weaver Cottage, Wiltown, Curry River.
Parish:	Curry River
CURRY RIVEL Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr T Osborne
Recommending Case Officer:	Nicholas Head Tel: (01935) 462167 Email: nick.head@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	30th March 2017
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs M Cooper
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Duncan Pyle, Bank Chambers, Cheapside, Langport TA10 9PD
Application Type:	Other Householder - not a Change of Use

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The report is referred Committee at the request of the Ward Member to consider the issues raised by the proposal.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The site is located on the east side of the B3168 (Wiltown). It forms part of a group of four terraced cottages on the outskirts of the village. To south and east of the houses is open agricultural land; across Wiltown towards the west is also open land. The cottages are of traditional design and stone construction, and all have rear two-storey extensions mostly within a similar building line. The property, which occupies the southern end of the terrace, has a large rear garden, extending some 60m eastwards, which enjoys vehicular access to the highway.

Permission is sought for a two-storey rear extension to replace the existing extensions (partially two-storey); and the demolition of the existing garage and its replacement with a double garage within the garden.

HISTORY

No relevant recent history.

POLICY

The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted on the 5th March 2015. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the adopted local plan now forms part of the development plan. As such, decisions on the award of planning permission should be made in accordance with this development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Legislation and national policy are clear that the starting point for decision-making is the development plan, where development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and

proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028)

SD1 Sustainable Development
EQ2 General Development
EQ4 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance - Department of Communities and Local Government, 2014.

Policy-related Material Considerations

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, March 2012 and September 2013.
Somerset County Council Highways Standing Advice, June 2013.

CONSULTATIONS

Parish Council: No objections.

Highways Authority: Standing Advice applies.

SSDC Highway Consultant: No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of representation have been received:

1. From the adjoining neighbour and her representative, objecting to the proposal and making the following main points:
 - light into the neighbour's dining room and kitchen will be reduced
 - maintenance work on the shared boundary would be prevented
 - the proposed extension would be over-bearing, dominating the rear gardens of the terrace
2. From relatives of the neighbour above, noting that they do not object to the application and making the following main points:
 - although some light may be lost to the rooms in the neighbouring house, privacy will be increased by removing the current direct viewing into the house from the neighbouring dwelling
 - it is not agreed that light to the kitchen would be reduced
 - access for maintenance will be improved
 - it is not agreed that the extension would 'dominate' the rear garden which is 140 ft long

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The proposal is for a rear extension to an existing dwellinghouse. Subject to appropriate compliance with relevant policies and material considerations, the principle is accepted.

Visual and Landscape Impact

The cottage is at the southern end of a terrace of 4 dwellings. This southern boundary opens onto an open field, which forms an 85m gap between built developments along the east side of the B3168. The road rises northwards at this point, and the cottages are very visible on this approach into Curry Rivel, being set-off against the open field, which in turn gives views into open countryside.

The cottage is a modest two-storey traditional stone dwelling which has had a modest rear two-storey extension. This existing extension is supported by a conservatory at the extreme eastern end.

The proposal seeks to replace this existing extension with a two-storey structure that is larger than the original cottage. It extends 9m out from the original building at two storey height. Although a minor reduction in ridge height has been agreed by the applicant, it is considered that the design and massing of this extension would be unduly visually prominent, given the exposed setting. In this respect, the proposal is not considered to respect the established character of the setting.

The proposed materials and design also give cause for concern. The existing extension is largely in natural stone; the proposal seeks to finish to whole 9m elevation, at two-storey height, in a painted rendered finish. The large ground-storey extension along two-thirds of the elevation, and the large number of windows exacerbate the impact, drawing visual attention away from the modest stone cottage, and imposing on the established rural setting.

It is not considered that the proposal maintains or enhances the setting. It fails to maintain the local distinctiveness of this locality. In these respects, then proposal is contrary to the provisions of Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposal is set well away from the neighbouring dwelling to the north (the subject of the letters of representation set out above). It is not considered that, even though the extension is long relative to the scale of the cottages, it would unacceptably block out light or create an overbearing presence harming the enjoyment of the neighbouring resident.

However, some comment on the current extraordinary arrangement between these two properties should be made. Currently, the dwelling immediately to the north of Weaver Cottage has a window into the dining room area which looks directly into a covered porch in Weaver Cottage. As noted by the neighbour, this window is important in letting light into the dwelling, but there is the anomaly that neighbours can look directly into each other's houses through a window.

The proposal would remedy this, by setting the new accommodation away from the widow. Although the new wall would be close (within 1m), light would still be able to enter. Although the light might be marginally less than at present, such light could currently be completely blocked by occupants of Weaver Cottage. The alteration would remove this possibility, and is therefore considered positive.

Considering these issues, it is therefore not considered that there would be any amenity harm represented by the proposals that would warrant a refusal.

Garage

Part of the application includes the erection of a double garage towards the end of the long garden area. The proposed building has a pitched roof; materials unspecified. Subject to appropriate materials, it is considered that this building can be accommodated in the position indicated without undue harm to the setting.

Neighbour Comments - Letters of Representation

The comments made by the neighbour and her family members have been carefully considered. It is not considered, as set out above, that the proposal would result in any overbearing or overlooking impact that would warrant a refusal. As regards the matter of loss of light, the proposal is considered to improve the current anomalous situation described above.

Conclusion

The 9m- long rear extension relates poorly in scale and detailing to the existing cottage. Being in an exposed position, fronting onto open agricultural land and visible to motorists approaching Curry Rivel from the south, the proposal would appear incongruous and at odds with the established simple rural character of the immediate setting. The impact of the design, scale and massing would be exacerbated by the materials (i.e. the extensive painted rendered walls) and numerous windows. It is not considered that the proposal respects the established character and appearance of this locality. It fails to promote South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the district, contrary to the stated aims of Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan. It is accordingly recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

01. The proposal, by reason of its design, scale, massing and materials, fails to respect the established rural character and appearance of the existing cottages and the setting adjacent to an open field on a busy approach road to Curry Rivel. It fails to promote South Somerset's local distinctiveness and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the district. In these respects, the proposal is contrary to the aims of the NPPF and Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan.

Informatives:

01. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;
- offering a pre-application advice service, and
 - as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions

In this case, the applicant/agent did not take the opportunity to enter into pre-application discussions. However, during the course of the application the applicant was invited to amend the scheme to reduce the length of the two-storey component, lower the ridge height and introduce natural stone to the southern wall. Whilst a change in ridge height was agreed, along with minor fenestration changes, the applicant was not agreeable to making further changes.
