

29/2007/004

MR & MRS EATON-JONES

**ERECTION OF TWO AND THREE STOREY EXTENSION WITH LINK TO
OUTBUILDING AT HIGHER HOWSTEAD, OTTERFORD**

323298/115109

FULL

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to erect effectively a 2 and 3 storey extension on the end of the existing dwelling projecting down the hill to link with an outbuilding. The extension in footprint terms extends 13 m, longer than the existing house. The extension projects the width of the original cottage and steps down in height. The first step maintains a 2 storey extension and is 7.3 m high, the second step provides 3 stories of accommodation and is 7 m high, while the final section provides a lobby area with first floor balcony and a flight of steps down to the barn level.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

BLACKDOWN HILLS PARTNERSHIP the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure that all development in the AONB will be of the highest quality and would conserve or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area; the AONB Partnership supports local planning authorities in the application of their policy framework in order to help achieve this aim. I note that the applicant's design and access statement refers to the property as a simple rural cottage, and this is typical of the simple form of traditional houses in the AONB that contribute to the special qualities of the area. The traditional buildings of the Blackdown Hills are an essential and distinctive part of its landscape – one of the reasons for designation as an AONB is that it is 'a landscape with architectural appeal'. It is important therefore to safeguard against the cumulative effect of creeping suburbanisation from uncharacteristic new or replacement dwellings, unsympathetic domestic alterations and extensions and corresponding domestication of the countryside. Given the isolated location and essential simplicity of Higher Howstead, the scale of this extension and the link to outbuildings would increase the footprint and scale of the dwelling considerably, thereby affecting the character of the building and its surroundings.

DRAINAGE OFFICER I note the septic tank is to be used to dispose of foul sewage. The applicant shall ensure the capacity of the system is satisfactory to provide for the maximum likely number of occupants and any appliances that discharge foul water into the existing septic tank.

PARISH COUNCIL since the latest proposal for development is considerably lower in completed height and the intrusive nature of the original 3 storey proposal has been somewhat alleviated, the Council does not wish to object to the proposal. The extension will only be visible to a very small number of people and it is unlikely that the proposed extension will ever be separated from the main house. Should the

application be approved the Council would be pleased to see a condition imposed which requires that the building remains as one dwelling in perpetuity.

POLICY CONTEXT

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 - Design, S7 – Outside Settlements, H17 – Extensions to Dwellings & EN10 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal provides a significant increase in accommodation over and above the previous extension allowed here which merely projected 4 m. Pre-application advice was given concerning the principle of extension here, however there is still concern over the scale of the accommodation. The issue is whether this detracts from the traditional character of the simple rural cottage as identified in the introduction to the Design Statement and whether the bulk and scale of the proposal is subservient to the existing dwelling.

The extent of the new build footprint extends 13 m, more than that of the original dwelling. The footprint and building project down the slope to link the dwelling to an outbuilding and while the height is not above the original ridge line the proposal creates an additional massing projecting down the slope. The Parish Council do not object to the revised scheme but the Blackdowns Partnership consider it would affect the character of the building and its surroundings as it would be significant in scale and detracts from the rural character of the existing dwelling on this site within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The revised design is considered an improvement over the previous refusal and on balance it is now felt that the impact of the proposal is not such to warrant refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials and single family dwelling.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal is considered to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 and H17.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES:

