



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 November 2021

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W3330/D/21/3280265

**Zeals Cottage, Tolland Road, Tolland Lydeard St Lawrence, Taunton
TA4 3PW**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Brown against the decision of Somerset West and Taunton Council.
 - The application Ref 41/21/0001, dated 20 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is garage extension to form a carport with store over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Tolland Road is a rural lane that serves a scattering of dwellings and farm buildings. Woolcotts, a modest dwelling along with the Old Village Hall opposite the appeal site, typify the majority of buildings along this part of the lane in having a simple vernacular appearance and symmetrical proportions. Buildings in the vicinity are often positioned close to the road or set back marginally from it. This intimate arrangement along with the understated form and appearance of buildings along it, contributes to the road's rural character.
4. The proposed extension would project from the flank wall of the existing double garage at an angle towards the side boundary of the host property. This splayed arrangement would result in the profile of the combined structure having an awkward and jarring appearance, that would be noticeably at odds with the building's opposite. Moreover, the proposal would result in the garage having an elongated frontage that combined with its 1.5 storey height and proximity to the road would give it a prominent appearance that would accentuate its discordance. Accordingly, the proposal's shape, scale and location would be visually unacceptable in the context of this part of Tolland Road.
5. The gap created in the road frontage by the appeal site is not particularly wide and it is acknowledged that in some instances passing motorists may only have fleeting views of the proposal, given the screening effect from existing roadside vegetation from longer distance views. That said, Tolland Road is a narrow rural highway where vehicles would also be travelling at low speeds in

anticipation of oncoming traffic. Furthermore, I noted during my site visit a small number of pedestrians using the road. Accordingly, the proposal would be perceptible to passers-by and in this respect its incongruous appearance would be enduring.

6. The garage would be constructed using materials to match the existing garage and dwelling. Although this is supported, it would not address the effect of the building's scale and appearance.
7. Notwithstanding, my concerns regarding the proposal's effect on the road's rural character, it would be positioned at a lower land level to the more elevated and taller host dwelling, in addition to having a more reduced massing and overall scale. Therefore, when combined with the existing garage, the proposal would not overly dominate the host dwelling or harm its appearance to the extent that its setting would be unacceptably harmed.
8. Although I have found that the setting of the host dwelling would not be harmed, the proposed extension would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would fail to accord with Policy D6 of the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), which requires proposals to be less damaging to the character of the surroundings than an extension or conversion which meets the need. It would also fail to meet the requirements of Paragraphs 130 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework which require that proposals are visually attractive in terms of architecture and layout, whilst being sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

9. The proposal would provide additional storage and home working space at the host dwelling. There would be benefits in this given the need for more flexible ways of working and accommodation that meets that need. But, there may be other alternative, less harmful, ways of fulfilling those space requirements within the curtilage of the host dwelling.
10. Letters of support have been submitted from nearby residents indicating, amongst other matters, that the proposal would resolve the appearance of an existing dilapidated boundary fence. Presumably it is implied it would mask that boundary's appearance, however, this could be improved in ways other than the construction of the proposal. Accordingly, I attach limited weight to that argument.
11. Other nearby examples of buildings positioned close to the road have been provided. However, from my site visit, I observed that none were directly comparable to the proposal in terms of its position, angular form and overall discordance. As a consequence, I have given limited weight to those examples, and in any event, I have considered the appeal scheme on its own merits.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR