
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2025

by **H Faulkner BSc (Hons) MSc PGCE MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/W/24/3347783

Bluestone Cottage, Lottisham Lane, Lottisham, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8PF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Robert Cox against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/0103/FUL.
 - The development is described as the proposed erection a carport and store building with home office space over at land adjacent to Bluestone Cottage, including change of use of this agricultural land to be included within the domestic curtilage of Bluestone Cottage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development has been changed on the decision notice to 'Proposed Erection of Carport, store and Home office over, and change of use of the agricultural paddock land to be included within the domestic curtilage of Bluestone Cottage.' I have no record of this change being agreed, however, the wording on the decision notice accurately reflects the proposals and I have proceeded on this basis.
3. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 12 December 2024. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended. As a result, I have not sought submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by taking this approach.
4. The application form states the development was started in January 2023 although at the time of the application it was not considered to be complete. I saw during my site visit that the building had been erected with dormer windows constructed in both the front and rear roof slopes. Windows to the rear at ground floor level had been blocked up. The car port area had been boarded up and there were variations from the plans in the detailing to the front elevation. My assessment of the proposal is based on the plans before the Council at the time of the planning application.

Background

5. Planning permission 2022/1124/FUL granted consent for a building on this site which included a carport, store, and home office. This was further varied by permission 2023/2079/VRC. The construction of a building in this location and its use have been established through these previous permissions. Within the

Council's officer report, they acknowledge that it is the inclusion of the dormer windows in the rear elevation which led to the refusal of the application.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer windows on the character and appearance of the rural landscape.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is situated within open countryside. There are several other houses and farm buildings nearby. The area is distinctly rural with stone buildings contributing to the areas character. Bluestone Cottage itself is a semi-detached property situated within a cluster of traditional buildings. The building subject to this appeal is located separately to the west of the main house.
8. The previous approval was for a building ancillary to Bluestone Cottage. It is a reasonable size compared to the cottage; however, its design retains a simple form, particularly at the rear, and this helps it to appear as a secondary building rather than a separate dwelling. The small dormers at the front sit comfortably within the form of the building.
9. The current proposal with two additional dormer windows on the rear roof effects the appearance of the building from this side. The smaller of the two dormers has a similar design to those on the front of the building. However, the larger window with its substantial glazed area is a much more significant feature on the building. By virtue of its size and prominence it draws more attention towards the building and detracts from its form as an ancillary building. The inclusion of these features leads it to appear as an independent entity.
10. Even if the building were considered to retain its ancillary appearance the design and scale of the large dormer window is at odds with both the style of the building and the surrounding area. This results in a visually harmful effect on the character of the building and the surrounding area. Whilst not highly visible from the road, public views of the rear of the building and the dormer windows are available from the Public Right of Way (SM21/1) which runs adjacent to Bluestone Cottage.
11. Attention is drawn to design features on Bluestone Cottage and its attached neighbour along with Halimotts House. However, features on these properties appear as small gables rather than dormer windows. They form part of the traditional architecture of the buildings and include elements such as sash windows which are in keeping with the style of the houses and are not comparable to the large, glazed area on the proposed dormer.
12. Policy DP4 of the Mendip District Local Plan Part 1 (2014) (MDLP) does not support development which would individually or cumulatively, significantly degrade the quality of the local landscape. Whilst I find that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area, I do not find it to be significantly degrading and therefore I find no conflict with this policy. However, as the proposals are not of an appropriate scale or form for the context, the scheme would be contrary to Policy DP7 as well as failing to contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local distinctiveness as required by Policy DP1.
13. As the site is to the north of a Grade II* listed building, Lottisham Manor, I am mindful of the statutory duty set out in section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed

Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. The special interest and significance of Lottisham Manor is derived in part from its age dating back to the 15th Century and the associated architectural features both internally and externally. The property is visible from the road with substantial gardens to the rear. In views from the PROW the Manor can be seen behind the building erected on the site. In respect of the dormer windows whilst they have a harmful effect on the appearance of the building itself and its rural character, they have a neutral effect on the setting of Lottisham Manor and its significance is not affected. A lack of harm in this respect, however, does not alter my overall conclusions.

14. The inclusion of dormer windows in the rear of the building, particularly the large, glazed window detracts from the ancillary nature of the building, is out of keeping with the design of the building and the surrounding area. It would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area and contrary to Policies DP1 and DP7 of the MDLP which amongst other things requires proposals to contribute to local identity and distinctiveness and appreciate the built context.

Other Matters

15. The appellant suggests that the building has been constructed to a high standard to showcase his work as a builder. Even if this is the case the additional dormer windows are not required for this purpose. The building may be energy efficient, replace unsightly shipping containers and be more secure, however, the building previously approved would also meet these aims.
16. The large window will let additional natural light into the space and provide views from the building. However, this does not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

H Faulkner

INSPECTOR