



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 April 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/D/24/3356104

Lane End House, Curload Lane, Stoke St Gregory, Somerset TA3 6JA

- 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 and Mrs Martin against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 36/24/0013.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and the effect of the proposal on biodiversity, including protected species.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Positioned on the corner of Curload Lane and Stoke Road, with an open corner garden, and featuring an elegant symmetrical Georgian style façade, Lane End House makes a positive contribution to the street scene. To the rear, the former farmhouse has been updated with a contemporary style box dormer, with a flat fibreglass roof and composite cladding.
4. It is argued that the extension would be sufficiently stepped back from the principal elevation and would be more in keeping than the present configuration. However, given it would be set back from it by less than a metre and its parapet would similarly match the eaves height of the frontage, it would not be subservient in scale. It is acknowledged that housing styles differ in the area. Furthermore, the muted low-pitched roof would include hidden drainage, set within a traditionally designed parapet. Even so, the proposed development would extend the house to one side by two storeys. This would disrupt the balance of the building and the symmetry of its principal Georgian façade.
5. Furthermore, the overall massing of the extension would stand out as an unusually stark feature. Although a mature boundary hedgerow would screen the extension from the highway to the southwest, the first floor of the extension would be nevertheless visible above a side garden wall and planting, from the street in front of the property. Consequently, the eye would be drawn to an extension that would detrimentally elongate the building's characterful frontage.

6. The complexities involved in extending the property are noted. Moreover, various attempts have been made to harmonise the extension with the house, including brickwork and lintel details that would match the principal façade and modern materials which would unify the extension with the box dormer to the rear. However, any such complimentary design measures would not resolve the incongruity of its scale and position in relation to the parent building.
7. This is similarly the case with the fenestration. Although those openings on the front would be of a similar but subservient scale, and a condition could be imposed to require them to be sashed, this would not overcome the harm which would arise from the overall height and placement of the extension.
8. Based on the above, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the host building and to the character and appearance of the area. In that regard, it would conflict with Policy DM1 of the Adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011 – 2028 Development Plan Document (CS) which requires development to protect the character and appearance of buildings and the street scene. It would also be contrary to Policy D5 of the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (DMP) which permits proposals to extend existing residential properties provided they do not harm the form and character of the existing property and are subservient to it in scale and design.

Protected Species

9. The Council considers that a Preliminary Bat Roost and Breeding Bird Assessment (PA) would be required to establish the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected in accordance with Government Circular 2005/06. However, as the Council intended to refuse the application, it did not wait for the appellant to submit a finalised version of the PA and proceeded to determination.
10. While not submitted with this appeal, the evidence shows that the PA required further survey work. Additionally, I note the appellant's comment that no bats or evidence of bats were discovered during recent renovations at the property, this evidence is anecdotal. Therefore, in the absence of a completed PA, I am unable to credibly determine the full effect of the appeal proposal on biodiversity, including protected species.
11. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal could well have a harmful effect on biodiversity including protected species. As such, it would be contrary to policies DM1 and CP8 of the CS which require developments to protect habitats and species and provide for any necessary mitigation measures. The proposal would similarly conflict with the Circular.

Other Matters

12. I acknowledge the appellant's frustration regarding the Council's handling of the application, including a lack of positive engagement and a failure to view the proposal from their garden. However, given I have visited the site, and I have determined the case solely on its planning merits, these are not matters which I need to consider further.
13. Although, the Parish Council has indicated its support for the proposal, this does not outweigh the harm I have found above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR