



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2025

by **B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/D/25/3363088

Clifford Cottage, Rull Farm, Whatley Road, Otterford, Chard, Somerset TA20 3QJ

- 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 Luke Pearce against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 29/24/0003.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey extensions to the side and rear with conversion of garage into ancillary accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have removed wording from the description of development above that does not describe development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and the landscape and scenic beauty of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

Reasons

4. Clifford Cottage is a former barn structure converted to two dwellings, located within the Rull Farm complex in the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. Whilst it has been extended¹, it retains a simple form and appearance. This is because the approved two storey extension continued the existing linear roof form of the building. The attached garage addition is low level and flat roofed, set comfortably below the eaves. It is visually subservient and does not compromise the original functional form of the building.
5. The retained simple linear form of the main building therefore preserves its original intrinsic agricultural character. Historic photographs illustrate large agricultural structures nearby the original barn building, in addition to a small masonry structure attached to the North-east elevation. These agricultural buildings do not compromise the linear character of the original agricultural building.
6. The proposed extension would be erected above the existing garage projection. As such, the footprint of the existing development would not be altered. However, the proposed extension would introduce a gable design that mirrors the roof and

¹ Application references 29/07/0008 & 29/9/0010

pitch of the original building at a similar total height and would sit in parallel with the main roof.

7. The link between the two gable roofs would be glazed and therefore lightweight and subservient, however the scale of the additional gable and roof line would visually compete with the existing building and prominently alter its existing retained linear form.
8. Whether the extension is on the front or principal elevation of the dwelling house or not, it would dominate and undermine the agricultural character of the building and would hinder its legibility as its former function as a barn. Matching materials may tie the structures together but would not mitigate for the significant visual impact of the extension.
9. The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2024 document sets out that key to the Blackdown Hills designation is the subtle combination of four aspects of the landscape, which includes being a landscape with architectural appeal.
10. As a respectfully converted former barn that retains its simple architectural qualities, the appeal building, whilst only visible in glimpses or from a distance from public vantage points, contributes positively to the architectural appeal of the surroundings. It consequently makes a positive contribution to the natural and scenic beauty of the National Landscape.
11. As set out above, given the harm to the traditional rural agricultural character of the appeal building, the architectural character of the building would be compromised and its contribution to the wider landscape would be diminished. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.
12. The two proposals at Pound House² appear to be, firstly, a largely ground floor extension, with the eaves and ridge set significantly below that of the original building. Secondly, the extension infilling a gap retained the direction and form of the existing roof. These extensions would not visually compete with the main building in this regard therefore, and their visual impact are not comparable to the proposal before me.
13. The original property shown at Fry's Moor House³ is an L shaped dwelling with a projecting porch area and attached outbuilding. The proposed extension therefore did not harm any simple linear agricultural architectural form and character. Similarly, Royston Cottage⁴ is an existing two storey farmhouse with a L shaped roof profile.
14. Whilst various additions have been approved within the Rull Farm complex, none of these are to an obvious single simple linear barn building. It is not therefore demonstrated they are comparable to the proposal in front of me. As such these other permissions and development highlighted are materially different to the scheme before me.

² Application references 10/05/0004 & 10/06/0023

³ Application reference 29/16/0013

⁴ Application references 29/17/0032 & 29/18/0018

15. The example at The Shippen⁵, was, unlike the appeal proposal, a double gable roof extension. Notwithstanding this, even if the development and circumstances have similarities, it does not provide an example that should inevitably be followed given that I have found that harm would result.
16. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing property and the landscape and scenic beauty of the wider Blackdown Hills National Landscape. The proposal would conflict with Policies DM1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012) and Policy D5 of the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), which require that the form and character of the dwelling and the appearance and character of any affected landscape are not harmed.

Other Matters

17. The Council set out that the appeal site lies within the catchment area for the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. As I am dismissing the appeal I have not considered this matter further.
18. Even if there is no alternative location for the extension, this does not outweigh the harm I have identified. The lack of harm identified in relation to matters such as neighbour amenity is a neutral matter and does not weight in favour of the scheme. The AONB Officer did not object to nor support the scheme. This also does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
19. Any private benefit to the appellants in terms of improved accommodation would be small and does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

20. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed and permission is refused.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR

⁵ Application reference 10/18/0020