
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2025 by K Hole BA (Hons)

Decision by C Carpenter BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/D/25/3371646

Washbattle Mill Cottage, New House Plain, Huish Champflower, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2HJ

- 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 Ms Carolin Colvin against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/17/25/002.
 - The development proposed is “Ground Floor and First Floor extensions”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The application form refers to the appeal site as “Mill Cottage”. However, the appellant has confirmed that the appeal site is known as “Washbattle Mill Cottage.” This decision therefore refers to it as such. The neighbouring property to the west of the appeal site is known as “Washbattle Mill”.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and surrounding area; and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of Washbattle Mill, with particular reference to outlook and light.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property is a part single-, part two-storey detached dwelling located in the rural hamlet of Washbattle. The hamlet comprises four cottage dwellings within buildings originally connected to the historic rural economy, including a former mill. The dwellings are similar in the respect that they have been constructed with traditional stone in a rectangular form with simple pitched gable end roofs. Overall, the scale of the dwellings is modest. Although the appeal dwelling has been enlarged through incremental extensions, its original smaller scale can still be

appreciated. As a group, therefore, and notwithstanding alterations, the appearance of the cottages contributes strongly to the character of Washbattle as a small and historic rural settlement.

6. The design of the proposal involves a two-storey extension to the side of the front elevation. The extension would continue back to align with the rear elevation and wrap around the dwelling to adjoin the single-storey lean-to roof at the rear. Section 5.15 of the Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide (2021) advises that extensions should not dominate the original dwelling and should be subservient in volume and visual impact. The existing side extension is set slightly back from the original dwelling which demonstrates a level of subservience to the original dwelling. However, this would be incorporated into the new extension to form a single, extensive façade of largely uniform building line, height and materials.
7. Consequently, the added scale, width and overall massing of the proposal would dominate the appearance of the dwelling. This would conflict with the guidance on subservience noted above. In addition, appreciation of the building's original modest scale would be substantially diminished, and its elongated form and much larger size would look out of place next to the smaller cottages nearby.
8. The existing pitched gable end roof would be extended with a second pitched gable end roof constructed behind and connected by a valley gutter. On its own, the pitched roof design would reflect the form of the existing second storey and indeed that of the other roofs in the hamlet. However, the proposed double pitched roof with valley gutter would not be characteristic of the area. It would therefore appear contrived and visually discordant.
9. While the proposal would be located within generous garden space, it would be visible from public view. The upper part and extended roof to the front elevation would be seen above the mature hedging that runs along the eastern boundary, and the valley gutter and new pitched roof would be clearly visible from the public highway, notwithstanding bends and inclines in the road. Given that the appeal dwelling is already larger than the neighbouring dwellings, the added scale and mass would further accentuate this disparity.
10. Overall, the change to the appearance of the host building would undermine its visual and historic relationship with the other cottages in Washbattle and thereby erode the character of the hamlet. The proposed use of matching materials would not overcome the dominant scale and discordant form of the proposal, so would not be sufficient to mitigate this harm.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and surrounding area therefore conflicting with Policy BD/3 of the West Somerset Local Plan (2016). This Policy requires scale, proportions and detailing of development to be in character and appropriate to the building to which they relate. For the same reasons, the proposal would conflict with the requirements in The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) for development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Living Conditions

12. The appeal dwelling shares a boundary with Washbattle Mill. Both dwellings sit at different angles with the gap between the side elevation of Washbattle Mill and the

rear elevation of Washbattle Mill Cottage widening towards the north where the extension would be positioned. I acknowledge that the extension would be visible from the first-floor window on the side elevation of Washbattle Mill. However, due to its proposed position largely behind the rear elevation of Washbattle Mill Cottage, together with the separation distance, it would not have a materially detrimental effect on outlook for the occupiers of Washbattle Mill. There is also little evidence that light for those occupiers would be adversely affected, bearing in mind the orientation of the buildings.

13. I therefore conclude the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of Washbattle Mill, with particular reference to outlook and light. Accordingly, I find no conflict with the Framework where it seeks a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of development.

Other Matters

14. It has been brought to my attention that the purpose of the proposal is to provide accommodation for a live-in carer due to the personal circumstances of the occupants of the dwelling. In considering my recommendation, I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, particularly the need to eliminate discrimination against persons with protected characteristics of age and/or disability, advancing equality of opportunity for those persons and fostering good relations between them and others. I also recognise that residential annexes, where appropriate, can help to provide flexibility of accommodation.
15. However, there is no pertinent evidence that the proposed development would be the only way to achieve the objective of live-in care in this case. Consequently, and given the extent and permanence of the proposed change to the building, these personal circumstances are not sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified.
16. I appreciate the appellant has attempted to overcome concerns raised during determination of the planning application. However, I have considered the proposal before me on its individual planning merits, and it would still result in harm to character and appearance for the reasons I have already outlined.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. While the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupiers at Washbattle Mill, its harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and surrounding area leads me to find a conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. No other material considerations, including the Framework, have been shown to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Hole

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

C Carpenter

INSPECTOR