
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2026

by **R J Redford MTCP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/W/25/3374532

Tower Hill Barn, Mill Lane, Beckington, Frome, Somerset BA11 6SN

- 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 Alex Keevil against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/1049/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as to retain extended curtilage and construct annex to create double garage, tool store and additional ancillary accommodation and construct link building over pedestrian access and gable end extension to create shower room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. There is a second appeal (APP/E3335/W/25/3374383) by the same appellant on a nearby site which I have also been appointed to determine. However, this has been dealt with on its own merits in a separate decision.
3. The appellant advises that the proposal should have included a timber solar shade along the west elevation and part of the north elevation. Whilst the plans¹ identified by the appellant show differences in materials along those elevations, they do not show or refer to solar shading. Accordingly, this decision has dealt with the proposal as it presents on the plans.
4. For clarity, the proposal constitutes 4 elements: (1) an extension on the existing gym/office; (2) a link between the main building and existing gym/office; (3) an extension of the residential curtilage into the adjacent field; and (4) onto that land, an extension of the existing 2 floor annex. This would create an additional bedroom, allow the reorientation of living space, and provide undercover parking.

Background and Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether the appeal site is a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to relevant policies relating to the countryside, and the proposals effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

6. The appeal site includes the host dwelling which has a modest square curtilage, and a strip of the adjacent field which has been covered in hardstanding and used

¹ PL5418/D6 and PL5418/D8

for storage by the appellant. The host dwelling falls within the Beckington Housing Development Boundary (HDB) but the existing annex and strip of field are outside of it, so would be considered to be in the open countryside.

7. Mendip District Local Plan (LP) Policy CP1 requires that development within the open countryside needs to comply with LP Policy CP4, and this would be the case for proposed elements (3) and (4). These elements would not provide rural affordable or occupational housing. Nor would they constitute development of the rural economy, community infrastructure or safeguard a community facility or premises. Therefore, elements (3) and (4) would fail to comply with LP Policy CP4.
8. As proposed elements (1) and (2) would be within the HDB, they would comply with the spatial strategy set out in LP Policy CP1.
9. The appellant has stated that the annex was approved even though it would be outside the HDB. That it was in the curtilage of the dwelling it was to serve is likely why the spatial strategy policies were not determinative in its approval. This is not the case for elements (3) and (4).
10. Therefore elements (3) and (4) of the proposal would not comply with the relevant policies relating to the countryside, specifically LP Policies CP1 and CP4. As such the appeal site would be an unsuitable location for these parts of the proposed development.

Character and appearance

11. The appeal site is at the junction between Mill Lane and a private driveway, at the very edge of Beckington village, situated in the corner of a large field. This edge of settlement position is emphasised with the single storey L-shaped host dwelling and detached annex abutting the boundaries with the road and driveway rather than the open field. The aesthetic of the existing house is very much that of converted agricultural barns and their low-level form and open aspect across the field emphasises a rural rather than village or suburban character.
12. The modest, single storey size of the host dwelling and its curtilage are key to its character specifically the spaciousness created by the open boundaries with the adjacent field which reinforces its countryside context. Proposed elements (3) and (4) would extend the size of the curtilage and create a secondary L shaped building which would increase the enclosure of the site. They would extend the existing annex's 2 storey height to the edge of the appeal site.
13. This would mean when viewed from the surrounding road and drive, the annex and proposed element (4) would be the dominant building on the appeal site as it would be taller than the host dwelling. Further the extended annex's footprint would be similar if not larger than the host dwelling. Thus, by size, height and over all bulk, the proposed elements (3) and (4) would create a building which would overwhelm the host dwelling, aggrandise the annex and, when viewed externally, would create a development which would not be in keeping with the modest rural character of the original house and its setting.
14. The proposal would create a courtyard with development on 3 sides, which the appellant has described as a building typology associated with farmsteads, and has used the conversion of the main farm on the opposite side of Mill Lane as an example of this. However, this emphasises that the appeal site is not a farmstead,

but rather a modest roadside barn in the corner of a field. And the current residential use has largely maintained this appearance.

15. The proposal would therefore create a form of development uncharacteristic of the original simple barn form. It would create a defined and more elaborate complex of buildings which would further separate the historic relationship between the barn and surrounding field. This would have an urbanising effect on the appeal site, bring development further into the countryside, and permanently harm the rural character of the site's locality.
16. It is accepted that the materials proposed would be in keeping with the host dwelling and would not be out of character in the countryside. However, this does not overcome the excessive size, bulk, and height of that proposed.
17. The proposed elements (1) and (2) would be largely located within the built envelope of the appeal site and would be of a size, scale and finish that would complement the existing building. They would also not impact on the open and rural character of the host dwelling or the appeal site as a whole. However, this does not negate the harm proposed element (3) and (4) would cause.
18. The proposal would therefore harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and due to its reasonably visible position would have an incrementally urbanising effect on the rural edge of the village to the detriment of the area's character and appearance. Accordingly, it would fail to comply with LP Policies DP1, DP4 and DP7 as far as they require development to contribute positively to the local identity, not degrade the quality of local landscapes and be of a scale, mass, form, and layout appropriate to the local context.

Other Matters

19. The Council has not found harm in relation to living conditions, highways and refuse collection. However, a lack of harm, by definition cannot weigh for or against the proposal. This would also be the case in relation to the impact on bats, for which the Council consider conditions could mitigate. There is nothing before me to conclude otherwise.
20. The planning application associated to this appeal was submitted post 2 April 2024 therefore the Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations must be applied. The appellant has stated that the proposal should be considered a self-build / custom build development. If this is the case then the proposal would be exempt from providing any biodiversity net gain, so this too would be a lack of harm.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and there are no sufficiently weighted material considerations, including the Framework, which would indicate a decision otherwise. The appeal is, therefore, dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR