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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020 by Christian Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

**Decision by Andrew Owen BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 14 August 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/W/20/3252267**

**Lower Hurcot Farm, Hurcot Lane, Somerton TA11 6AA**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Tim Burrage against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
  - The application Ref 19/02725/FUL, dated 30 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2020.
  - The development proposed is 3-bay open fronted timber frame garage and adjoining loose-box with oak posts at the front, ship-lap boarded walls, pantile effect PVC coated steel sheet roof on a concrete base with an apron in front of two bays.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

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

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the local landscape character of the area.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Lower Hurcot Farmhouse forms part of a small group of buildings which comprise the western portion of the hamlet of Hurcot. The land surrounding the hamlet's built form generally comprises open agricultural fields although there is separation from the wider countryside to the south by a railway embankment. The two storey detached house is set back a short distance from the road and the property has a large rear garden area. To the northern side of the dwelling there is a driveway which leads to an open parking area situated between the rear of the house and an old outbuilding.
  5. The appeal site is to the north of the driveway. At the time of the site visit fencing had been erected and the landform remodelled, including an excavated area siting lower than the neighbouring field. The excavated area would accommodate the proposed timber frame garage and attached loosebox. However, it is apparent that the land previously formed part of the neighbouring large open agricultural field which rises towards the north and
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wraps around the flank and rear of the appeal property, making an important contribution to the landscape setting of the hamlet.

6. Policy EQ2 of the 2015 adopted South Somerset Local Plan (LP) seeks to ensure development promotes local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district. In determining this, the policy sets out a number of considerations that a proposal will be assessed against. This includes 'conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area'. The development would fail to meet this consideration and instead cause significant harm to the landscape character of the area owing to a combination of the sizeable incursion into the open field, the carving out of the natural landform and the domestic nature of the proposed outbuilding and associated hardstanding. Given its close proximity to the road, the harmful effects of the development would be visually prominent despite the fact that it would be seen from the south against the rising field behind and would have a limited visual impact when seen from the north. Overall, it would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the district in accordance with Policy EQ2.
7. The appellant's stated need for the additional covered parking, loose-box and associated turning space are acknowledged, as is the care taken in the design and materials of the proposed building. However, it has not been demonstrated that other less harmful options to accommodate the identified needs within the existing large permitted residential area of the property have been fully explored. Limited weight is therefore given to this matter.
8. The appellant has drawn attention to the granting of planning permission for a double garage and later attached workshop and store at The Old Barn, on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site. However, the full background to those permissions have not been made clear, in particular whether they involved the change of use of agricultural land to residential use. In any event, they are not directly comparable to the current proposal because they are set further back from the road and are thereby less prominent.
9. Accordingly, it is concluded the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the local landscape character of the area and the benefits of the development would not outweigh the harm. It would conflict with Policy EQ2 of the LP for the reasons previously stated. It would also conflict with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

10. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Christian Ford*

PLANNING DECISION OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Planning Decision Officer's report, and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*Andrew Owen*

INSPECTOR