

OFFICER: John Millar (01935) 462465

APPL.NO: 07/01288/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application

PARISH: Montacute WARD: ST MICHAELS

DESCRIPTION: Modification of existing windows, installation of new windows and rooflights (GR349050/116380)

LOCATION: Stable House, Hamdon Stables, Park Lane, Montacute, Som, TA15 6XN

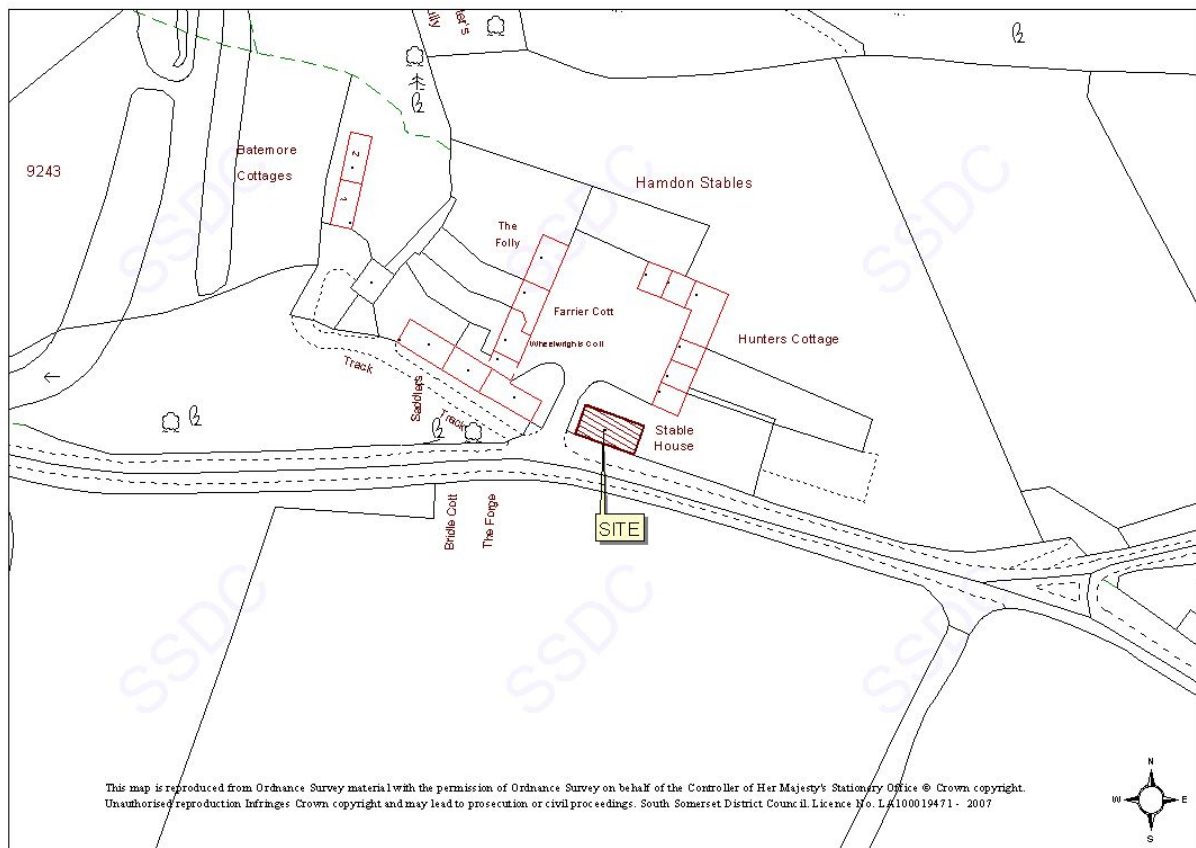
APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs A Gillespie

AGENT: Graham Vincent Architecture Ltd, The Old Chapel, Great Street, Norton Sub Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6SG

DATE ACCEPTED: 13 March 2007

Reason To Referral To Committee

The application is before Committee as the applicant is an employee of SSDC and a Head of Service. As such, this application may not be dealt with under delegated power.



Site Description And Proposal

The property is one of a number of units converted as part of an overall barn conversion scheme, approval for which was granted in 1994. This application relates to Stable House, a detached dwelling located to the south of the site, immediately adjacent to the public highway.

The proposal is made to enlarge the existing windows, insert 8 rooflights and also insert a new opening in the south (roadside) elevation.

History

941694: The carrying out of alterations, conversion of barn into seven dwellings and provision of garaging / stable block and store - Conditionally approved.

Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Regional Spatial Strategy: Vis 1, Vis 2, EN4

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan: Policy 49

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006): ST4, ST5, ST6, EH7

SSDC Supplementary Planning Guidance: The Conversion of Barns and Other Historic Buildings

Consultations

Town/Parish Council

No comments received.

SSDC Technical Services

No comments.

County Highway Authority

No objections.

County Archaeology

No objection on archaeological grounds.

SSDC Conservation Officer

Thank you for consulting me on the above application. You will recall that I replied to a pre-application consultation on this property sometime ago. This was when I was allocated some of the backlog of pre-applications to be cleared.

At that time I commented:

Stable House is not listed and is not within the conservation area, but it does lie within the area defined as open countryside. As such, policy ST4 of the Somerset Local Plan applies (copy attached):

In my view, the proposed alterations to this barn would be contrary to policy ST4 as it would have an adverse effect on the character of this converted barn. I would suggest that you consider the removal of the screen which is revealed on the North side and replace this with a large, virtually entirely glass screen. In addition you may wish to consider moving the toilet and utility from the front of the building to the back of the building in the area of the study and perhaps move this forward if indeed this room is required. Again on the upper floor, the en

suite to bedroom two could be moved into the area where you have shown the bed at present, thereby allowing a great deal more light into bedroom two.

In summary, I do not consider the external alterations to be appropriate but do consider that a combination of internal reorganisation along with complete change to the fenestration within the revealed area would add a great deal more light to the property.

I subsequently met with the architect involved and we discussed a number of options

The application has been submitted without alteration to the drawings.

The character of this barn is the large expanse of wall and uncluttered roof to the roadside, and the large openings to the courtyard. In considering alterations this character must be respected. To form large openings in this roadside wall and roof would be damaging to the character of the barn and should be resisted. For me there are other less intrusive options that respect the character of the barn. In response to the application, the applicant has been encouraged to pursue other design options in discussion with the Officers, but has indicated that he wishes the application determined as submitted.

My advice is that this proposal is contrary to ST4 and the advice contained within the Council's booklet on the conversion of barns, and should be recommended for refusal.

Representations

None

Considerations

This application relates to the addition and alteration of openings within this barn conversion. These include the addition of 8 rooflights and a new window to the south elevation. In assessing this application, particular consideration should be given to Local Plan Policy ST4 and guidance contained in SSDC supplementary planning guidance, The Conversion of Barns and Other Historic Buildings.

ST4 states that where changes of use or conversion of a building outside defined development area is to be allowed, further alteration or extension of the building or development within the curtilage will be permitted if it is demonstrated that the development would not have an adverse effect on its character or setting. The District Council will consider the removal of permitted development rights only where it is clear that further development would be likely to have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the development.

The Council's supplementary planning guidance states among other things that:

- The roof of a farm building is perhaps its most important feature ... characteristics of large unbroken roof slopes should be respected and retained.
- Even small rooflights can be prominent ... and disrupt the simple lines of a traditional roof.
- Agricultural buildings are characterised by large areas of uninterrupted wall with few windows and doors.
- Consider carefully the buildings existing openings and make use of these before even considering the introduction of new ones.
- If and only if an acceptable design solution is largely possible without extra windows and doors should the conversion be considered.
- New openings should be positioned carefully to deliberately maintain the character of the building. Often the objective will be to retain large areas of uninterrupted wall.

The application is made to provide additional light to the habitable rooms of the property. The design and access statement mentions that the original design of the barn conversion

was such that internal light levels are extremely low, making the house gloomy and unpleasant for the inhabitants. An important consideration when allowing a barn conversion scheme is that permission should only be granted where major reconstruction is not required (EH7) and that where acceptable design solutions are possible without extra openings (SPG).

The barn conversion is of a very high quality with this building in particular, being characterised by unbroken roof slopes and limited openings to the south elevation. The south elevation is highly prominent, being the principal roadside elevation. While there are 4 small openings, these do little to detract from the agricultural nature of the dwelling and the wall remains mostly uninterrupted. When planning permission was granted in 1994, permitted development rights for the addition and alteration of openings was removed to safeguard the character and appearance of the barn conversion.

It is considered that the enlarging of the existing window openings, particularly on the south elevation, the addition of a new window and the addition of rooflights will not respect or relate to the character of this building or its surroundings and will have a severely detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the converted barn. There are few isolated examples of additional opening on some of other barn conversions but these are on elevations that are either not readily visible from public view or more protected by existing plants and trees. This proposal is for a major intervention to the most visible and principal elevation in regard to public view. It is not considered that other alterations constitute proliferation of new development that would cite a precedent.

The Conservation Officer has been consulted and has recommended refusal of this application. It considered that to form large openings in the roadside wall and roof would be damaging to the character of the barn and should be resisted. Furthermore, the Conservation Officer has carried out pre-application discussions with the applicant's agent and has made suggestions as to how more appropriate changes may be able to be made that could provide additional light without the wholesale alteration of existing openings and a mass addition of new openings that adversely affect the buildings character and appearance. However, this application has been made without further consideration to the pre-application advice.

Therefore, the recommendation to Members is to refuse planning permission for the proposed works.

Recommendation

REFUSE

01. The proposed installation of rooflights, due to the interruption of the roof slope would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the barn conversion and as such is contrary to policies ST4 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 and advice contained in the District Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - The Conversion of Barns and Other Historic Buildings.
02. The proposed alteration of the existing window openings and the addition of a new window opening, especially to the south elevation, due to the interruption of large expanse of wall, would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the barn conversion and as such is contrary to policies ST4 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 and advice contained in the District Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - The Conversion of Barns and Other Historic Buildings.