

**OFFICER: Steven Banks (01935) 462119 [Item 3]**  
**APPL.NO: 07/02592/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application**  
**PARISH: Buckland St Mary WARD: BLACKDOWN**  
**DESCRIPTION: Conversion of redundant barn to home office space and guest suite (GR 326545 / 115187)**  
**LOCATION: Greenacre Cottage Blackwater Road Buckland St Mary Chard Somerset TA20 3LE**  
**APPLICANT: Linus Surguy**  
**AGENT: Wiebke Rietz Reed Holland Associates Bridge House 14 Bridge Street Taunton TA1 1UB**  
**DATE ACCEPTED: 29 June 2007**

**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:**

The Ward Member with the agreement of the Area Chairman has asked for this application to be referred to the Committee to enable members to consider the impact of the proposals on the locality.

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL:**

This planning application relates to the creation of an office/guest suite to the south east of Greenacre Cottage.



**HISTORY:**

01/01147/FUL - Erection of a ground floor and first floor extension - Application conditionally approved 28/06/2001

951083 - Erection of a two storey extension to dwelling - Application conditionally approved 11/07/1995

940111 - The erection of a double garage - Application conditionally approved 03/03/1994

892388 - Erection of a boundary wall and replacement double garage - Application conditionally approved 29/11/1989

890930 - Northern extension conditionally approved 31/05/1989

**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:**

VIS2 - Principles for future development  
EN 4 - Quality in the Built Environment  
SS19 - Rural Areas

**Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan**

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development.  
Policy STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages  
Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

**South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006)**

ST5 - General Principles of Development  
ST6 - The Quality of Development  
ST3 - Development Areas  
EC2 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
EC3 - Landscape Character  
EH7 - The Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

PPS 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS:**

*Town/Parish Council:*

Support with the condition that it is 'tied' to the main dwelling.

*County Highways:*

If the proposed accommodation was for ancillary purposes then the Highway Authority would raise no objection to the proposal. However if the proposal was for holiday let style accommodation encouraging additional vehicles to the site then the Highway Authority would raise concerns regarding the safety of the means of access to the site and would possibly recommend refusal.

*Area Engineer:*

No comment.

*Landscape Officer:*

Objects strongly to the proposal.

*Neighbours:*

No response.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

The proposal would result in an erosion of the countryside by virtue of domestic expansion into agricultural land contrary to PPS7 and Policy ST3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

The proposal would also have an adverse impact on landscape character due to the domestication of the countryside, in a manner at variance with local character contrary to Policy ST5, EC2 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

Blackwater is a small hamlet in a rural location and the few domestic plots in the vicinity primarily lay alongside the narrow lane frontage. The barn lays somewhat separate from the house, in a field to the south of the house, and thus is divorced from the general settlement pattern, and highway. Additionally, the red line attached to this application extends the domestic use not only to the barns, but additionally to the rest of the field.

A domestic use in this field location is contrary to the local settlement pattern, and thus at variance with local character. The 'red line' field clearly lays outside the historic curtilage of the residential element of the site, and is a substantial area. The extent of the residential proposal is neither appropriate to the scale of the dwelling, nor of a scale characteristic of rural residential plots in the locality. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to landscape policies, as it would extend the domestic plot beyond established residential boundaries into an agricultural field, is contrary to the settlement pattern, domesticates an area to an extent that is at variance with both the landscape and historic character, and is of an incongruous scale.

Development of this form, in this relatively isolated location, would be at variance with, and subtly erode, the intrinsic characteristics that are integral to the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills AONB. Consequently, as PPS 7 and the adopted plan policies favour the conservation of the AONB, and require development to respect the character of its landscape surround, there are clear landscape grounds with which to resist and determine this proposal.

The site lies outside the Development Area where planning policies aim to strictly control new development in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside. The proposal would prove detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside.

The proposal does not accord with PPS1 not protecting or enhancing the character or amenity value of the area. The environmental quality of the area would be damaged and decline due to the poor, unattractive, inappropriate design not fitting with the environmental characteristics of the area. Therefore the proposal does not integrate into the environment well.

The proposal neither maintains or enhances the environment as ST3 requires, nor does it respect the setting, which is characterised by a general lack of development form.

The proposal by virtue of its size, design and external appearance, represents an unacceptable extension of new development into an area of unspoiled countryside which is clearly visible from a public footpath. The public footpath is approximately 32m from the public footpath.

The large proposal is predominantly new build and includes a shower, toilet and four rooms. The proposal would be tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling in the countryside due to the identified rooms and its position 32m away from the existing house. A new dwelling in this location would not be sustainable due to a lack of public transport and local facilities. An occupier of the dwelling would be dependant on the car.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

##### **Application Refused**

1. The proposal due to its size, scale, the nature of the accommodation and its position away from the existing house, would be tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling in the countryside. The proposal is capable of functioning independently of the main dwelling Greenacre Cottage and does not maintain or enhance the environment contrary to Policy ST3, ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.
2. The proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape due to the domestication of the countryside, in a manner at variance with local character contrary to Policy ST5, EC2 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.