

Area West Committee – 18th January 2012

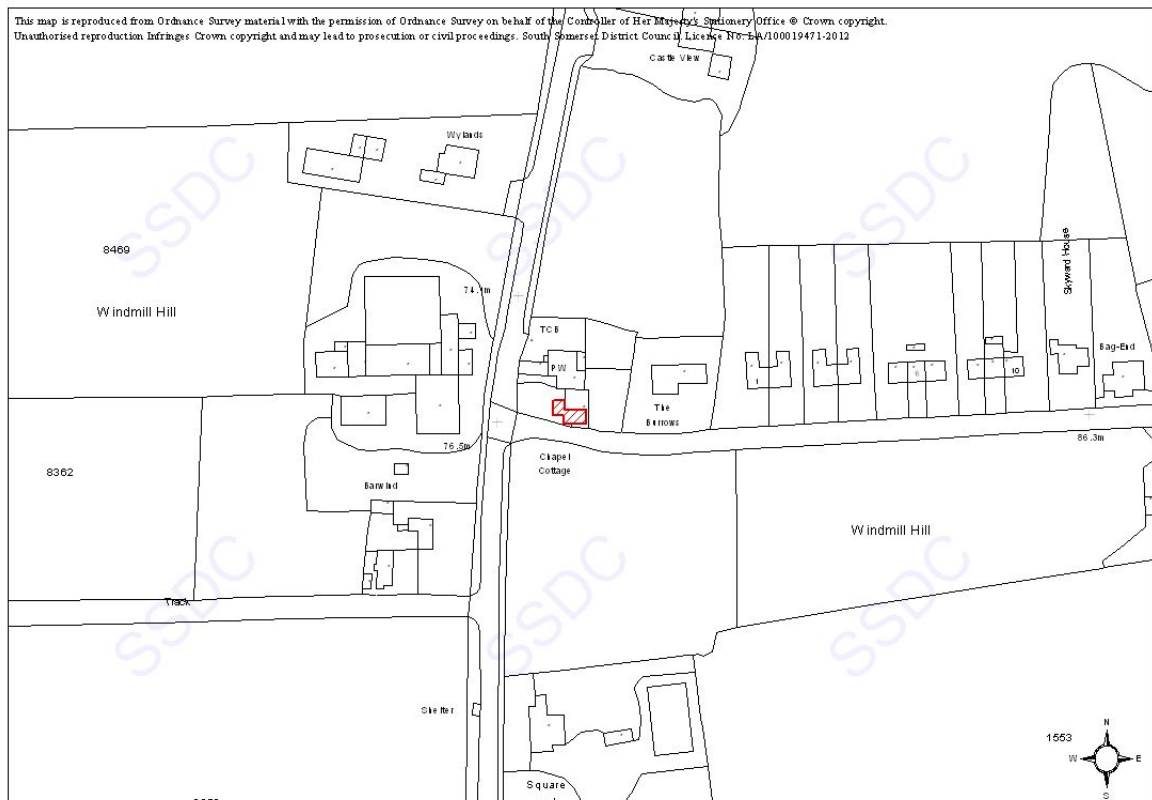
**Officer Report On Planning Application: 11/04168/FUL**

<b>Proposal :</b>	Alteration and the erection of two storey side and front extension to dwellinghouse (GR 330994/116643)
<b>Site Address:</b>	Chapel Cottage Windmill Hill Ashill
<b>Parish:</b>	Ashill
<b>NEROCHE Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Mrs. L P Vjeh (Cllr)
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	John Millar Tel: (01935) 462465 Email: john.millar@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	16th December 2011
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr and Mrs Chris Downing
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	Mr Chris Baranowski Higher Dairy House Allowenshay Hinton St George TA17 8TB
<b>Application Type :</b>	Other Householder - not a Change of Use

**REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

The application is to be considered by Area West Committee at the request of the Ward Member, with the agreement of the Area Chair. It is felt that the issues should be given further consideration by members, particularly as a result of local support for the proposal.

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL**



The property is a two-storey cottage constructed from a mix of natural flint stone, blue lias and rendered finish. It is in open countryside, beyond any defined development area, located in a prominent location on a corner plot of Windmill Hill and Wood Road. The property is attached to a local Baptist Church and there are several neighbouring properties to the east, located along Windmill Hill. The property is in need of renovation and has been extended in the past, most noticeably by way of a single storey side extension and a large box dormer to the front elevation.

The proposal is made to extend the property by removing the box dormer and single storey extension and replacing with a raised roof and two-storey front gable and side extensions. These extensions are to be finished in a mix of render and natural stone.

## **HISTORY**

No relevant history.

## **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

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan:

STR1 - Sustainable Development

Policy 5 - Landscape Character

South Somerset Local Plan 2006:

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EC3 - Landscape Character

Policy-related Material Considerations:

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

SSDC Guidance - Extensions and Alterations to Houses - A Design Guide

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 8 - Sustainably sited and constructed high quality homes, buildings and public spaces where people can live and work in an environmentally friendly and healthy way.

Goal 11 - Protection and enhancement of our natural environment and biodiversity.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Parish Council:** This application was considered by Ashill Parish Council on 7th November 2011. There were no objections. The Chairman declared an interest in this application on the grounds that he was related to the applicant. Accordingly, he left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and the Vice Chairman took over.

**SSDC Technical Services:** No comment.

**County Highway Authority:** No observations.

**SSDC Principal Landscape Officer:** I note the above application seeking to extend the above dwelling house.

Whilst the overall balance of the proposal is made bulky by the width and the degree of projection of the west gable extension, from a landscape perspective, it is not so disproportionate as to generate a landscape objection of adverse scale relative to its surrounds. Hence on balance I raise no landscape issues.

## REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised by site notice for the requisite period. Six letters of support have been received from local residents. The main points raised include support on the basis that the proposed alterations will improve the appearance of the existing property, it needs renovation and modernisation, it will support a growing local family and will have no adverse impact on neighbouring properties.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The dwelling is located in a prominent location within a good sized plot on the corner of Windmill Hill and Wood Road. The proposed alterations include the removal of a poor quality large box dormer and single storey side extension and replacement with two storey front gable and side extensions, as well as raising the roof of the main part of the existing dwelling.

Saved policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan requires the proposal, in terms of density, form, scale, mass, height and proportions, to respect and relate to the character of its surroundings. Similarly, saved policy ST5 states that it should respect the form, character and setting of the locality. Policy ST6 also states that the proposal should not unacceptably harm residential amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties by disturbing, interfering with or overlooking such properties.

In assessing this application, consideration should also be given to SSDC Guidance 'Extensions and Alterations to Houses - A Design Guide'. This guidance states among other things that:

*"No extension should dominate the existing house in terms of size or shape. Extensions should generally be **subservient**, appearing as if they have a 'supporting role' to the existing house...usually an extension should be read as a subservient addition. This usually means that it will be lower than the main house and expressed as a secondary, added element. This will require (among other things) that:*

- The roof ridge will be lower than the existing house.*
- The form will possess similar characteristics as the existing house, i.e. be in the same 'family of forms'.*
- The roof will follow the principle characteristics of the existing house roof.*
- (Side extensions) Should be set back behind the front of the faceoff the house.*
- (Corner plots) Because two sides of the extension may be on view, particular care must be taken with a design for a corner location."*

In general there are no objections in principle to the extension of this dwelling. The increase in height by approximately 1m is acceptable as is the principle of the extension to the front and side. Despite this, the proportions of the proposed two-storey elements are of concern. In particular, the width and level of projection of the front gable and the depth of the side extension are considered to be disproportionate to the rest of the building. It is noted that the width of the proposed side extension does not project as far as the existing single storey extension, and when viewed from the east is perfectly

acceptable. However, when viewed from the south and west, offering the most prominent public views, the extensions do not appear to be so well related to the existing building.

Prior to submission of this application, the applicant entered into lengthy pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority - the above concerns were raised. The submitted scheme was revised to some degree to take officer's comments into account but it is considered that these revisions still do not go far enough to be considered acceptable. In particular, issues were raised in regard to the depth of the side extension, which is set down from the ridge and set back from the east elevation but is still flush with the west elevation. This gives a bulky appearance, which detracts from the character and appearance of the property. The extension appears to have been designed to be flush with the front of the property to allow a wider gable extension to the west (front) elevation, however this also gives an unbalanced appearance to the resultant property. Officer's advice was that an application submitted along these lines would be unlikely to be supported, although if the side extension were to be set back from the west elevation and the gable projection narrowed, this may then be acceptable.

The Council's Landscape Architect has considered the proposal and has commented on the bulkiness of the proposal, although does not deem this to be so disproportionate to have a detrimental impact on local landscape character. Even though it is agreed that local landscape character of the area is not affected by the proposal, it is still considered that the extensions, particularly when viewed from the south and west, are of a scale and proportion that fails to adequately respect and relate to the character of the existing property and its surroundings.

In addition to the scale of the extensions, there is some concern with the half rendered appearance of the external walls. The existing building comprises a mix of stone and render and for that reason there is no objection to this mix being repeated. However, the horizontal change from stone with render above, as well as the 'bell cast' finish is not in character with the cottage itself or its surroundings and as such it would be more appropriate for each elevation to be either natural stone or fully rendered.

Other than the concerns raised above, the resulting building sits well within the plot and the increase in overall footprint is generally acceptable. It is also considered that the additions will not lead to any adverse impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residents. The proposal has received the support of the Parish Council and a number of local residents. However it is still considered that the scheme is unacceptable, although further revision to reduce the bulkiness of the additions and improve the material finish are likely to lead to officer support. Despite this, on the basis of the application as submitted, it is strongly felt that the proposal is unacceptable and as such, the recommendation to Members is to refuse permission.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse permission

## **FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:**

1. The proposed two-storey front gable and side extensions, by reason of their bulk, form, scale, mass, proportions and material finish fail to respect and relate to the character of the property and its surroundings and as such has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality. As such, the proposal is contrary to advice contained within SSDC Guidance 'Extensions and Alterations to Houses - A Design Guide', policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.