

<b>Application No:</b> <b>09/01412/LB</b>	<b>Ward:</b> <b>Astons and Heyfords</b>	<b>Date Valid:</b> <b>18 November 2009</b>
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr & Mrs Eastwood	
<b>Site Address:</b>	Church End, Church Street, Somerton	

**Proposal:** Demolition of single storey extension and construction of single storey link to existing outbuilding. Outbuilding converted to living accommodation

## 1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 This application seeks listed building consent for the demolition of a single storey, lean-to extension on the rear of the property, conversion of an existing rear outbuilding to provide ancillary living accommodation and erection of a glazed link/covered yard at the rear.

The property was listed in 1988, and was originally part of a farmhouse, forming a terrace of vernacular stone, rural buildings, which has since been converted to form a single dwelling.

The property is located within the Somerton Conservation Area, and adjoins the neighbouring Grade II listed cottage. St James's Church, which is a Grade I listed building lies directly to the west of the site, and public footpath no. 349/4 runs north-south past the western side of the plot. The site is also located within an Area of High Landscape Value.

1.2 The dwelling has been extended at single storey level to the rear in the form of a simple lean-to and at two storey level on the rear, which has been finished in white/cream render.

## 2. Application Publicity

2.1 The application has been advertised by site notice, neighbour letter and press notice. The final date for comment was 1 January 2010.

2.2 Four letters of support has been received, and in summary state that the planning application will further enhance the environment that is Church Street, particularly when viewed from the adjoining churchyard, will preserve the setting of the Grade I listed church and will improve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by replacing an unsightly corrugated roof building with a high quality, slate roofed construction.

## 3. Consultations

3.1 Somerton Parish Council – has **no objection** to the proposal.

3.2 Oxfordshire County Council Highway Authority has **no objection** to the application.

- 3.3 Conservation Officer - **objects** to the proposal.
- 3.4 Oxfordshire County Councils Planning Archaeologist, Richard Oram, recommends the attachment of a planning note regarding archaeological finds.
- 3.5 English Heritage – Do not wish to offer any comments on the proposal, and recommend that the application be determined in accordance with national and local Policy guidance, and on the basis of the Council's specialist conservation advice.

## 4. Relevant Planning Policies

- 4.1 PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
- 4.2 South East Plan 2009 – Policy BE6
- 4.3 Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 – Saved Policy C18

## 5. Appraisal

- 5.1 The key issue to consider is:
  - Impact on the setting, character, architectural and historic fabric of the listed building
- 5.2 **Impact on the setting, character, architectural and historic fabric of the listed building**  
The Conservation Officer has offered the following comments in respect of the proposal, outlined in paragraphs 5.3 – 5.7 below:
- 5.3 ***The site***  
*Church End Cottage is a Grade II listed vernacular stone dwelling fronting directly onto the highway. The property originated as a farmhouse; recorded on the 1765 enclosure map as Middle farm. The enclosure map represents the building as an L-shaped building; the main range along the lane, the service wing and attached outbuilding along the tchure that runs perpendicularly away from the Church Street between the churchyard and the farmhouse. As would be expected a number of other outbuildings are indicated to the rear of the main house.*  
*The 1887 OS map shows the original building now divided into cottages and possibly extended eastward along Church Street, the outbuildings that currently stand to the rear of the main cottage buildings (S of the main building to create a small yard) are also shown as existing.*



5.4 *The original C18 and C19 buildings are of the traditional linear plan form so often found throughout the villages in this area. Traditionally any additions to such a building would follow this linear arrangement; as has been the case here with the addition of more humble accommodation on the east gable of the main dwelling. The cottage has a perpendicular service wing which is again located traditionally at one end of the rear elevation.*

*In recent times the two cottages nearest the church have been reunited into one dwelling; Church End Cottage.*

5.5 *The site is bounded by a footpath which runs down the plot between the cottage and the Church of St James (Grade I). There are considerable ground level differences between the cottage plot and the much higher grave yard which results in a certain amount of over-looking from the churchyard; it is therefore the case that the rear of the plot is not hidden away and due to the public nature of the church results in the rear of the cottage plot contributing more significantly to the character and appearance of the setting of the church and the conservation area.*

5.6 ***The design, scale and layout***

*The proposal includes a rear extension that masks the entire rear elevation of the property; linking the main dwelling with the C19 outbuilding by covering over the yard formed between them. The resultant massing of the building thus created is bulky and completely at odds with the traditional massing of historic village dwellings which usually have a rectilinear plan form. There is no historic precedent for buildings such as the farmhouse and utility barn to be joined across the rear courtyard; the distance is too far and the resultant structure contrived in order to achieve this. The resultant extension has a footprint some 43% that of the original cottage. The extension, although partially hidden by the service wing, can be seen*

*from the public domain. The resultant extended cottage is lumpen in appearance; the extension is far too large and unsympathetic for the property.*

5.7 *There are a number of design issues. The existence of a first floor window to the rear of the cottage introduces the need to add a glazed pitched roof element into the flat roof to provide borrowed light. This element whilst necessary for providing light to the stair introduces unwanted complexity into the roof. The proposal leaves a residual courtyard. The scheme introduces fully glazed doors – not a traditional feature. The palette of building materials should be limited; the timber boarding of the external wall to the dining area is also considered excessive.*

5.8 Paragraph 2.12 of PPG 15 advises that 'Authorities are required by Section 66 (1) of the Act , in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.  
Paragraph 3.13 advises that where successive applications for alteration / extension to a listed building are made, it needs to be borne in mind that minor works of indifferent quality, which may seem individually of little importance, can cumulatively be very destructive of a building's special interest.

5.9 The comments of the Conservation Officer, contained in paragraph 5.5 above in respect of the visibility of the rear of the property and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are noted. However, the majority of the proposals will not be prominent or visible from the public domain. Glimpses of the rear elevation are available from the public footpath, but it is not considered that the proposal would be prominent from public view points within the Conservation Area. In this regard, the HDC&MD considers that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and would not adversely affect the setting of the Grade I listed church.

5.10 The HDC&MD considers that the size and scale of the proposed extension and alterations, with the exception of the conversion of the outbuilding, is disproportionate and unsympathetic to the setting of the existing dwelling and the adjoining Grade II listed building. The proposal is neither minor nor sympathetic to the architectural and historic character of the building, and is therefore contrary to the advice contained in PPG 15, Policy BE6 f the South East Plan and Policy C18 of the Adopted Local Plan.

## **6. Recommendation**

### **Refuse, on the following grounds**

That the proposed development, by reason of its design and scale does not represent a minor and sympathetic addition to the existing listed building and is therefore considered to be unsympathetic and significantly detrimental to the character and appearance of the original dwelling. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Government guidance within PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and saved Policy C18 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996.

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