
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2017

by Olivia Spencer BA BSc DipArch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 09 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/W/16/3160341
Hillside View, Combe Martin EX34 0BD

- 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 Tom Boundy of Catalyst Homes Ltd against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 61350, dated 10 June 2016 was refused by notice dated 3 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a dwelling at plot 11.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The majority of buildings in King Street share a limited palette of materials and traditional pitched roof form but vary in size, design and relationship to the street edge. In some instances structures lying behind these buildings are visible at breaks in the frontage, with the surrounding landscape often seen beyond that. As a result the area has a broadly cohesive but informal urban character and appearance. Hillside View provides an opening in the frontage through which limited views of the proposed house would be available from King Street. The two storey pitched roof structure sitting behind the King Street Stores would not appear out of place in this context.
 4. The character of Hillside View itself however is different. Terraces of houses and flats surround an open area that is enclosed also by the rear of the King Street Frontage buildings. These perimeter buildings give definition to the space, which although dominated by parking, has a clear and considered appearance that provides a distinctive sense of place and a modest but nevertheless spacious setting for the relatively dense housing. The appeal site, whilst not accessible to the public, visually forms part of this space.
 5. The proposed house would have a similar height, roof form and be constructed of similar materials to that of the rest of the development in Hill. The broad consistency with surrounding buildings in these terms is illustrated in Fig P1 of the appellant's statement. As a two dimensional image, what this photo-
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montage does not clearly show however is that the proposed house would sit forward of the King Street frontage building. As such it would be experienced as a large, disruptive and harmful protrusion into the open area at the heart of the existing Hillside View group, poorly related to surrounding buildings.

6. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would be poor design, detrimental to the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies DVS1 and HSG2 of the North Devon Local Plan 2006 which together seek to ensure new development is of a high design quality that does not harm the character of the settlement. The National Planning Policy Framework states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions as would be the case in this instance.
7. The appellant refers to an absence of adequate new housing provision within the current adopted Local Plan. It is not clear from this whether the appellant alleges a lack of a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land, and I have no evidence on this matter before me. Nevertheless, even if relevant policies were considered out-of-date on this basis, the small benefit of the provision of just one dwelling would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the area I have identified.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Olivia Spencer

INSPECTOR