

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2019

by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/D/19/3227786

Sunnyside Bungalow, Church Lane, Parracombe, Devon EX31 4QJ

- 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 Miss J Leworthy against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 62/50/18/012, dated 14 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 12 February 2019.
 - The development is described as "Retrospective planning consent for a domestic garden shed".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The shed has been erected and therefore I have determined the appeal on the basis that the development has already occurred.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Parracombe Conservation Area and the Exmoor National Park.

Reasons

4. Parracombe is a traditional village in the valley of the River Heddon. The central part of the village contains a tightly knit group of buildings arranged along narrow streets. Outlying parts of the village, including the vicinity of the appeal site, display a more dispersed layout, with buildings set out along narrow lanes. This historic pattern of settlement contributes substantially to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset.
5. Church Lane is an ancient route way which leads to Churchtown and St Petrock's Church and as such is a significant feature of the conservation area. The appeal site is on the lower part of the lane, which is narrow, with high, vegetated banks, walls and trees either side. Although there are dwellings along the lane, they are generally set back and well screened by vegetation. As a result, this section of the lane has a strongly enclosed and verdant character with little intrusion from buildings.
6. The shed is clearly visible when approaching the site from either direction along Church Lane. It is particularly prominent when travelling up the hill towards Churchtown, where it draws the eye due to its height and proximity to the

boundary. While the surrounding trees and vegetation provided some screening at the time of my visit, this would be substantially reduced when trees and shrubs are not in leaf. The shed has introduced a sizeable and prominent building into the street scene, out of character with this part of the lane which is otherwise largely devoid of such structures. In this conspicuous, elevated position the shed detracts from the relatively undeveloped appearance of the lane and the character of this historic route way. As a result, it harms the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and by extension also harms the cultural heritage of the National Park.

7. The use of timber for the walls is appropriate for an outbuilding however the modern profiled roof sheeting is not a traditional material in this area. The roof is readily apparent from the road and adds to the building's harmful impact on the appearance of the area.
8. The shed apparently replaced other outbuildings, a greenhouse and a shed. I have been provided with photographs of these and an OS plan. These show that the previous shed appears to have been smaller than the current structure and that the greenhouse was largely transparent. I have no compelling evidence to suggest that two apparently more modest structures with a different configuration would have had a similar effect to the scheme before me. As such these previous outbuildings do not justify the harm identified.
9. Whilst the shed does not appear dominant within the site itself or out of proportion with the bungalow this does not alter the harmful effect identified above.
10. I have given great weight to the conservation of the cultural heritage of the National Park. I have also paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and given great weight to that heritage asset's conservation. The harm I have found carries considerable importance and weight. This harm is less substantial in the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) terms as it would affect a discrete part of the heritage asset. Nevertheless, there are no public benefits arising from a private domestic outbuilding that would weigh against the harm.
11. For these reasons I conclude that the shed harms the character and appearance of Parracombe Conservation Area and the Exmoor National Park and is contrary to policies GP1, CE-S4, CE-D3, CE-S6 and HC-D16 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2017). Together and amongst other criteria, these require development to achieve high quality design, conserve or enhance the cultural heritage of Exmoor National Park and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. Furthermore, the shed does not accord with the policies of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment and the cultural heritage of National Parks.

Conclusion

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

L McKay

INSPECTOR