
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2019

by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/W/19/3230996

Land adjacent Puckpool House, Puckpool Hill, Seaview PO33 1PJ

- 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 J Kohn against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref P/00138/19, dated 8 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as '*Retention of outbuilding and front boundary walling adjacent the existing access onto Pondwell Hill*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out in the banner heading above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the site address on the application form and the appellant's submitted plans that the development includes the front boundary walls adjacent the existing access onto Puckpool Hill.
3. The application was made retrospectively and at the time of my site visit I saw that the outbuilding and front boundary walls had been constructed and were complete.
4. The application form describes the development as 'retention' of outbuilding and front boundary walls, however 'retention' is not an act of development.
5. The Council advise the third reason for refusal, in respect of the potential impact of the proposed development on trees, relates to a dotted line on the submitted plan 'Block Plan, Location Plan' P2 Revision A, depicting a large area which although not labelled could be interpreted as an expanse of hardstanding. However, the proposal before me relates solely to an outbuilding and front boundary walls. The Council further advise the third reason for refusal is unnecessary. I therefore do not address this matter in the reasoning below.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are (i) whether there is an identified local need for the outbuilding and front boundary walls, having regard to local policy which limits development in the countryside, and (ii) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether a need for the outbuilding and front boundary walls has been identified

7. The appeal site is located in the countryside well outside the defined settlement boundary of the Ryde Key Regeneration Area. Policy SP1 of the Island Plan¹ 2012 (IP) sets out the spatial strategy for the Island. It states that unless a specific local need is identified, development proposals outside of, or not immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary will not be supported.
8. The appellant contends that the requirement to demonstrate a specific local need is not always a prerequisite for smaller schemes of a minor nature. However, Policy SP1, in regard to this requirement, does not differentiate between the size of development proposals.
9. Notwithstanding the above, the submitted local need case for the outbuilding (described as an 'orangery' on the submitted plans) is for a short term need for storage of items and materials sourced from Puckpool House, pending the possibility of the appellant securing planning permission for development at the site, whereupon there would be an opportunity to bring the outbuilding back into ancillary residential use. However, I note a recent application for development at the site was dismissed at appeal². Consequently, there is no evidence before me to indicate the strong likelihood that the outbuilding could be brought back into ancillary residential use.
10. The appellant contends the front boundary walls, which are positioned either side of the existing access onto Puckpool Hill, reflect the status of the site and the listed Puckpool House. However, this would not amount to a clear case of local need.
11. For the reasons outlined above, I do not consider a specific local need for the outbuilding and front boundary walls has been identified. Consequently, the development conflicts with Policy SP1 of the IP which, amongst other things, restricts development outside defined settlement boundaries unless a specific local need is identified.

Character and appearance

12. The breezeblock outbuilding was constructed on the concrete base of an old shower block/chalet building which formed part of the former holiday park. It is approximately 21.0 metres long, 5.6 metres wide and 3.3 metres in height and is positioned behind a rockery within the western part of the site on ground lower than much of the remaining area of the site.
13. The site is well screened by numerous mature trees and other foliage within the site and along its boundaries and as such contributes positively to the verdant semi-rural character of the surrounding area. Notwithstanding that the outbuilding is low profile and its external surface is painted in a dark colour, taking into account its overall size and domestic appearance, even though it is well screened from public views, it forms an alien and incongruous feature within the wooded setting.

¹ Full title: Island Plan – Isle of Wight Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management Development Plan Document. March 2012.

² Reference APP/P2114/W/18/3196045

14. The curved front boundary walls are approximately 1.8 metres in height at the road frontage and are finished in a smooth render. Although painted in a dark colour, taking into account their height, shape and solid form of construction, the walls are visually at odds with the predominantly softer wooded boundaries and setting of the site.
15. Overall, for the above reasons, the outbuilding and front boundary walls urbanise the semi-rural character of the area. Thus, the development is significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it does not accord with Policies SP1 and DM2 of the IP, and the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, set out to ensure that development complements the character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

16. The appellant contends that the front boundary walls are an improvement on the former situation which comprised scaffold poles and fencing mesh and are less imposing than the entrance to the former holiday park to the west of the site. However, this does not justify allowing harmful development.
17. I have had regard to the comments set out in the Council's officer report about the impact of the front boundary walls on sight lines along Puckpool Hill. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on the main issues for the reasons given above, I have not pursued this matter further.

Conclusion

18. In conclusion, for the reasons given above, no specific local need for the outbuilding and front boundary walls has been identified. In addition, the development is significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Bremford

INSPECTOR