



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2021

by C Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/D/21/3275633

16 Mill Hill Cottages, road from Higher Lumburn Bridge to Middle Lumburn Bridge, Mill Hill PL19 8NW

- 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 and Mrs Kirk Potter against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3110/20/HHO, dated 28 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 02/03/2021.
 - The development proposed is 1 and 2 storey extension to rear.
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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. Mill Hill Cottages comprise groups of Victorian terraced housing which are all of a similar design. Although many of the cottages have been subject to some degree of alteration, there nonetheless remains a high degree of architectural consistency along the frontage of the terraces. This consistency, together with the rural setting of the cottages on one side of the road behind a wooded slope, gives the settlement a very distinctive appearance.
4. I am informed by the Council that the cottages have a close association with the industrial heritage of the Mill Hill area. Given that they retain many of their original features, it seems to me that the cottages are of historic interest within their local setting, even though they are outside the World Heritage Site¹ and are not subject to any specific heritage designations.
5. The appeal property is situated at the end of one of the terraces. The front elevation maintains a similar appearance to the adjoining cottages, while the side elevation is consistent with the side elevation of the neighbouring terrace. Although there is an extension and outbuildings to the rear, these are mainly positioned behind the property and so are not particularly noticeable from the street frontage. The appeal property therefore makes a contribution to the consistent appearance of the terraces as seen from the road.

¹ Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

6. The proposed extension would incorporate both single-storey and two-storey elements. The two-storey part would sit behind the house and so would not have much visual impact on the front of the terrace, although it would be seen in oblique views of the side elevation. However, as the single-storey parts of the extension would be positioned to the side of the house, they would be more clearly seen from directly in front of the property.
7. Due to the design and choice of materials, the extension would be visually distinct from the original parts of the house. It would also be set back from the road frontage, which would help to lessen its impact. However, the extension would maintain a relatively complex appearance, with the pitched roofs of the single storey elements being nestled behind each other when viewed from the street frontage. In side views, the hipped-style roof of the two-storey part of the extension would also be seen. Viewed together, the different parts of the extension would have a somewhat convoluted appearance when seen from the street, which would distract from the architectural qualities of the original property and wider group of terraces.
8. The extension would also have a visual impact at the rear of the property, where there is a lane running behind the cottages. While the proposal would help to consolidate the existing extension and outbuildings, it would also increase the mass of built development at the rear. However, there is less architectural consistency amongst the rear elevations and this part of the terrace is not widely exposed in public views. From the rear, the visual impact of the development would therefore be more limited.
9. There are other examples of extensions among the cottages, including some side extensions which are more visually prominent than the proposal in this case would be. I am not aware of the circumstances under which they gained planning permission, but do not consider that they establish a convincing precedent for similar development. On the whole, the cottages retain a high degree of architectural consistency as viewed from the street. While the proposed extension would be a relatively small feature in comparison to the wider group of terraces, it would nonetheless represent an incremental change that would erode the distinctive, historic appearance of the cottages.
10. Although the appellant has indicated that an extension could be constructed through permitted development rights, there is little before me to demonstrate that this would result in more harmful scheme than the appeal proposal. Hence, I give this fallback position limited weight.
11. I appreciate that the appellants are seeking to improve their property. However, the proposed extension would be a permanent feature and a less harmful way of accommodating the appellants' needs has not been discounted. In reaching this decision, I am mindful of the emphasis which the Framework² places on achieving good design as well as protecting local heritage assets, even if they are not subject to any designation.
12. This leads me to conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Of the policies quoted by the Council, Policies TTV29 and DEV21 of the Local Plan³ are of particular relevance. Policy TTV29 requires extensions to be appropriate to the design and setting of the host dwelling,

² National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021.

³ Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 - 2034

whereas Policy DEV21 seeks to sustain local distinctiveness by conserving non-designated heritage assets and their settings. The proposal would conflict with the objectives of both of these policies.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

C Cresswell

INSPECTOR