



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2021

by Colin Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/D/21/3272093

Suilven Cottage, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6ES

- 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 Paul Ames against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 4211/20/HHO, received by the Council on 18 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is a granny annexe.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a granny annexe at Suilven Cottage, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6ES in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 4211/20/HHO, received by the Council on 18 December 2020, subject to the conditions set out in the Schedule at the end of this Decision.

Procedural Matter

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published on 20 July 2021. Although the main parties have not been given an opportunity to comment on the revised document, the changes introduced are of limited relevance to the Council's reasons for refusal. Therefore, no party's interests are prejudiced by me determining the appeal on the basis of the information that has been submitted to date.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are:
 - the effect of the proposed annexe on the character and appearance of Suilven Cottage and the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
 - whether the proposed annexe would be ancillary to the host dwelling

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Suilven Cottage is a detached dwelling formed from the merger two cottages into a single property. Due to its age and appearance, the Council consider the cottage to be a heritage asset of local significance. It is part of a small group of historic cottages on either side of a narrow rural lane which is surrounded by

fields and open land. This is a particularly scenic location and, due to the quality of the wider landscape, the site and surroundings form part of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB).

5. I understand that planning permission¹ has been granted for a self-contained annexe which is broadly similar to the development which is being proposed in the current appeal. Considering that some construction work is already underway, it is highly likely that this permission would be implemented in the event of the current appeal being dismissed. The most notable difference between the appeal proposal and the approved scheme is the introduction of a porch and dormer windows in the annexe.
6. The existing porch, which serves as the main entrance to the cottage, is positioned centrally on the main frontage, contributing to a sense of visual balance. The addition of a second porch on one side of the property would inevitably interfere with this balanced appearance. This would be highlighted by the fact that the new porch would project further from the frontage of the building than the existing porch and the new doorway would be perpendicular to the existing front door. The roof of the new porch would also be of a different shape to the pitched roof of the existing porch.
7. However, implementation of the approved scheme would also affect the visual balance of the property. While the proposed porch would be more elaborate than the new doorway in the approved scheme, it would nonetheless be a relatively small structure in the overall context of the host dwelling and, in my opinion, would not appear especially prominent. It would also be distanced from the road on the far side of the frontage and, from some vantage points, would be partially screened by the proposed garage.
8. The proposed dormer windows on the front and rear elevations of the annexe would also be relatively minor features in the context of the whole property. Although the existing windows in Suilven Cottage are not of this design, dormer windows of a similar style to those being proposed are seen on the adjacent cottages. As such, the proposed windows would be in keeping with the architectural characterises of the area.
9. Taken as a whole, it seems to me that, in comparison to the approved scheme, the changes introduced by the appeal proposal would have a limited impact on the overall character and legibility of the cottage as viewed from the street and surrounding landscape. The historic façade of the host dwelling would be largely unaffected by the development and, for the reasons set out above, the proposed porch and dormer windows would not result in the annexe appearing unduly dominant.
10. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of Suilven Cottage and the AONB. There would be no conflict with Policies SPT1, TTV26, TTV29, DEV1, DEV10, DEV20, DEV21 and DEV23 of the Local Plan². Collectively, these policies seek to protect heritage assets and designated landscapes, as well as actively promoting appropriate standards of design.

¹ Council Ref: 1821/20/HHO

² Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 - 2034

Whether ancillary

11. Although the proposed annexe would have its own front door, accessed through a separate porch, it would still be possible to access the host dwelling from an internal doorway on the first floor. This doorway would serve as a functional link between the different parts of the cottage, connecting the stairwell area of the annexe with the stairwell area of the host property. As such, it would be easy for occupants of the annexe to access the internal living space of the main cottage. Despite the absence of a similar set of connecting doors on the ground floor, it seems to me that this arrangement would be satisfactory to ensure that there is no permanent boundary or demarcation between the annex and the host property. A planning condition can also be imposed to ensure that the annexe remains ancillary rather than being occupied as an entirely separate dwelling.
12. I therefore conclude on this issue that the annexe would be ancillary to the host dwelling. The proposal would be in compliance with Policy DEV10 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that residential annexes should be clearly ancillary to the principal dwelling via a functional link. It would also accord with the Supplementary Planning Document³ in this regard.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.
14. In the interests of clarity, standard conditions requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the plans and within a time limit have been imposed. As indicated above, there are also conditions to ensure that the annexe remains ancillary. To help protect the character of appearance of the area there is also a condition requiring further details of materials. Although the Council suggested a condition requiring an ecology report, I consider it unnecessary given the nature of the proposal.

Colin Cresswell

INSPECTOR

(Schedule of Conditions attached)

³ Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted July 2020

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, SC20-04B, SC20-06B, SC20-05B.
- 3) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Suilven Cottage, Bradford Cottages, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, PL20 6ES.
- 4) The installation of the internal doorways at first floor level hereby approved to link the existing dwelling with the annexe accommodation, shall be installed in accordance with the drawings prior to first occupation of the annexe and retained as such in perpetuity.
- 5) Prior to their installation, details of the external facing materials of the garage, and of roofing materials to be used in the construction of both the proposed extension and garage development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with those details as approved.