



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2022

by T Gethin BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/D/21/3278934

Parc Rowland, Trewartha, Veryan TR2 5QJ

- 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 R Bridges against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA20/11433, dated 22 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is Proposed demolition of existing hallway and garage and erection of new extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2021. However, as its provisions that are most relevant to the appeal have not materially changed, no parties will have been prejudiced by my having regard to the latest version in reaching my decision.
3. As the appeal proposal is located within an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), I have had regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area as set out in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended). The development plan and the Framework also seek to protect such designated landscapes, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and attach great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape character and scenic beauty of AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to its location within the Cornwall AONB and Heritage Coast.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is situated within the Roseland area of the South Coast Central section of the Cornwall AONB. This area includes, amongst other aspects, some scattered settlements and, as described by the AONB Management Plan 2016, a tranquil and well-managed farmed landscape with a globally renowned, stunning coastline, which is also designated as Heritage Coast. Containing a modest bungalow, the site is surrounded by a number of other properties which form a varied cluster of development within a rural setting where fields predominate and other development is generally limited.

6. Built form in Trewartha consists of a mixture of bungalows, chalet bungalows and various two-storey properties with a mix of designs. The surrounding area is relatively flat, the site contains limited boundary treatment, a public right of way runs past it and the public highway is a short distance away. Accordingly, while the site is relatively well screened by surrounding development and soft landscaping in longer distance views, as shown in the submitted views, it is clearly visible in a number of short distant views, including from the highway to the north and north-east and from the adjacent section of public right of way. From those points, I observed on my site visit that the existing dwelling has an unassuming appearance which relates to its context and does not read as a prominent or negative feature from the surrounding landscape.
7. The proposed development would involve, amongst other aspects, the erection of a two-storey extension in place of the existing garage and hallway, and various alterations to the main bungalow. Although the proposed increase in the existing roof pitch would reduce the height difference to the proposed extension, the two-storey addition would nevertheless dominate the main form of the remaining single-storey element and the proposed second storey would read as projecting significantly forward, behind and above the bungalow. The proportions and mass of the proposed extension would be highlighted and amplified by its orientation relative to the existing property. Despite its height being similar to adjoining properties, the extension would also appear as a significant, bulky addition relative to its context, including in relation to its position to adjoining properties, and due to its mass. In addition, with the size, siting and window forms in the extension bearing little relation to the bungalow's remaining fenestration, the extended and altered property would appear disjointed.
8. Accordingly, the proposed extension would read as an incongruous, tacked-on feature that would fail to respect the modest form and character of the bungalow and would appear as a prominent addition. It would therefore read as a harmful feature in the locality. In coming to this view, I have taken into account the various other Council and appeal decisions put to me, the presence of hipped roofs in the area and the varied styles and character of surrounding properties, that the projection of the proposed extension would be limited at ground-floor level and the increase in footprint would not be significant, and that the external materials proposed would reflect nearby built form. The lack of protection for the existing bungalow and that it could in principle be demolished and replaced with a larger two-storey property, such as that shown in the submitted images, do also not lead me to a different conclusion.
9. Other buildings in the surrounding area are two-storeys, have varied designs and have been extended and altered over the years, and the submitted evidence indicates that the adjoining bungalow is proposed to be replaced with a two-storey building. However, Policy HO9 of the Roseland Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2030 (NDP) is clear that extensions should be subsidiary in size and sympathetic to the character of the existing dwelling. It has been put to me that the appeal proposal, involving a two-stage approach to modernisation of the property, would essentially create a visually new building, with the erection of the extension followed by renovation of the main bungalow, and thus it would change so much that its existing character would have less relevance and the altered main building would be subservient and sympathetic to the extension. Be that as it may, the appeal proposal involves an extension to an existing bungalow that, although with an altered and

renovated appearance, would remain as a modest single-storey feature and the two-storey addition would neither read as being designed as subsidiary or sympathetic to it, as required by the NDP policy. The quoted figures of a 74% increase in floorspace and an 88% increase in volume further substantiate that the extension would neither be subsidiary in size nor sympathetic to the main bungalow's modest character. I also observed on my site visit that while some nearby properties may have been extended, the extensions and additions in the locality appear as subservient to the main buildings.

10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to its location within the Cornwall AONB and Heritage Coast. I therefore find that it does not accord with Policies 12 and 23 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 and NDP Policies LA1, LA2, CV1 and HO9. Amongst other aspects, these: require development to ensure Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness, conserve and enhance the landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB and maintain the character and distinctive landscape qualities of the Heritage Coast; support development that integrates with, contributes to and enhances the character of the settlement, responds to local character, and meets the objectives of the Cornwall AONB Management Plan; and support extensions which are in keeping with the setting, are sympathetic to the character of the existing dwelling and are designed as subsidiary in size. The proposal would also be inconsistent with: the provisions in the Framework in relation to achieving well-designed places and conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and Policies MD9, SCC9.01 and SCC9.09 of the AONB Management Plan which require development to address and respond to landscape sensitivity and capacity and support the use of the NDP's evidence and policies in preparing and considering development proposals.
11. It has been put to me that the proposed development would comply with NPD Policies GP1 and GP2. However, given the harm I have identified above, I find that it would also not accord with these policies which, amongst other things, expect development to promote and be sensitive to local character.

Other matters

12. I note the appellant's reference to their pre-application discussions with the Council and the amendments made to the proposal, the communication they had with the Council during determination of the application, their concerns about consistency with other planning applications in the area, and their frustration regarding the position and response of Council Officers and the time taken to determine the application. However, these issues are not determinative as to the acceptability of the appeal proposal. I have therefore considered it on its merits, based on the evidence before me.

Planning Balance

13. The Cornwall AONB Officer did not comment on the planning application. The Parish Council, which includes councillors with a history in planning and involvement in the preparation of the NPD, did not object, several neighbours support the proposal and, in-line with part e) of CLP Policy 12, the appellant consulted them during the design process. However, this does not indicate that the development is acceptable and should be permitted, and I have found that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to its location within the Cornwall

AONB and Heritage Coast. Although the wording of some of the relevant development plan policies means that the appeal proposal would not necessarily conflict with them, it would nevertheless not accord with CLP Policies 12 and 23 and NPD Policies LA1, LA2, CV1 and HO9. Taking all of this into account, I find that the appeal proposal would be contrary to the development plan as a whole.

14. The existing bungalow, providing the appellant's principal residence for the past 20 years, has not been extended and has remained in the ownership of the family since it was built in the 1960s by the appellant's father. The proposed energy-efficient extension, designed to be accessible, adaptable and alterable using modern construction methods and materials, would provide the appellant – who is an active member of the local community – with additional living area, including a new study which the current bungalow lacks, and the increased roof pitch would provide additional storage and improve access to plumbing pipework. The position and orientation of the extension would mean that the proposal would largely retain the original footprint and extent of garden space, allow for sufficient on-site parking, maintain sufficient distance with neighbouring properties, allow for optimal positioning of photovoltaic panels and, as set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement, provide the best solution to the appellant's requirements given the constraints of the site. Furthermore, it has been put to me that the bungalow suffers from damp, requires modernisation in line with building regulations and sustainability aims, and the poorly-insulated single-skin hallway and garage are unsustainable, environmentally unfriendly and uneconomic to repair. The proposal, including re-insulation of the older walls and using heat pumps and solar power, would also help to achieve climate targets and avoid the need to demolish the whole property with the associated expense.
15. However, given the scale of the development, the benefits would be relatively limited. Consequently, the harm I have identified above, which could not be overcome by the imposition of reasonable planning conditions, and the conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by these considerations. The reference in CLP Policy 23 to the interests of those who live and/or work in the AONB does not lead me to a different conclusion while the identified harm and conflict with the above development plan policies means that the proposal is not supported by CLP Policy 1 and cannot reasonably be described as making effective or best use of land.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

T Gethin

INSPECTOR