



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2022

by Lewis Condé BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Thursday 24 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V3310/D/22/3290186

28 Clavelshay Road, North Petherton, Bridgwater TA6 6PJ

- 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 James against the decision of Sedgemoor District Council.
 - The application Ref 37/21/00103, dated 6 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Erection of two storey and single storey side extension to existing end of terraced property'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host property and its setting within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a brick built, two-storey cottage, that forms the end dwelling in a short row of terraced properties. The terrace is located off a country road, approximately 3.5km to the south-west of North Petherton and lies within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The area is intrinsically rural in character, with the road bordered by grass verges and high hedges, and the surrounding land being agricultural in nature.
4. The appeal property is set significantly higher than the highway that it fronts onto. The property has a stone boundary wall, with mature vegetation on top, which sits adjacent to the highway and limits views of the application site when passing along the road.
5. The terrace that the appeal dwelling sits within seems to have once consisted of four properties, but the middle two properties appear to have subsequently been converted to a single unit. The terrace retains a highly linear form due to the narrow width of the dwellings, their pattern of fenestration and simple detailing. This linear form remains, despite the previous conversion of the middle property.
6. The appeal building is of a modest scale, within a relatively constrained plot. The appellants have highlighted that due to a combination of its location, orientation, neighbouring properties and shared access arrangements, the dwelling doesn't have a traditional front and back arrangement. Furthermore,

due to the combination of circumstances, the appellants identify that the front area of the property acts as private amenity space. I noted these factors during my site visit. Nevertheless, when viewed from public vantage points, even if not used in this manner, the site's south elevation (facing the main highway), still displays the characteristics of a principal front elevation. This was also true for the rest of the terrace.

7. I find that the modest scale of the host dwelling and wider terrace, along with its linear form and simple detailing positively contribute to the built form within the rural setting of the Quantock Hills AONB.
8. The proposal would significantly increase the width and mass of the property, with the extension on the principal southern elevation appearing of a greater width than the original dwelling. This would result in the building having a horizontal emphasis and radically alter its appearance. The extension would therefore appear at odds with the existing dwelling and would also result in the terrace, as a whole, having an unbalanced appearance.
9. The design of the proposal would be subordinate to the host dwelling, due to the extension incorporating staggered set downs from the property's main ridge height, as well as incorporating setbacks from its front elevation. Nevertheless, its overall appearance would be inconsistent with, and detract from, the host property and the wider terrace.
10. The horizontal emphasis of the proposals is further accentuated through the incorporation of bi-fold doors. Ordinarily, this may not necessarily be harmful. However, the location of the bi-fold doors on the principal elevation results in a particular visual disconnect between the proposals and the rather consistent form that is shared between the host property and its wider terrace.
11. The appellants have raised that there is a planning permission on the neighbouring barns immediately to the side and rear of the appeal site, which has been approved to incorporate significant expanses of glass. It is therefore felt that the proposed bi-fold doors would be in keeping with adjacent emerging development. I do not have full details of the neighbouring planning permission(s), nor do I know whether that scheme will be delivered as currently approved. However, even if the neighbouring scheme is delivered with significant glazed elements, this would not necessarily make the proposed bi-fold doors acceptable in the location proposed on the appeal property. This is due to the specific form and appearance of the appeal property.
12. From my site visit, it was apparent that views of the development would be rather limited. This is primarily because of the extent of mature vegetation that already helps to screen the dwelling's existing gable end elevation, but also due to the difference in levels between the appeal site and public highway. In addition, I noted that a trellis has already been erect in the front garden and there appeared to be a recently planted hedgerow that once matured could further screen the proposals.
13. However, despite the potential limited views of the development, I still consider that it would be an inappropriate addition that would diminish the character and appearance of the existing property and wider terrace. The use of vegetation to limit views of the development may be capable of reducing its overall harm. However, the long-term effectiveness of using vegetation as a screen cannot be guaranteed, nor can its retention be appropriately secured. I

therefore do not consider that a landscaping condition could suitably mitigate the impacts of the development.

14. I therefore conclude that the extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and would fail to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the Quantock Hills AONB. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy D2 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032 (adopted 2019) ('the Local Plan'), which amongst other things, seeks to secure high quality design that responds positively to and reflects the particular local characteristic of the site. It is also contrary to Local Plan Policy D19 that seeks to conserve and enhance the qualities of the District's AONBs.

Other Matters

15. I note the appellants' frustrations regarding the service received by the local planning authority during the application process. However, the appeal has been determined upon the merits of the proposals.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan, and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR