



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by Jane Smith MA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/22/3306452

The Lynch, Cowleaze Hill, Shanklin, Isle of Wight PO37 6QZ

- 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 Mrs Pip Dodd against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00778/HOU, dated 28 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is to create a new lower ground floor rear extension for a new gym space as well as new window and door openings, new windows and doors, and external cladding & roofing and internal alternations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the banner heading above, I have used the description of proposed development as provided on the planning application form. This differs from the description on the Council's decision notice, which also listed a proposed extension to form a porch/lobby and bathroom and proposed timber decking. These elements of the proposed development are clearly shown on the application plans, and I have had regard to them when considering the appeal.
3. Confirmation has been provided that the appellant's surname has changed since the application was submitted. Therefore, I have taken the appellant's surname in the banner heading above from the appeal form and determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to whether it would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

5. The Lynch is a detached house in rural surroundings, within a landscape of chalk downs in the southern part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is on raised land to one side of Cowleaze Hill, facing down the hill. At the rear, the house and garden stand in an elevated position with commanding and extensive views towards Shanklin and Sandown Bays and the landscape beyond. There is tree cover to either side of the dwelling and on the other side of Cowleaze Hill. However, the front and rear gardens are more open.

6. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that decision-makers have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. With this in mind, and in accordance with paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I have attributed great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.
7. The Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 (AONB MP) includes a statement of significance which notes that isolated dwellings are part of the settlement pattern in the AONB. In the Sustainable Communities chapter, the AONB MP goes on to note the lack of a single predominant building style. Nevertheless, sympathetic development reflecting appropriate vernacular style and materials is identified in the AONB MP as a factor in ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the landscape's unique sense of place. Traditional building materials and features are noted as including hard chalk, flint, slate, thatch, some tile, small windows, and large walls and roofs of a simple style.
8. The existing dwelling is a fairly imposing detached house, presenting two storeys to the front, with an additional basement storey accessible from lower land at the rear. It replaced an earlier dwelling on the site and has itself been altered, giving the existing roof and internal layout a somewhat complex and unusual form. However, as viewed from the road it presents a more straightforward two storey elevation, with simple hipped and fully tiled roof.
9. Although the total area of glazing would be comparable to the existing elevations, window and door openings would be extensively resized and remodelled. Most significantly, a new front gable and three dormer projections (two at the front and one at the rear) would be introduced into the roofscape. These would create a more complex roof form, particularly at the front, where the new gable and dormers would be conspicuous from the road. The proposed front elevation would as a result no longer have the simple roof style which it has at present.
10. While the timber cladding may have a more muted appearance than the existing red hanging tiles, vertical timber cladding is not a typical material within the surrounding landscape. The zinc cladding may also be relatively muted, once weathered, depending on the surface finish. However, between the standing seams this material would have a flatter and more reflective texture than is typical of local vernacular materials.
11. The use of zinc cladding is not limited to commercial buildings and the material can be employed to good effect on residential buildings in appropriate settings. However, in this particular setting, the proposed external materials would introduce a significantly different aesthetic, which has little in common with the vernacular materials identified in the AONB MP. While paragraph 134 of the Framework supports innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, this is subject to a proviso that such designs fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. In this case, that includes the surrounding nationally designated landscape.
12. Although there are trees to either side of the dwelling, the sloping front garden is more open and unscreened. The whole front elevation is prominent from the roadside and the house is therefore perceived as part of the landscape for those travelling along Cowleaze Hill. Views of the property from the rear are

much more distant, but are available from a widespread area. Therefore, the proposed alterations would be seen within the landscape from a range of near and distant viewpoints.

13. As a result of the extent of roof alterations and the choice of external materials, the proposal would depart from the local vernacular, introducing a distinctly different architectural style in a visually prominent location. For that reason, the proposal neither conserves nor enhances the nationally designated landscape of the AONB. This is therefore a factor to which I have given great weight, in line with paragraph 176 of the Framework.
14. While there was no objection from the AONB Partnership, their consultation response indicates that this may have been due to the scale of the proposal being below the threshold for consultation with the local planning authority. Therefore, there is no clear evidence that the AONB Partnership actively considered the proposal or that they judged the design approach to be acceptable in landscape terms.
15. I acknowledge that there would be no increase in height and the overall scale of the dwelling would not be significantly increased. The Council's Officer Report furthermore acknowledges that the single storey basement extension would be acceptable in terms of its massing and degree of visual subservience. I likewise find that this addition and the related alterations to the garden would have no material impact on the landscape, due to their limited scale and position at the rear.
16. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, by failing to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. It would conflict with Policies SP5, DM2 and DM12 of the Island Plan¹ and related advice within the AONB MP. These policies, amongst other things, require that new development conserves and enhances the Island's built environment and landscape, reflecting the aims and objectives of the AONB MP.

Other Matters

17. The proposed alterations would enable a comprehensive refurbishment and modernisation of the existing dwelling, addressing several current issues arising from its condition and internal layout. This holistic approach would also better integrate the dwelling with its outdoor space. However, these benefits could be secured through a range of design approaches and do not necessitate introducing features which are inconsistent with the local vernacular. On that basis, I have given these beneficial factors limited weight, which does not overcome the harm to the AONB, as identified above.
18. The proposal addressed issues raised in pre-application advice, but such advice is not binding on the Council's subsequent consideration of the application. There is no substantive evidence that the Council's decision was based on personal taste or otherwise unjustified, given the conclusions I have reached above.

¹ Island Plan Isle of Wight Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management Plan Document adopted March 2012

Conclusion

19. Having had regard to the development plan as a whole, along with all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jane Smith

INSPECTOR