



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2023

by J Hills MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/D/23/3320753

2 Halsbury Cottages, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, Devon EX39 5EN

- 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 Richard Hulland against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref 1/1168/2022/FUL, dated 22 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The site consists one of a pair of a modest scaled semi-detached two storey properties. These properties have a symmetrical frontage appearance that I observed to be visible from the adjoining lane, despite high hedges. Although located in the open countryside, Policy DM25 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 (LP) is supportive of the principle of residential extensions where the form, scale, setting and design of proposals, amongst other things, respects existing development, its setting and surroundings.
4. The development would improve the cramped structural layout of the small property and increase its scale to provide for the needs and facilities of modern family living. However, despite its reduced proposed floorspace, and even if the proposed side extension would not be visible from nearby properties or Buckland Brewer, it would nevertheless introduce a significant increase in scale of built form when compared with the host property, consuming most of its plot width. As such, it would harmfully erode the spacious side garden layout, appearing cramped.
5. Furthermore, although there would be some set back to the side extension, the continuation of ridge heights would add to a sense of bulk and massing uncharacteristic to the design, scale and setting of the pair of properties. In this respect I have not been provided with any substantive evidence to the demonstrate that a lowered ridge would result in unreasonably low internal

ceiling heights. Therefore, the development would consequently generate an uncomfortable and therefore incongruous visual relationship between the properties.

6. Therefore, I conclude on this main issue that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposed development would be in conflict with policies DM04, ST04 and DM25 of the LP which together in this respect seek to promote developments that are appropriate and sympathetic in to the character and appearance of the area. There would also be conflict with chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, says that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Other Matters

7. The proposal would make some contribution to the local community in terms of keeping young families in the area, attending the local school and supporting the local economy and community. It would also provide for the needs and facilities of modern family living. However, any social or economic benefits associated with the development would be modest and would not be significant enough to alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issue.
8. Even if large arrays of solar panels are in adjoining fields this is not comparable with the proposal before me. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits, based on the evidence before me. Furthermore, the lack objections is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development.
9. I agree with the appellant that the submission of the application demonstrates their need for the additional accommodation, though such benefits would be personal and would consequently not weigh in favour of the development.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no considerations individually or cumulatively that outweigh this. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

J Hills

INSPECTOR