



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2023

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/23/3321997

6 Henacre Road, Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 1DN

- 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 Sarah Tyers against the decision of South Hams District Council.
 - The application Ref 0182/23/HHO, dated 17 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extension to existing dwelling to include single-storey ground floor extension and the creation of new off street parking area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and upon protected habitats and species.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling within a wider residential estate development. Henacre Road runs in a horseshoe shape to the east side of Coronation Road and bisects it with two cul-de-sac limbs to the west side. The appeal site is on the north side of the southern cul-de-sac. Due to the topography of the area, and in common with other properties on the north sides of Henacre Road, No 6 is set above the levels of the pavement and highway and behind a sloping front garden. The proposal would include the replacement of an existing front porch extension with a single-storey, side and front, wrap-around addition that would span the full depth and width of the dwelling.
4. Houses to the southern stretch of Henacre Road are generally semi-detached with some variation to their style. Many have been extended in a variety of ways, with front gardens equally altered from their original form. However, despite this, and contrary to the appellant's viewpoint, I found that the properties in the vicinity of the appeal site do appear to share a clear and defined building line. With the exception of some minor front porch extensions, including at No 6, and original bay features to some, there is little variation or intrusion to the forward alignment of the dwellings, which is an important feature of the street scene.

5. Appendix 1 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (SPD) gives guidance for residential extensions and alterations. Paragraph 13.36 advises that extensions that project forward of the existing house will generally be resisted. Although Figure 27 within the SPD illustrates an example of a front extension to a terraced row, I find no evidence to support the appellant's assertion that the guidance applies only to such dwellings. The SPD cannot reasonably cover every scenario and to my mind the appeal property sits within a street scene where there is some rhythm to the development pattern and where the guidance explicitly states that only small, sympathetically designed front extensions would be acceptable.
6. In this instance, the front extension would be a prominent feature of the dwelling. It would stand proud of the front elevation and would significantly alter its form and appearance. Its intrusive presence would be exaggerated by the excavated frontage, resulting in a significant degree of under-build to the extension that would be exposed to view. Rather than seen as a modest, ground floor extension, it would appear as an overly tall and incongruous addition that would be out of proportion with the unimposing scale and appearance of the existing dwelling. It would also result in an obvious imbalance to the semi-detached pair that would be further harmful to the visual amenities of the area.
7. I saw during my visit some very prominent extensions to the front of Nos 55 and 57 Henacre Road, which are part of a terrace of three. However, these were exceptions rather than the norm and in any event are set along the north limb of Henacre Road and away from the immediate setting of the appeal property. Moreover, I am unaware of the specific planning history and circumstances to either of these two extensions, which, to my mind, demonstrate how insensitive additions can impact a street scene.
8. My impression overall is that the proposal would result in an extension to the dwelling that would be intrusive and out-of-keeping within the street scene, and incongruous in its setting. By failing to relate well to its surroundings and by having an adverse effect upon the character of the area, there would be conflict with Policy DEV20 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (the JLP) and with Policy KWAC BE3 of the Kingsbridge, West Alvington and Churchstow Neighbourhood Plan (2021-2034). For these same reasons there would also be conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) objectives for achieving well-designed places.

Protected Habitats and Species

9. The Council considers there to be potential for the roof tiles of the existing porch to provide a habitat for bats and birds. However, I saw that the porch was well sealed and in good condition with no obvious gaps for use by bats or other wildlife. Given this, and the very limited scale of the existing porch and its physical context within an urban setting, I am not persuaded that there is a reasonable likelihood of protected habitats and species being present. As such, the requirement of paragraph 7.71 of the SPD for an ecological survey to be undertaken does not apply. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, an enhancement for wildlife by, for example, requiring bat or bird nesting boxes to be included on the extension, could have been secured by condition. In these circumstances there would have been no conflict with the JLP Policy DEV26 or

the Framework's objectives for conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Conclusions

10. Notwithstanding my findings with regard to protected habitats and species, for the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, including the support offered by Kingsbridge Town Council, which is noted, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR