



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2024

by J Evans BA(Hons) AssocRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/D/24/3341811

Willow Tree Farm, Sampford Courtenay EX20 2SW

- 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 Paul Gibbins against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 2772/23/HHO, dated 11 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is described as renovations and extensions of existing bungalow into a two storey chalet bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for renovations and extensions of existing bungalow into a two storey chalet bungalow in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: 2772/23/HHO, dated 11 August 2023, subject to the attached schedule of conditions.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Paul Gibbins against the decision of West Devon Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description on the application form and the decision notice refer to a number of matters which are superfluous to the description of the development. I have therefore revised the description to better reflect the proposal before me.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effects of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property relates to a single storey detached bungalow located within an attractive rural context and sited within a large garden, which is enclosed to the public highway to the east by established boundary hedgerows and trees. The existing building has no particular visual merit. It is understood to date from the latter half of the C20 and was constructed originally as a rural workers dwelling. The property is visually perceived on its own and appears

- relatively subtle within its surroundings due to its low-level form, its set back positioning from the highway and the screening from the established natural boundary enclosures. Nonetheless, the property is in part visible from certain locations in the area.
6. I have been made aware that the appeal site falls within the Landscape Character Type classification of 1F Farmed lowland moorland, as set out in the '*A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon*' (the LCA), prepared by LUC dated February 2017. Amongst other matters, the LCA explains that a key settlement characteristic for the area is a '*Sparse settlement pattern with scattered farmsteads*'. This is reflective of what I perceived during my site visit whereby I noted individual dwellings, often with surrounding buildings, dotted on either side of the highway within the surrounding area to the appeal site. I also noted that these properties had no prevailing building style.
 7. The appeal proposal seeks to extend the property upwards through a modern design approach to provide for an additional floor, that would be incorporated within a variety of pitched roof building forms. The scale and massing of the property would increase over what exists at present and therefore the property would become more visible from public viewpoints within the surrounding area, including the public highway which runs past the appeal site, and the public right of way to the north.
 8. Nonetheless, the proposal would still remain set back within the site allowing for the retention of the established natural landscaping along the site boundaries. Thereby the proposal would be perceived with hedgerows, trees and landscaping in the foreground and surrounding the site. As a result, the increase in massing and scale would not appear unduly imposing from the public vantage points within the surrounding area. Therefore, subject to the use of recessive finishes to the external materials to be used, so as to ensure the appearance of the proposal would reflect the rural characteristics of the surroundings, alongside securing an appropriate landscaping scheme to manage and reinforce the natural boundaries at the site, I am satisfied that the proposal would appropriately assimilate into context. It would not appear uncharacteristic or visually intrusive over wide areas.
 9. Turning to the concerns expressed by the Council about the extent of the glazed components of the development, the greatest elements of such would relate to the proposed two gables that would project out on the proposed north and south elevations. I do not consider these elements of the proposal would be unduly prominent, for the reasons I have set out already above. Nonetheless, I note with regard to the openings on the proposed south elevation gable, which would provide the greater element of glazing, the glazed detail would be set back under a roof overhang that would reduce the prominence of the glazing detail, and would also enable shadow casting, that would reduce the effects of any light spill and glare.
 10. Therefore, I find no conflict with Policies TTV29, DEV20 and DEV23 of the Plymouth and South Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 or the Landscape Guidelines of the LCA, which amongst other matters, require development to meet good standards of design, to contribute positively to landscape, and to be appropriate in scale and design in the context of the setting of the host dwelling.

Conditions

11. The standard time limit is required together with a condition listing the plans in the interests of certainty. To protect the character and appearance of the area, details of external facing materials and a landscaping scheme must be provided. Based upon the evidence and recommendations of the submitted bat survey, a condition is necessary to secure the recommendations and mitigation measures as identified through this report are implemented.

Conclusions

12. For all the above reasons, having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Evans

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Existing Site Location Plan 0439_WIL_EX_1.0 dated NOV 2022; PROPOSED SITE PLAN 0439_WIL_PL_1.1 dated FEB 2023; PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN 0439_WIL_PL_2.0 dated FEB 2023; PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN 0439_WIL_PL_2.1 dated FEB 2023; PROPOSED ROOF PLAN 0439_WIL_PL_2.2 dated FEB 2023; PROPOSED HOUSE ELEVATIONS I 0439_WIL_PL_3.0 dated FEB 2023; PROPOSED HOUSE ELEVATIONS II 0439_WIL_PL_3.1 dated FEB 2023; and PROPOSED DRAINAGE PLAN 0439_WIL_DR_1.1 dated FEB 2023.
- 3) Prior to their installation, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.
- 4) No development above foundation level shall commence until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscaping scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, identify those to be retained and set out measures for their protection throughout the course of development. The protection measures proposed shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme before the development hereby permitted commences above foundation level and shall thereafter be retained until it is completed. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the development or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species as those originally planted.
- 5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and mitigation measures of the Bat Emergence and Re-entry Surveys Issue 2 dated 02/08/2023. The required measures shall be fully installed and implemented prior to the occupation of the approved development and retained as such thereafter.