



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2025

by **S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/24/3348102

Auld Reekie Hamstead Road, Cranmore, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, PO41 0YB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Lynnette True against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00236/HOU.
 - The development proposed is a lychgate.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Following the submission of the appeal, the revised *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. I have had regard to the latest version in reaching my decision. Whilst paragraph numbers have changed, the policies of the Framework most relevant to the appeal have not altered so substantially as to affect the matters raised by the main parties. Therefore, there is no requirement for me to seek their views on this matter, and I am satisfied that this approach would not prejudice any party's interests.
3. The planning application was submitted retrospectively. I found the appeal scheme had been carried out at the time of my site visit. I have dealt with the appeal accordingly, and on the merits of the appeal scheme.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the appeal scheme on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The site lies within a rural setting in open countryside which is within the Isle of Wight National Landscape (IWNL). It is sited on the west side of Hamstead Road which is narrow, partially unmade and has no paved footways or street lighting. For the most part, the roadside is characterised by grass verges, hedges, trees, and open undeveloped fields.
6. Amongst large stretches of undeveloped land and wooded areas, there is an intermittent presence of built development along both sides of the road. These buildings generally comprise detached dwellings set well back from their highway frontages and within large verdant plots. As such, and notwithstanding that the treatment of site frontages varies, and there are some front boundary walls and

fences, the street scene has a distinctly spacious and sylvan character, where soft landscaping is dominant, and buildings are set back.

7. The appeal property comprises a detached bungalow which is set back from the road behind a deep front garden enclosed by a low frontage boundary wall. It forms part of a row of detached street-facing dwellings on this side of the road. They are sporadically laid out with no consistent front building line, but they retain a notably spacious layout of development in relation to the road. Where there is existing frontage development, including timber pergolas on the appeal site and the adjacent property to the north, and a timber entrance arch on the adjacent house to the south, these are lightweight open structures which retain a sense of openness to the front of their sites.
8. Notwithstanding the description of development as a lychgate, the appeal scheme does not have the typical appearance of this type of rural structure. Notwithstanding that historically such gates are commonly associated with entrances to churches/graveyards, rather than domestic gardens, the design of the appeal scheme is more characteristic of that of a domestic car port.
9. This is due to a combination of its large wide and deep rectangular footprint and simple pitched slate roof. Notwithstanding mock Tudor timber panelling on the front and rear gables, there is a lack of gate-specific design detailing at the front. The structure is uncommonly wide and of too simple a design to appear as an entrance gate when viewed from the street. Moreover, it is sited at the point of vehicular access to the dwelling and above part of the existing gravelled access drive. As such, since its footprint is large enough to easily accommodate the parking of a car, it would effectively appear as a car port when viewed from the street.
10. Due to its position adjacent to the site frontage, together with its combined height, width and relatively bulky top-heavy roof form compared to the supports below, the appeal development assumes an unduly over-dominant and cramped visual presence when viewed from the public realm of the highway. This is particularly apparent given the set back and single storey height of the appeal property bungalow, within whose immediate context the appeal scheme is perceived when approaching the site from along Hamstead Road.
11. The visual discordance of the development is exacerbated by its steeply pitched roof which adds massing and height to the development so that it is of a scale that competes visually with the modest sized bungalow and does not appear completely subordinate to it. This discordant relationship with the host property is further compounded by a difference in materials and design detailing between the appeal scheme and the existing rendered bungalow and front boundary wall.
12. Moreover, the siting of the appeal scheme near the existing timber pergolas in the front garden of the appeal site close to the front boundary, adds to a cluttered and congested form of built development which contrasts with the prevailing more spacious layout of development which characterises the road.
13. The position of the development adjacent to the road would be at odds with the prevailing pattern of built development along this side of the road whereby domestic outbuildings are set back from their frontages and assume a subservient role in relation to the dwellings to which they relate. The overall result is a structure which appears unduly incongruous within its surroundings to the detriment of the

prevailing spacious and verdant roadside character which makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of this part of IWNL countryside.

14. Some screening of the appeal scheme occurs because of nearby walls and soft landscaping. However, due to its height, the appeal development would not be sufficiently well-screened to eliminate the aforesaid discordant and cramped impacts that I have identified, and the development would be clearly visible to passing road-users. Moreover, I cannot be certain that the existing nearby soft landscaping would remain, and this is not a reason to allow development that is of an inappropriate form and layout to its surroundings.
15. As such, the proposal comprises an unduly bulky, cramped and visually prominent addition to the appeal site, comprising an incongruous feature within the street scene and in relation to the host property. Accordingly, it materially harms the open verdant and spacious character of this part of the road and is unsympathetic to the surrounding built and rural environment.
16. This harm is not justified by a lack of impact upon large woodland blocks which comprise a key identified characteristic of Landscape Character Area LCT6 'Northern Woodlands' within which the appeal site lies in accordance with the *Isle of Wight AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024* (the AONBMP).
17. I saw during my site visit that detached domestic garages exist to the front of some other dwellings within the road. However, these sit comfortably within the street scene for various reasons, including a set-back and/or angled position in relation to the site frontage, being positioned behind frontage walling and/or mature frontage vegetative screening, having a lower height and less bulky structure than the appeal scheme, or having a design and materials that clearly visually connect them to the host dwelling as an ancillary garage building.
18. Consequently, none of these structures appear unduly incongruous or over-dominant within the street scene, having regard to their use, form and position in relation to their host properties and their site frontages, and they retain the spacious verdant qualities of the frontages of their respective plots.
19. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to the aims of Policies SP5, DM2 and DM12 of the *Isle of Wight Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management Development Plan Document* (March 2012) and Policy P39 of the AONBMP.
20. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development proposals comprise high quality design that protect, conserve and/or enhance the Island's natural environments and complement the character of the surrounding area, strengthening its local distinctiveness, particularly in the National Landscape, and support proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the landscape.
21. This is consistent with Chapters 12 and 15 of the Framework, which, respectively, seek to achieve well-designed places and conserve and enhance the natural environment, including attaching great weight to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Other Matters

22. My attention has been drawn to an allowed appeal decision¹ in respect of a car port elsewhere within the IWNL. However, the details relating to that appeal, including the appeal scheme, the location of development in relation to surrounding built development and the site frontage, are not directly comparable with those of the current appeal. I must determine this appeal having regard to the appeal site circumstances and the merits of the scheme before me.
23. The appellant has stated that the appeal scheme was constructed on the understanding that planning permission was not required. This does not alter my decision in respect of this appeal, which must be considered on the acceptability of the appeal scheme itself.
24. The council has raised no objections in respect of other matters including neighbouring and host property living conditions, highway safety and tree impacts. However, such matters are requirements of other development plan policies and a lack of identified harm is a neutral factor that does not diminish the significant harm that I have identified in respect of the main issue.
25. Whilst only one third party objection was received, and no objection was raised by the Parish Council, this does not affect my conclusion in respect of the main issue.

Conclusion

26. The appeal scheme conflicts with the adopted development plan when considered as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
27. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/P2114/D/23/3326952