



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2025

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/24/3355083

17 Ashford Road, Topsham EX3 0LA

- 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 Mr & Mrs Pike against the decision of Exeter City Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/0645/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing garage, store and conservatory structures and construction of a side extension, dormer extension; alterations and driveway works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for demolition of the existing garage, store and conservatory structures and the construction of a side extension, dormer extension, alterations and driveway works at 17 Ashford Road, Topsham EX3 0LA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 24/0645/FUL and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the pair with No. 15 and on the street scenes of Ashford Road and Orchard Way.

Reasons

3. The Council has three main concerns as regards the impact of the appeal scheme in relation to the main issue: (i) the size of the extension; (ii) the unbalancing of the pair with No. 15, and (iii) the effect of the proposed flat roofed rear dormer extension.
4. I saw on my visit that from Ashford Road Nos. 15 & 17 are seen as a pleasingly unassuming pair of bungalows with matching front elevations save for the rooflights in No. 15. The buildings are of a conventional mid C20th design which although of not particular merit makes a positive contribution to the street scene of Ashford Road, not least because of the contrast with the predominant terrace housing in this part of the road. And as the Decision Notice makes clear, it is the Council's view that any extension should be subservient to the host building, including through such measures as being set down and set back as set out in the Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD.
5. However, whilst such guidance would normally be appropriate, there are a limited number of occasions when it would fail to achieve a design that both

harmonises the host building and reads comfortably in the street scene.

I consider the appeal scheme to be a case in point. Because the appeal dwelling is one of a pair of matching bungalows, a set back from the front elevation and a set down from the ridge would appear somewhat incongruous and would not be read as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. This is especially so given the corner position where the element of subservience could reasonably be perceived as a somewhat awkward design feature in views from both Ashford Road and Orchard Way.

6. The appeal scheme opts for a more integrated design and although the extended dwelling would no longer be one half of a matching pair, the retention of the half-hipped roof shape enables the necessary visual co-ordination between Nos. 15 and 17 to remain, despite the latter becoming noticeably larger. And in contrast to a design following the SPD guidance, the open corner with the space to permit this size of extension within the existing building line is conducive to more of a second 'principal' elevation with less clutter than the existing flank of the building which also includes the dwelling's entrance.
7. Because the proposed extension would result in the building no longer matching No. 15, I also consider that the use of render is acceptable, especially bearing in mind the alterations and additions to No. 19 on the opposite corner of Orchard Way, which now has more of a contemporary than traditional appearance. The new front entrance and the removal of the somewhat unsightly garage, shed and lean-to are further advantages of a coherent architectural composition that, on balance, outweighs the loss of existing symmetry of the pair.
8. As regards the Council's objection to the flat roof and cladding of the proposed rear dormer, the modest proportions of the structure relative to the roof plane are such that I do not consider that it would draw the eye and be perceived as incongruous in an area with a variety of design features, including other flat roof dormers close by.
9. I have had regard to all other matters raised, including a detailed objection from a local resident. I acknowledge that the loss of the front garden to parking is a disadvantage of the scheme. However, I conclude on balance that there would be no harmful conflict with Policy CP17 of the Exeter City Council LDF Core Strategy 2012; Policy DG1 of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 2015, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024.
10. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. A condition to obscure glaze a bathroom window will safeguard privacy, whilst a condition limiting the hours of construction will safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
11. In respect of the extended dropped kerb, I would anticipate that in giving its consent, the Local Highway Authority would require an alternative surface to gravel within the first two or three metres from the pavement. This is because the inevitable spillage of gravel on to the highway through its disturbance by the entry and exit of vehicles can be hazardous as well as unsightly.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this Decision;
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OS based Location Plan; Land Survey Plan by Tor Surveys Ltd & Drawing Nos. 924.1; 924.2; 924.8; 924.9; 924.10;
- 3) The rear dormer window proposed in the southeast elevation of the development shall not be glazed other than in obscure glazing and shall thereafter be permanently retained in this form;
- 4) During the construction period, no site machinery or plant shall be operated; no construction or demolition shall be carried out, and no deliveries made, other than between 0800-1800 hours Monday to Friday; 0800-1300 hours Saturday and at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.