



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P1133/W/24/3350625

Iona, Teignmouth Road, Bishopsteignton, Teignmouth TQ14 9PL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Baker against the decision of Teignbridge District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 23/02216/OUT.
 - The development proposed is an outline application for 1 No. new dwelling with all matters reserved.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the suitability of the appeal site for a dwelling: firstly as regards the local and national planning policy requirements for sustainable development, and secondly in terms of the landscape character of the area.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that Iona is a detached dwelling at the end of a row of dwellings on the A381, roughly halfway between Bishopsteignton and Teignmouth. The appeal site itself is the area of garden on the west side of the property and currently includes a garage close to the vehicular access from Teignmouth Road. The option of the garage remaining is left open.
4. The Officer's Report sets out the reasons for the Council's decision to refuse outline planning permission. Turning firstly to sustainability, the proposed dwelling would be located outside any of the defined settlement limits within Teignbridge and is therefore considered to be the open countryside for planning policy purposes. Whilst Policy S22 of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 adopted in 2014 ('the Local Plan') does permit a countryside location for some categories of residential development, the appeal scheme is for an open market dwelling and does not qualify for any of these exceptions.
5. There is a similar preclusion in the relevant policies of the Bishopsteignton Neighbourhood Plan and Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework revised in December 2024 ('the Framework') at paragraph 48 confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan (in this case the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6. For the appellant it is argued that the appeal site does have sustainability credentials. It is part of a cluster of dwellings; it has nearby access to a shop, a public house, a village hall, a school, a stop for regular bus service, and a west-bound public footpath. However, although I accept that that Iona is by no means isolated from these services and facilities, when Local Plan Policies S21, S21A and S22 are read together it is clear that there is no support for an ad hoc interpretation of what may be considered sustainable sites.
7. Policy S22 says that in the open countryside development will be '*strictly managed*'. And I do not see this process as allowing material considerations to be advanced on the lines suggested in this appeal when these same considerations would have been available at the time both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan were being drafted.
8. If open market housing were to be permitted on land defined as 'open countryside' (notwithstanding that it includes a dwelling cluster and Iona) on an individual application basis, the credibility of policy-led development patterns would be undermined. As and when the Local Plan is reviewed, factors such as the shortage of housing may well result in a re-definition of some boundaries. However, for the present the Council points out that Teignbridge currently has a five-year housing land supply, whilst Policies S22 and EN2 (the latter is referred to below) are considered to be up to date and relevant to the determination of the application.
9. Turning briefly to the second part of the main issue, the visual impact of the development, the new dwelling would be located within the designated 'Undeveloped Coast' which is regarded as a distinctive landscape, especially given that this area includes the Teign Estuary. Policy EN2 of the Teignbridge Local Plan gives further emphasis to the unacceptability of the appeal site being used for housing by regarding development as being inappropriate unless it is needed for agriculture or forestry or involves a use that requires a coastal location. As regards the visual impact, this is an outline application with all matters reserved so any appraisal is inevitably limited in scope. However, the application plan illustrates a suggested siting and footprint size. And although these ostensibly appear reasonable, the limited spacing between the two buildings would not be characteristic of the existing dwelling cluster.
10. As a result, in views from Teignmouth Road and any other longer distance views from the public realm, including the other side of the Estuary, Iona and the new dwelling together with the nearby 'Curlews' would to all intents and purposes be read together. As such, they would at best be perceived as a harmful pocket of more intense development than the surroundings and at worst as a single built form. This has the potential to be unduly dominant and detrimental to the landscape character of Undeveloped Coast, in conflict with Local Plan Policy EN2A.
11. I have had regard to all other points raised for the appellants but overall, I find that the appeal scheme would be in harmful conflict with the relevant development plan policies and the Framework taken as a whole. The appeal therefore fails.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR