



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: 19 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/D/24/3357516

24 Oakbeer Orchard, Cranbrook, Exeter EX5 7BL

- 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 Katie Spurway against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/2152/FUL.
 - The development proposed is an extension to the rear of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and its immediate surroundings including the street scene of Oakbeer Orchard.

Reasons

3. The appeal proposal seeks the addition of a first-floor accommodation above the existing ground floor pitched roof rear projection which appears to be part of the original design and development of this house type. This addition to the living space of the dwelling would have a flat roof and it is this to which the Council objects.
4. The grounds of appeal argue that there are other examples of first floor flat roofs nearby and have provided a photograph of one, on the side gable of a dwelling. However, this is of much lesser depth than the appeal scheme and as part of a two-storey bay window projection it forms part of the original design of the property. Although it does provide a modest amount of additional floorspace, its main purpose is a feature to give visual relief to an otherwise overly austere gable facing the road.
5. The appeal proposal is quite different. Although No. 24 is a modern development it includes pitched roofs not only for the main roof but also for the ground floor projection that the application seeks to build up to two-storey height. Unless a dwelling is of contemporary design with a flat roof for the property as a whole, a first-floor flat roof on part of a more traditionally designed dwelling of pitched roofs and gables will almost always be perceived as an ungainly feature.

6. As such, it would draw the eye as having a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property. I consider this to be the case here, and with similar ground floor projections on other dwellings of this house type in this part of Cranbrook, it would be difficult for the Council in all fairness to resist other similar applications that would cause additional harm.
7. The appellant argues that the addition would not be seen from public vantage points. However, the officer's report includes a photograph of the appeal dwelling when moving along Oakbeer Orchard from west to east. Although this is more of a long-distance view, the whole of the rear elevation of No. 24 can be seen and the proposed first floor flat roof box structure would be clearly visible. Moreover, I consider that the unsympathetic addition would be harmful to the character and appearance of No. 24 itself, as well as being a jarring feature from the windows and gardens of surrounding properties.
8. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the Oakbeer Orchard development which in my view is of a high standard of design. This would conflict with Strategy 48 and Policy D1 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 adopted in 2016; Policy CB8 of the Cranbrook Plan DPD 2013-2031 adopted in 2022 and with Government policy in Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework revised December 2024.
9. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR