



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/24/3352437

Alexander House, 33 Stoborough Meadow, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5HP

- 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 Andrew Robson of Marmotte Properties Ltd against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2024/01422.
 - The development proposed is grey cladding above the dado line, replacement of UPVc soffits and fascias on porch with same cladding and install similar style new aluminium white double-glazed windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development on the application form differs slightly from the description on the decision notice. The evidence that I have before me does not provide details of the appellant's agreement to change the development description, therefore I have used the description of development provided on the application form.
3. I note from the appellant's planning statement that it is the first-floor window directly above the porch which would be replaced. In addition, the metal porch posts would be clad with oak. There is also reference to the future installation of solar panels on the garage of the property. However, the application drawings show no details of that. Therefore, I have determined the application on the basis of the plans before me, whereby the proposed development comprises; fibre cement cladding to the first storey of the house with light grey "Marley Cedral Weatherboard" and the replacement of the porch soffits and fascias with the same cladding, the casement of the porch posts in oak, and the replacement of the first floor window above the porch with an aluminium white double glazed window.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the location of the site within the Dorset National Landscape (formerly referred to as the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached dwelling located in a characterful housing estate, designed in the Dorset vernacular, situated within the Dorset National

Landscape. The house is located immediately ahead when entering Stoborough Meadow. Its positioning, along with its scale and proportions, and interesting architectural details, which include a balconied porch and arch detailing above, make it stand out as a prominent, landmark building in the estate.

6. Contrary to the committee report's finding, I do not consider that changes to the estate over time, such as the replacement of windows and the addition of solar panels have diluted the integrity of the original design concept, such that it can no longer be understood. The estate's properties share a distinctive, common palette of walling materials, comprising brick, render and stone. The proposed development would introduce horizontal, fibre cement cladding to the first floor of the house. In the context of the surrounding area and the prominence of the building, it would be a striking change which would be visually conspicuous, eroding the unity of the estate's design and character and undermining the quality of the appearance of the property.
7. In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to two nearby porches which have oak posts and have already been cladded in similar cladding to that proposed, and to the presence of timber cladding on an adjacent building. I have not been provided with the planning history of the porches, but what I saw, in comparison to the genuine timber cladding elsewhere, confirms that the use of such material has been to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. This is because the cladding is readily identifiable as an artificial building material. Also, from what I saw, the use of timber cladding on the estate is restrained and limited in scale. Therefore, timber cladding, and in particular artificial timber cladding, is not prevalent enough to have adjusted the palette of common walling materials to the extent that would support its application to the whole upper floor of a house. Similarly, and bearing in mind the porch's prominence in the street scene, I consider that the introduction of oak cladding to the posts would be detrimental to the building and the area.
8. The appellant has also referred to the commonplace use of cladding elsewhere, including at Poundbury, a place which also features buildings constructed in the Dorset vernacular style. However, Poundbury is some distance away and as such is not directly comparable to the circumstances of the appeal proposal and its individual setting within Stoborough Meadow.
9. Mindful of my duties to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes, whilst I have found above that there would be a harmful impact on the unified character and appearance of the local area, that impact, would be localised. This is because the scale of the development is not substantial enough to undermine the scenic qualities or beauty of the wider landscape designation. On that basis, the proposal would not conflict with the general statutory duty or provisions of policy E1 of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018 – 2034 (LP) which attaches great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in the Dorset National Landscape.
10. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the local area and would conflict with policy E12 of the LP which seeks high quality design that positively integrates with its surroundings, and policy 2 of the Arne Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2034 which seeks the use of materials which reflect local distinctiveness. It would also be contrary to the

Purbeck District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which highlights the importance of reinforcing local distinctive characteristics.

Other Matters

11. I note that the appellant engaged positively with the Council's professional officers to agree on a scheme which they could support. The application was recommended for approval by officers but refused at planning committee. The decision on whether to grant permission in this case was a matter of judgement which the committee was entitled to exercise. Given that I have visited the site, and I have determined the case solely on its planning merits, whether or not the committee visited the site is not a matter which has any bearing on the appeal.
12. With regards to the resilience of render to weathering, from what I saw on my visit, the rendering on most of the properties has been maintained to a high standard. Therefore, given the harm I have identified from the proposals, I have given this matter minimum weight in the determination of the appeal.
13. I note from the committee report that the officer supported the window replacement as did some of the neighbours, which I agree with, it essentially being a like for like replacement. However, as it forms part of the development, and I have not been asked to consider any aspect separately, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the proposal as a whole.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR