



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2025

by **E Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/D/24/3358224

17 Combe Batch Rise, Wedmore, Somerset BS28 4DT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Robert Redding against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 50/24/00056.
 - The development proposed is the enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of one additional storey.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

2. Under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the Order) (GPDO) planning permission is granted for the enlargement of a dwellinghouse by the construction of additional storeys, including any engineering operations reasonably necessary for the purpose of that construction, subject to limitations and conditions. Paragraph AA.2(3)(a) of Class AA of the GPDO requires the developer, before beginning the development, to apply to the local planning authority for prior approval as to the matters set out in parts (i) to (iv). In this instance, the Council's refusal reason relates to paragraph AA.2.(3)(a)(ii), regarding the external appearance of the dwellinghouse.
3. In view of the above, the main issue is whether prior approval should be granted when the proposed development is assessed against condition AA.2 (3) (a) (ii) in relation to the external appearance of the dwellinghouse.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow located within Combe Batch Rise, a cul-de-sac of semi-detached and detached bungalows. Despite some minor variations in terms of design, the properties in the cul-de-sac are single storey in height, and are similar with regard to their form, features, and roof profiles, and set back a similar distance from the highway to the front. The strong sense of regularity of the built form and layout creates a pleasant sense of uniformity, which is an intrinsic component of the character and appearance of the area. While there are 2 storey properties of various designs in the wider area, beyond the cul-de-sac, they do not contribute to the distinct character and appearance of the area of which the appeal site forms part.

5. The existing bungalow is positioned towards the end of the cul-de-sac, which may limit passing pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Despite this, it is nonetheless an integral part of the built form which makes up the street scape on this side of the road and is clearly visible in views along Combe Batch Rise in both directions. In its current form, the appeal property contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
6. The appeal proposal would see the addition of a second storey to the existing bungalow. In design terms it would reflect the roof form, architectural detailing, fenestration and external materials of the existing bungalow and would therefore be consistent with its external appearance.
7. Notwithstanding this, the resulting height, scale and overall bulk of the proposed 2 storey house would be significantly greater than that of the other bungalows within the cul-de-sac. Therefore, despite the position of the bungalow, by virtue of the additional storey it would appear as an anomalous feature which would disrupt the uniformity of building heights in the row, and within the cul-de-sac. Consequently, given the consistency in height and scale of the existing bungalows, the proposal would be at odds with the homogeneity of the nearby development and would harm the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
8. While I acknowledge the appellant's willingness to add climbing plants to the external walls of the dwelling, which it is suggested would soften the effects of the finish, this would not overcome the harm I have identified regarding the overall height and scale of the proposal.
9. I therefore conclude that, in light of the above considerations, the resulting external appearance of the dwellinghouse, by virtue of its additional storey, would harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore fail to accord with the conditions AA.2.(3)(a)(ii) of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the GPDO. In that regard, the proposal conflict with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework that seek to achieve well-designed places, by among other things, ensuring that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. While the existing bungalow is modest in size and somewhat dated, and the appeal proposal would provide additional habitable space and improved living conditions, which would be more energy efficient, there is no compelling evidence that the appeal proposal is the only means of achieving such aims. The appellant has referred to a single storey rear extension which could be constructed under permitted development rights, which it is suggested would be overbearing and bulky and less sustainable than the appeal proposal. However, there is no substantive evidence that they would genuinely pursue this option if the appeal failed or that such a scheme would be similar to, or worse than, what is currently proposed. As such, it is a matter of limited weight.
11. The appeal proposal would facilitate the removal of the existing dormer to the rear of the property, which the appellant contends would be a benefit of the scheme. Nonetheless, given the existing dormer is not significantly at odds with the character and appearance of the surrounding residential development, this would not justify the appeal proposal.

12. Even if the increase in height of the dwelling would no longer affect long distance views out towards the wider open countryside, this would not lead me to reach a different conclusion. Furthermore, the absence of harm in relation to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties would not itself render the scheme acceptable.
13. My attention is drawn to an appeal decision at 11 Thurlow Park Road¹ where, despite the increase in eaves and ridge height, the Inspector found the resulting mass and scale of the appeal proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling or the area, given the varied built form around the appeal site. However, I do not have the full details in respect of such works so I cannot be sure of the circumstances in that instance. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits, based on the evidence before me.
14. Like the Inspector in the appeal at 8 Conway Close², I acknowledge that it is inevitable that permitted development rights under Class AA of the GPDO would have some impact on the appearance of the host building. While I have reached a different conclusion regarding the effect of the resultant 2 storey dwelling in the appeal before me, this is a matter of planning judgement and having regard to the merits of the case.

Conclusion

15. For the foregoing reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

E Worley

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/23/3317715

² Appeal Ref: APP/A1530/D/23/3321603