



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 March 2025

by **Lewis Condé BSc, MSc, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E9505/D/24/3349349

Hillcrest, Shipmeadow, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 8HJ

- 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 Peter Albon against the decision of Broads Authority.
 - The application Ref is BA/2024/0091/HOUSEH.
 - The development proposed is horizontal cladding attached to exterior wall surfaces of dwelling
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for horizontal cladding attached to exterior wall surfaces of dwelling at Hillcrest, Shipmeadow, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 8HJ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref BA/2024/0091/HOUSEH and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the original planning application form, but I have removed reference to matters that are not acts of development.
3. At the time of my site visit it was apparent that the proposed development had been commenced but not complete.
4. I am also the Inspector dealing with another appeal¹ at this property. Given the context of the appeal sites and similarities in the reasons for refusal and policy contexts for each of these appeals, there is some degree of repetition between my decisions. However, each case has been determined on its own merits.
5. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024. In respect of matters of pertinence to the appeal scheme, there have been no fundamental changes to national policy. Accordingly, comments on the updated Framework were not requested from the main parties.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, and the natural beauty of the Broads.

¹ Appeal Reference: APP/E9505/W/24/3353862

Reasons

7. The appeal site lies within the Broads Authority Executive Area (the Broads). The Broads is a Protected Landscape that has the same status as a National Park. The Levelling-Up and Regenerations Act 2023 amends the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their functions to now “seek to further” the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes.
8. Amongst other matters, the statutory purposes of the Broads is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads. These duties are reflected in the Framework, with paragraph 189 confirming that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in the Broads which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues
9. The appeal dwelling is in a prominent roadside position in Shipmeadow, a small rural settlement. It is a sizeable dwelling, that has previously been subject to significant alteration, including large extensions. From the evidence before me, the use of render is also unlikely to be its original external finish.
10. Dwellings within Shipmeadow, and the nearby surrounding area vary in scale, design and appearance, including external finishing materials. Given these differences, I did not find there to be a particularly strong sense of cohesion between properties in this locality.
11. Despite the presence of one nearby building that utilised a similar modern cladding material, from my observations, the use of cement board cladding is not locally prevalent. Furthermore, the other nearby building that I observed where similar materials appeared to be in use was not directly comparable to the appeal dwelling due to its smaller scale and less prominent position.
12. At the time of my site visit the cement board cladding had been applied to a large extent of the appeal dwelling. From close range views the cladding does have a uniformed appearance and synthetic quality, particularly when directly sunlit. Nonetheless, whilst imitating timber, it still retains a somewhat rural characteristic.
13. Furthermore, I observed the property from a range of distances and did not find the cladding to have a stark appearance; due to its muted colour tone it appeared no more striking than the light colour render on the existing property. It is always a subjective matter of planning judgement as to whether a development’s design is sympathetic to local character, but given the external appearance of the host property has already been heavily altered through past works I do not consider the appeal scheme would diminish its traditional character. Additionally, because of the variance in appearance of nearby dwellings, I find the appeal proposal would not appear as an incongruous or urban feature. Nor would it be unduly prominent in the streetscene or wider landscape.
14. The use of natural timber cladding would provide more a sympathetic finish than the current appeal scheme. Nonetheless, for reasons outlined above, I still do not find the appeal proposal to cause harm to the character or appearance of the host property or the surrounding area.
15. In the context of the Broads, the appeal dwelling is set amongst other housing, which it would be read alongside in longer distance views. In this context, the difference between the existing render finish of the property and proposed

cladding would be nominal and would not have a material impact on the wider landscape or scenic beauty of the Broads.

16. Bringing the above together, I find that the proposal would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the host property or surrounding area, while it would conserve the natural beauty of the Broads. Consequently, it would adhere to Policies SP7, DM16 and DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads (adopted 2019). Together, amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that development is of a high-quality that integrates effectively with its surroundings, including through the use and detailing of materials. The appeal scheme also complies with the aims of Paragraph 189 of the Framework.

Other Matters

17. There is no robust evidence before me that the appeal scheme will cause significant issues of water ingress or cause further damp or degradation to the existing dwelling. Likewise, no robust evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that cement board cladding, is inherently more unsustainable than other materials typically used in construction processes.

Conditions

18. As the development has already begun, it has not been necessary to attach a standard time limit for the commencement of development. Nor do I consider any further conditions are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal scheme complies with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that indicate a decision should be taken other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore allowed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR