



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 June 2025

by **L Francis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/U1430/W/25/3359439

Land at Grenada Close, Bexhill on Sea TN39 3TN

- 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 S Eldridge against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref is RR/2024/1030/P.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of a garage to one bedroom unit of holiday accommodation.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/U1430/W/25/3359443

Land at Grenada Close, Bexhill on Sea TN39 3TN

- 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 S Eldridge against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref is RR/2024/1867/P.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of a garage to one bedroom unit of holiday accommodation.
-

Decision

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As set out above there are two appeals on this site. They differ in their boundary treatments and proposed parking arrangements. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits.

Main Issues

3. The main issues for both appeals A and B are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - highway safety

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The area is characterised by single storey and chalet style dwellings, set back from the highway within substantial plots. Front gardens are generally open to the street, which contribute to the area's spacious and open character. There are some single storey garages or outbuildings in the surrounding area that are located adjacent to the dwellings they serve.

5. The appeal site comprises a single storey garage with a hipped tiled roof and an existing crossover. The site is completely enclosed by close-boarded fencing which has the effect of distinguishing it from other sites in the area. Nevertheless, in the street scene the building reads as a smaller, ancillary building to the adjacent 2-storey dwelling at 1a Grenada Close.

Appeal A

6. The alterations proposed under Appeal A include the replacement of the garage door with a window to serve the living/kitchen area. The front boundary fence would also be removed and replaced with low level picket fencing with a hedge behind.
7. The proposed boundary treatment would be more permeable than the existing close boarded fence and would allow greater street views into the site. The replacement of the garage door with a window would give the building a more domestic appearance. It would read as a separate unit of accommodation with its own curtilage and entrance.
8. The building is substantially smaller in footprint and scale than surrounding dwellings, within a curtilage that would be smaller than others in the surrounding area. As an independent unit of accommodation, it would be incongruous in the surrounding street scene and would appear cramped within its plot.
9. In conclusion on this main issue for Appeal A, I therefore find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would be contrary to Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (Core Strategy) insofar as they require new development to respect and not detract from the character and appearance of the locality, and contribute positively to the character of the site and surroundings.

Appeal B

10. The alterations proposed under Appeal B would similarly include the replacement of the garage door with a window to serve the living/kitchen area. The existing close boarded fence and boarded access gates would be retained. Although the physical alterations to the building would be minimal, the building would nevertheless represent an incongruous unit of accommodation in the surrounding area given its size and restricted curtilage as set out above. The appeal proposal would be harmful to the established character of the area as it would be at odds with the pattern of development in the surrounding area where garages and outbuildings are contained within the more extensive curtilage of the dwellings they serve.
11. I have been referred to a previous appeal decision in relation to the conversion of the garage to a one bedroom dwelling (reference APP/U1430/W/23/3331327). The proposal included the removal of the boundary fencing. The Inspector acknowledged that the existing building is at odds with the scale of the surrounding dwellings, but in combination with the small plot and proximity to the adjacent building, when seen as a separate dwelling it would appear 'cramped and somewhat squeezed in'. As set out in my reasoning, I do not consider that the harm to the character of the area would arise solely from the removal or alteration to the boundary fence. The harm also arises from the building's use as a separate unit of accommodation in a plot and scale of building that would be out of character for an independent unit of accommodation in this location.

12. In conclusion on this main issue for Appeal B, I therefore find that the proposal would harm the character of the surrounding area. This would be contrary to Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (Core Strategy) insofar as they require new development to respect and not detract from the character and appearance of the locality, and contribute positively to the character of the site and surroundings.

Highway Safety

Appeal A

13. The scheme proposed under Appeal A would not contain off-street parking. The Council indicate that at least 1 on-site parking space would be required for the proposed holiday let. As such, parking for the accommodation would necessarily be on street. Grenada Close contains single yellow lines with a parking restriction on one side of the highway, with no parking restrictions on the other. This arrangement is also found on Hillborough Close which adjoins Grenada Close to the north.
14. At the time of my site visit on a Tuesday afternoon, there were a few spaces available on Grenada Close, with more space also available on Hillborough Close. However, I am aware that the time of peak demand for on-street space would not be on a weekday afternoon and is likely to be during the evening, overnight and at weekends. Increased parking demand in areas of limited on-street supply may lead to additional congestion as drivers seek spaces, or park illegally, which would be detrimental to highway safety. There is no evidence to suggest that such circumstances could be avoided by the appeal proposal.
15. The proposed development under Appeal A would be harmful to the safety of the highway due to the proposed parking arrangements resulting in additional demand for on-street parking. This would conflict with Policies CO6 and TR4 of the Core Strategy insofar as they seek to ensure development avoids prejudice to road and/or pedestrian safety and meets the parking needs of development with regard to, amongst other things, the safety impacts of a reliance on parking off-site.

Appeal B

16. The parking area would be located on the forecourt of the proposed holiday let and the physical access arrangements to the site would remain as existing. Whilst I note that the approved garage arrangement (planning permission reference RR/2022/1914/P) includes the hardstanding area to the front to assist in vehicle manoeuvring and turning, the visibility upon entry and exit would remain as existing under the appeal proposal. Despite the poor visibility, this arrangement would remain as shown on the original permission for the garage, and drivers would necessarily exercise caution when entering and leaving the parking area.
17. On this basis, I do not consider that there is substantive evidence before me which shows that the proposed arrangement would unacceptably harm highway safety over and above the existing arrangement. As such, in relation to this main issue, the proposal would be in line with Core Strategy Policies CO6, TR3 and TR4 insofar as they seek to ensure development avoids prejudice to road safety and meets the parking needs of the development.

Other Matters

18. I note the concerns from interested parties about matters including the proposed holiday let use, drainage and other non-planning matters. As I am dismissing the appeals for other reasons, I shall not pursue these matters further.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

19. The Council is satisfied that both appeal proposals would be acceptable with regards to their effect upon the living conditions of nearby residents and consider that matters including cycle storage could reasonably be secured by planning condition. I see no reason to disagree. However, these matters are neutral considerations not weighing for or against the appeals.
20. The proposed use as a unit of holiday accommodation would offer direct and indirect economic benefit to the district and is supported by local and national planning policy. However, the extent of this benefit would be very modest given the scale of development proposed.
21. Conversely, the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area and to highway safety in appeal A, and to the character of the area in appeal B, would outweigh the benefits identified for each scheme.
22. The material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, appeal A and appeal B should both be dismissed.

L Francis

INSPECTOR