



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/D/25/3365873

The Mount, Lakenham Hill, Northam, Bideford, EX39 1JH

- 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 Mike Leigh against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 1/0174/2025/FUL
 - The development proposed is described as the removal of approved loft conversion application number 1/0373/2024/FUL and construction of a new first-floor extension over approved single storey side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description of the proposal used in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. The loft conversion referred to is not yet built, and the appellant has clarified that the development proposed in the appeal would be built in substitution for it. The approved single storey side extension referred to is shown on the submitted '*as existing plans*', but it too is yet to be built.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached dwelling of a traditional appearance, the last on the southern frontage of Lakenham Hill before it meets the B3236. Although the dwelling immediately to the east is a detached dormer bungalow, the remainder of this frontage is characterised by detached two-storey dwellings. The opposite frontage is comprised of dwellings of a bungaloid form set at a lower level.
5. The house stands in an elevated position, well above the level of the carriageway in Lakenham Hill, and that of the B3236, running to the rear of the property and which links Bideford and Westward Ho. The house has a generously sized triangular shaped garden to the west, which for the most part does not extend fully to the highway frontages. A strip of land outside the appeal site virtually surrounds the garden, stepping down rather steeply to the footways running alongside both roads to the front and rear.

6. In certain viewpoints from Lakenham Hill and the B3236, the dwelling as it stands breaks the skyline because of its elevated position. It can therefore be appropriately described as being prominent when viewed from those points. The principal effect of the proposals, in particular the changes to the west facing elevation, would be to substantially increase the perceived width and mass of the dwelling when viewed from just outside the site in Lakenham Hill and on the final approach to the dwelling when travelling uphill from Westward Ho.
7. In view of the prominence of the dwelling, the effect of the proposed extension would be accentuated. It would project well beyond the façade of the dwelling's southern elevation towards the B3236 and would be perceived as disproportionate in scale to that of the host property. It would also have a disjointed appearance with the extension becoming regarded, to my mind, as a disharmonious and poorly considered add-on to the dwelling, materially altering and harmfully affecting its traditional character and appearance.
8. The extension would be partly screened by vegetation and trees, particularly in summer. However, most of the vegetation that I saw grows on land outside the site and therefore there is no certainty that it could continue to be relied upon as affording partial screening to a development of harmful appearance.
9. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings. Accordingly, a material conflict arises with those provisions of policies ST04, DM04 & DM24 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan promoting the achievement of a high standard of design in new development and ensuring that in residential extensions the design should respect existing development, its context, setting and surroundings.
10. Having regard to my conclusions on the main issue I regard the proposals as representing a clear example of poor design. I therefore intend to follow the Framework's guidance as set out at paragraph 139 and to dismiss the appeal.

Other matters

11. I have considered the appellant's offer of not implementing what is described as the 'fallback' scheme, for which planning permission exists. Whether that scheme is to be implemented is a matter entirely for the appellant since I see no material benefit in allowing the appeal scheme to proceed having regard to its harmful effects.
12. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations leading to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR