
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by **O Marigold BSc DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/25/3365326

Hut 2, Field 763, Portland, Dorset DT5 2JT

- 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 Sophie Mounty against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/FUL/2024/05025.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Retain beach hut'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of the appeal development as set out in the Council's Decision Notice, which is more accurate than that used in the application form. I have also taken the address of the site from the appeal form, which is more concise than the version used in the application form. I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced as a result of these changes.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The site consists of an existing beach hut on Portland Bill, in a field adjacent to the coastline. The field and others nearby contain a large number of modest structures, once fishermen's huts. I understand that the appeal building has been in situ and in local family ownership for many decades. A small extension is said to have been originally constructed in corrugated steel, but the hut was otherwise a timber-built structure, including its windows and interior.
5. Consent is sought to further renew the permission, for a period of ten years. The submitted plans and application form do not specify the external materials of the hut. However, on site, whilst the front of the hut and the doors and windows are timber, the other elevations and roof have now been finished in corrugated steel. There is no dispute that the application seeks to retain the hut based on its as-built materials.
6. The Portland Neighbourhood Plan (NP), made January 2020, echoes earlier guidance in the Portland Beach Huts Supplementary Planning Guidance, dated February 2006. These seek to avoid a diminution of the character of the hut fields,

and to ensure that they retain the appearance of temporary, traditional timber-built structures, without permanent foundations.

7. The evidence before me is that the first non-stone huts, constructed in the mid-1900s, were of corrugated steel. There are now a handful of huts made or clad in non-timber material. Some have lost their traditional character or have permanent cemented blockwork footings. Nevertheless, most huts appear to be of timber, giving a uniformity of design and construction.
8. The use of corrugated steel for the appeal structure gives it a more permanent, modern and less traditional design. As such, when viewed from its surroundings, it appears incongruous and out of place in its context. Furthermore, granting permission for the use of the as-built material would make it difficult for the Council to resist subsequent similar proposals for other huts. This would potentially further undermine the character of the area as a whole.
9. I do not doubt that corrugated steel is cost effective, easy to use and offers good protection from the weather for the original historic structure underneath. Even so, the timber-finished huts have been maintained and remained as such for a significant period of time, and so I do not accept that these benefits justify the adverse effects that I have found.
10. Consequently, the appeal development harms the character and appearance of the area. At paragraphs 135 and 139, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires development to be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment, and that it should be refused if not well designed. For the reasons given above, the appeal development conflicts with the Framework.
11. NP policy Port/ST2 requires, amongst other things, that beach huts are to be finished in timber. However, the policy only seeks to control the replacement of beach huts or their extension. The application and appeal before me are for neither of these things, but instead for the retention of an original hut for a further period. Accordingly, I find no conflict with NP policy Port/ST2, but this does not change my findings of conflict against the Framework.

Conclusion

12. I have found no conflict with the Development Plan. Nevertheless, for the reasons given, the balance of material considerations, in particular the Framework, indicate that permission should be refused. Consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

O Marigold

INSPECTOR