



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2025

by **N Bromley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/25/3367127

Hillfield House, 181 Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7LF

- 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 Eco Green Developments against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/FUL/2024/06259.
 - The development proposed is construct 2 dwellings at rear and addition of pitched roof to the existing garage as well as an extension to the first-floor office space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - whether the proposed development provides an acceptable standard of living conditions for future occupants, with regard to outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises Hillfield House, a large detached two and a half storey building, in office use, within an urban environment. The building fronts Dorchester Road, located on the junction with Milton Terrace. The rear of the building includes a variety of extensions, a flat roof garage and a car park accessed off Milton Terrace.
4. The immediate area is characterised by a variety of residential and commercial buildings that range in age, style, scale, and appearance. Buildings that front Dorchester Road extend significantly to the rear, mainly comprising car parking areas. There are two storey terrace houses beyond the rear boundary of the appeal site on Milton Terrace, and another neighbouring street, Argyle Road.
5. The proposed semi-detached dwellings would be located to the rear of the site, adjacent to the end house of a small row of terrace properties that front Milton Terrace. With the proposed garage extension and office expansion, the proposed dwellings would significantly increase the amount of built development at the rear of the building. In particular, a large proportion of the rear yard and car parking area would be lost.

6. Combined with the additional mass of the proposals, and the juxtaposition with adjacent buildings, the proposed dwellings would appear cramped within the site and street scene. Particularly when viewed from Milton Terrace, near to the Dorchester Road junction. Also, the shallow rear gardens would exacerbate the cramped appearance of the development, with the proposed dwellings being pushed up close to the boundary. As such, the proposed dwellings would sit uncomfortably within the plot.
7. Furthermore, the featureless front elevations and lack of visual continuity with existing houses in the street scene, would further contribute to the harm. Indeed, the proposed semi-detached properties would not match the Victorian terraced housing nearby. Therefore, even with appropriate facing materials, the proposed dwellings would be incongruous within the street scene.
8. The Council has not raised concerns with the design and appearance of the proposed pitched roof to the existing garage, or the extension to the first-floor office space. These elements of the scheme would be viewed within the context of the existing building. Accordingly, I am also satisfied that they would have an appropriate appearance.
9. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with the design aims of Policies ENV10, ENV11, ENV12 and ENV15 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, 2015 (the Local Plan), which together and amongst other things, requires development to achieve a high quality of sustainable and inclusive design and the position of buildings should relate positively to adjoining buildings to respect local character.

Living conditions

10. Each dwelling would have a rear amenity area. They would be small, with a shallow depth, enclosed by the rear elevation of the houses and a tall boundary wall. In addition, due to the orientation of the amenity areas, they would not receive much daylight or sunlight.
11. The size of the usable space would also be further reduced by the need for bin storage arrangements and possible garden buildings. Overall, and for the collective reasons set out above, future occupiers would be deterred from using the space. On this basis, the proposals would provide an unsatisfactory standard of outdoor amenity space for future occupiers.
12. Consequently, I conclude that an acceptable standard of living conditions for future occupants would not be provided, with regard to outdoor amenity space. As such, the proposed development would not be in accordance with Policy ENV16 of the Local Plan, which amongst other things, seeks development that does not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the future occupiers of the properties.

Other Matters

13. The appellant suggests that a recent appeal decision at West of Church Hill and Off Butts Close and School Lane, Marnhull, Dorset, DT10 1PU, demonstrates that there is a serious need for new homes in Dorset. A copy of that decision has not been provided. Nonetheless, the Council identify that an examined Annual Position Statement confirms that it can demonstrate a five-year supply of housing of 5.02

years. The figure is fixed until October 2025, in accordance with paragraph 233 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In these circumstances, the proposal does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out at paragraph 11 of the Framework.

14. Even so, the provision of two dwellings, with a suitable amount of internal floorspace, would contribute to boosting the supply of housing, as referenced in the Framework. There would be social and economic benefits to local services during the construction and occupancy phases of the development also. The development could also be delivered relatively quickly due to it representing a small site, using previously developed land. However, these benefits would be modest by virtue of the proposal only adding two dwellings to the housing supply in the area.
15. Whilst I recognise the value of reusing brownfield sites for new homes, in order for this to be effective, it should not come at the unacceptable expense of the character and appearance of the area, or the living conditions of future occupiers. Indeed, in this case the identified harm would be substantial. As a consequence, the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the identified harm that would be caused by the proposed development.
16. Overall, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR