



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2025

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/25/3369310

Greencroft, Streatham Rose, Exeter, EX4 4PE

- 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 Richard Power against the decision of Exeter City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0714/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as detached garage/office building, including solar panels on roof, in rear garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appeal relates to a householder application and the submitted drawings show the proposed garage within the plot as it currently exists. Whilst not included in the description for the development water storage tanks and boreholes within the garden are included in the proposal. The appeal had been determined on this basis.
3. Whilst reference has been made to planning permission reference 20/1104/FUL (PP 20/1104/FUL), this permission, if still extant, cannot be varied via a householder application. As such any changes to PP 20/1104/FUL, fall outside the scope of this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character, appearance and verdant aspect of this part of Streatham Rise.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is situated in an area that is dominated by the University of Exeter and its spacious mature landscaped grounds, together with large traditionally designed low density detached dwellings occupying spacious plots. The mature trees, hedges and other planting within their front and rear gardens partially screen and soften the built development and make a strong contribution to the spacious verdant and sylvan character and appearance of the local area.
6. Streatham Rise is a quiet residential cul-de-sac which rises in a northerly direction. The appeal dwelling fronts onto the main part of Streatham Lane and is located within the northern part of a large irregular shaped plot. A detached double garage and parking area are located to the south of the dwelling. To the rear of the appeal site is a narrow cul-de-sac. The dwellings and outbuildings fronting this cul-de-sac are set back from the highway and typically benefit from a good level of screen planting along their front boundaries.

Consistent with this the rear boundary of the appeal property, which runs along the northern side of the cul-de-sac comprises a mature hedgerow of mixed species. This adds to the verdant appearance and sense of enclosure within the cul-de-sac.

7. Whilst there are a couple of frontages at the top of the cul-de-sac that are more suburban, the dwellings are set back from the cul-de-sac and there is soft planting immediately behind that front walls and railing. This together with the soft planting on the opposite side of the road helps to soften their impact on the street scene.
8. Together and amongst other things Objective 9 and policy CP17 of the Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy (CS) and policy DG1 (f) (g) & (h) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995–2011 (LP), seek to ensure that proposals are to a high standard of sustainable design and complement or enhances Exeter. They should create and reinforce local distinctiveness and raise the quality of urban living through excellence in design. The height and mass of proposals should relate well to the character and appearance of their surroundings.
9. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) similarly states that proposals should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history. Paragraph 168 of the Framework states that significant weight should be given to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposals contribution to a net zero future. Also, that small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
10. Chapter 8 of the Exeter City Council Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations supplementary Planning Document 2024 (SPD), advises that garages and outbuildings should be subordinate in scale to the host dwelling. They should be confined to single storey and should respect the architecture of the host dwelling. The width of driveways should be kept to a minimum to reduce the impact on the street scene.
11. CS Policy CP15 promotes sustainable construction and LP Policy EN6 states that Proposals for renewable energy facilities will be permitted provided their benefits outweigh any harm to the landscape. Paragraph 168 of the Framework states that significant weight should be given to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposals contribution to a net zero future. Also, that small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
12. The southerly side of the proposed outbuilding would be sited close to the cul-de-sac. Its tall gable end, with large expanse of brickwork and two garage doors would be set back from the road behind a shallow hardstanding whose splay would be wider than the proposed building. A section of the existing mature hedge and two trees would be removed to facilitate the construction of the building and hardstanding. Also, parts of its large pitched roof and solar panels would be visible above the retained boundary hedge. Its visually hard appearance would be exacerbated by the position of the building alongside the access to the existing outbuilding at Beech Tree House.
13. Overall, due to its siting immediately adjacent to the cul-de-sac, size, design and the associated removal of mature planting, the proposed outbuilding and associated access would be prominent. It would have a visually hard and would have urbanising impact on the cul-de-sac. It would undermine and unacceptably detract from the spacious, verdant and sylvan character and appearance of the cul-de-sac.
14. Reference has been made to the existing outbuilding to the rear of Beech Tree House, which is similar in form and has a first floor within the roof-space. However, despite being sited on higher ground, that outbuilding is smaller, set back from the cul-de-sac and benefits from mature screening along the boundary with the highway. It is also accessed from a narrow and enclosed crossover onto Streatham Rise. For these reasons its impact

on the local environment is not as great as the proposed outbuilding and associated hardstanding.

15. The proposed building would accommodate solar panels and a plant room that would include a 1000 litre water tank and associated filters and pumps. It would also include electric car and cycle charging facilities. This would benefit the energy and water efficiency of the host dwelling. I appreciate that in addition to the existing dwelling, the system has been designed to serve the dwellings the subject of PP 20/1104/FUL. However, as indicated in paragraph 3 of this decision, any changes to that permission fall outside the scope of this appeal. The proposed building, hard surfacing, tanks and boreholes would all change the approved scheme. Irrespective of this, it is clear that the efficiencies proposed could serve more than one dwelling and so could potentially benefit other local dwellings.
16. I give significant weight to the benefits associated with water efficiency and renewable and low carbon energy generation and their contribution to a net zero future. However, in this instance, on the basis of the evidence submitted, I am not convinced that a building in the position or size proposed is the only way to achieve maximum efficiencies for the host and any other local dwellings should the opportunity arise.
17. Little evidence has been submitted regarding the suitability of the host dwelling for retrofitting solar panels and maximising rainwater harvesting. As pointed out in the Council's delegated report, the orientation of the proposed outbuilding is not ideal for solar panels and some of the panels would be sited close to a mature hedge. Also, the embodied carbon emissions associated with the construction of the proposed outbuilding have not been factored in.
18. For these reasons I find that the visual harm that would be caused by the proposal would clearly outweigh the personal and energy & water efficiency benefits of the proposal.
19. I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the local environment. Accordingly, it would conflict with CS Objective 9 & Policy CP17, LP Policy DG1, SPD Chapter 8 and paragraph 135 of the Framework.

Other matters

20. Finally, whilst I have taken into consideration the other concerns raised by local residents regarding ecology, noise, privacy, vehicular visibility and the siting of the existing utility infrastructure, they do not materially add to my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

21. My conclusion on the main issue amounts to a compelling reason for dismissing this appeal, which the imposition of conditions could not satisfactorily address.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR