



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2025

by Robert Fallon B.Sc. (Hons) PGDipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/D/25/3369384

The Cottage Withindale Lane, Long Melford, Sudbury, CO10 9HS

- 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 Aidan Powlesland against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/01892.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey side extension (following demolition of an existing single-storey extension)..
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Aidan Powlesland against Babergh District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.

Reasons

Appeal site context

4. The appeal site consists of a mature detached bungalow with rear projection providing access to a portacabin extension. It has a simple rural-domestic architectural style and is set on a spacious plot which forms part of a small estate accompanying Mill House, a large, well-proportioned and handsome 2-storey property of the Georgian style.
5. As the main focal point of the estate, Mill House contains a range of residential and commercial buildings within its grounds, many of which are attached to the property. Although a number of these structures are 2-storeys in height, their different facing materials (render/timber weatherboarding), lower eaves & roof ridgelines, and rural-domestic/agricultural architectural styles give them a clear subservient character to the more formal, imposing and austere appearance of Mill House.
6. The appeal site is on the eastern edge of the estate set amongst a small wooded area on slightly elevated ground. Similar to other buildings on the estate, the bungalow's low height, modest proportions, different facing materials and unassuming architectural style give it a subservient character to Mill House.

The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area

7. The scheme's 2-storey height and bulk would project significantly above the existing bungalow and result in it becoming the dominant element of the building. It would also be in a neo-classical architectural style, which would be out of character with the simple rural-domestic architectural style of the bungalow. Although the appellant asserts that the scheme should draw its architectural cues from the classical style of Mill House, I do not agree as the extension would be primarily viewed against the existing bungalow, with limited intervisibility between it and the former building.
8. The appellant also states that the use of a neo-classical style would follow the well-established tradition of estate follies. However, such buildings are typically standalone features and there is no evidence before me of them being attached to modest bungalows constructed in a simple rural-domestic architectural style. Whilst I agree with the appellant that some meshing of architectural styles has already occurred on the estate with the 20th century alterations to Withindale Mill, I do not consider these to be sympathetic to Mill House and as a consequence, they only reinforce my concerns in respect of the current scheme.
9. In further support of the development, the appellant has drawn my attention to the mixture of architectural styles and evolution of buildings in Long Melford village. However, none of these are directly comparable in terms of context, position, scale, plot size, design or character. Similarly, the letter of support and lack of neighbour objections do not in themselves demonstrate a lack of harm.
10. When taken collectively, the different elements of the scheme referred to above would be unsympathetic and harm the character & appearance of the existing dwelling. I recognise that the development would only result in limited harm to the wider estate because of the bungalow's secluded position, but this does not remove the need to ensure a high quality design that respects the character, appearance and form of the existing property.
11. In light of the above, I conclude that the scheme would conflict with Policies LP03 and LP24 of the Local Plan¹ and Policy LM08 of the Neighbourhood Plan², which collectively seek, amongst other things, for development to; (1) be compatible/harmonious with their location and appropriate in terms of scale; (2) make a positive contribution to local character; and (3) in the case of extensions to existing dwellings, incorporate a high standard of design which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of the building.
12. I also find that the development would conflict with paragraphs 131, 135 and 139 of the Framework³ which collectively seek, amongst other things; (a) the creation of high quality buildings; (b) visually attractive development as a result of good architecture; (c) development that is sympathetic to local character; and (d) the refusal of permission for development that is not well designed. Despite the appellant asserting that these paragraphs are not relevant (and therefore cited in error), this confusion may have arisen because they have read an earlier superseded version of the Framework with slightly different text and formatting.

¹ Babergh and Mid Suffolk, Joint Local Plan - Part 1, November 2023.

² Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037, Referendum Version, August 2022, Long Melford Parish Council.

³ National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 12 December 2024 (as amended on 7 February 2025).

13. The case officer report clarifies that the development complies with Policy SP09 of the Local Plan (which relates to the conservation, enhancement and management of the natural and local environment and networks of green infrastructure). I am as a consequence satisfied that the scheme is not in conflict with this policy, which was referred to in the Council's reason for refusal.

Planning balance

14. There is no evidence before me that demonstrates there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date. As a consequence, the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 11 of the Framework is not engaged.
15. The appellant states that the scheme would result in the creation of a library that could be used by all occupants of the estate for the economic and social benefit of the area. However, even if there were evidence before me in the form of a legal agreement/undertaking committing to this, I would consider such an arrangement to be harmful to the living conditions of future occupants of the bungalow by reason of loss of privacy and noise & disturbance from comings and goings.
16. I recognise that the scheme would result in economic, environmental and social benefits from:- (a) an increase in the number of residents at the site, who would contribute to the Mill House estate, local economy & businesses and wider community; (b) a more fuel efficient dwelling incorporating sustainable construction techniques in the extension; (c) a larger dwelling that would suit a wide range of people and demographic family units with different accessibility needs; and (d) local employment during construction. However, given that the proposal only relates to an extension, I consider these benefits to be of limited value and that the adverse impacts of the scheme would outweigh these, when assessed against the policies in the development plan and other material considerations.
17. The appellant has emphasized their attempt to address concerns relating to the previous scheme dismissed at appeal (APP/D3505/D/22/3302344) by reducing the extension's size. However, I must consider the appeal scheme on its own merits.
18. I also recognise that the proposal would result in the removal of the unsightly portacabin extension, but consider its replacement with the scheme before me to be more harmful by reason of the adverse effects I have described above. However, if the appellant maintains their desire for a neo-classical designed dwelling in this part of the estate, it seems to me that the most appropriate solution would be to pursue a more comprehensive scheme involving the complete replacement of the existing bungalow with an entirely new structure.
19. In view of the above, I conclude that the scheme does not accord with the development plan and that other material considerations do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with this.

Conclusion

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

Robert Fallon

INSPECTOR