



Costs Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by S Sharp BSc(Hons) BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2025

Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/25/3371798

Beeches, Hussell Lane, Medstead, Alton, Hampshire GU34 5PD

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 78, 322 and Schedule 6, and the Local Government Act 1972, section 250(5).
 - The application is made by Mr & Mrs Ben and Lucy Barrass for a full award of costs against East Hampshire District Council.
 - The appeal was against the refusal of planning permission for a single-storey rear extension and garage conversion.
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Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Parties in planning appeals normally meet their own expenses. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably, and thereby caused the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.
3. Examples of unreasonable behaviour cited in the PPG include preventing or delaying development which should clearly be permitted, having regard to its accordance with the development plan, national policy and any other material considerations; and not determining similar cases in a consistent manner. Essentially, the applicants assert that the Council ought to have allowed the scheme on its planning merits, thereby avoiding the need for an appeal. They further contend that the Council acted inconsistently with previous decisions they had made.
4. It will have been seen from my appeal decision that the proposal takes into account and respects the design and character and appearance of the host dwelling. I also concluded that there would be no harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings, specifically in relation to outlook and privacy. Nevertheless, these were ultimately matters of planning judgement. It does not necessarily follow that a different judgement is inherently unreasonable.
5. The Council officer visited the site, assessing its context. The Council then set out this context and the reasoning for reaching their conclusion in the Council officer's report. It is clear from the correspondence between the applicant and the Council during the planning application process, and from the Council officer's report, that the Council considered the design rationale underpinning the proposal, prior to making its decision. It also identified the specific areas of concern and cited relevant development plan policies on the decision notice.

6. Although I ultimately came to a different judgement, the Council put forward a plausible position. It follows that I do not find that they acted unreasonably within the meaning of the PPG.
7. The applicants also refer to inconsistent decision-making by the Council. However, I have little substantive evidence to show the Council has been inconsistent in its approach to decision-making on similar proposals within the locality of the appeal site. The examples cited by the applicant do not influence the appeal proposal, as they differ in both design and context.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the Council did not act unreasonably. Therefore, no wasted expense has been incurred by the applicant. An award of costs is not warranted.

S Sharp

INSPECTOR