



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/25/3370578

Pilford Cottage, Pilford Lane, Colehill, Dorset BH21 7AR

- 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 Lewis Hamer against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2025/01828.
 - The development proposed is garage conversion to create first floor level with linked extension to main dwelling, removal of conservatory, erection of flat roof rear/side extension with block paving to driveway and upgraded patio.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for garage conversion to create first floor level, with linked extension to main dwelling, removal of conservatory, erection of flat roof rear/side extension, with block paving to driveway, and upgraded patio at Pilford Cottage, Pilford Lane, Colehill, Dorset, BH21 7AR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/HOU/2025/01828, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of Pilford Cottage and the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on trees.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Pilford Cottage is a detached, two-storey dwelling located near to the hamlet of Broomhill. It is relatively visible from Pilford Lane when approached from Broomhill, however there is a reasonably mature hedgerow that does obscure views of the dwelling when approached in the opposite direction. It also benefits from a garage that is linked to the dwelling by a brick wall, open fronted wood store and gate. Broomhill consists of a mix of housing types including thatched cottages, bungalows and two storey dwellings.
4. The appeal scheme would result in the garage roof being raised however it would remain lower than the roof of the main dwelling. Whilst the garage is more visible than the dwelling when viewed from the public highway, it is set back considerably from Pilford Lane. Moreover, given the existing built form, including a wall which links the garage to Pilford Cottage, in my planning judgement, the appeal scheme would not be unacceptably greater in scale. Consequently, the appeal scheme

would not, to my mind, introduce an incongruous urban feature. Furthermore, the design of the appeal scheme would retain the existing garage roof form. It would also include rendering to reflect that seen in the design of the main dwelling. Thus, it would be read within the overall context of the existing built form.

5. Given all of the above, the appeal scheme would remain subservient to the main dwelling and would not to my mind result in unacceptable harm to the relatively rural character and appearance of the surrounding area. It therefore would comply with Policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy 2014 (the CS) insofar as it seeks to ensure developments are of a high quality as well as reflect their surroundings.

Trees

6. The Council in its second reason for refusal has highlighted concerns that insufficient information had been provided to adequately demonstrate that neighbouring trees on land immediately adjacent to Pilford Cottage and relevant root protection areas would not be harmed.
7. The appellant has provided a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement by GTree Ltd (the AMS) with their appeal documents. However, this did not form part of the evidence upon which the Council made its decision. Furthermore, interested parties have not been consulted upon the AMS therefore accepting the AMS may prejudice the interests of the interested parties. I have therefore proceeded to determine the appeal on the basis of the evidence upon which the Council made its decision.
8. There is limited substantive evidence before me to adequately demonstrate whether or not the appeal scheme would result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring trees and root protection areas. However, given the small scale of the appeal scheme, the extant development on the site and the consultee comments from the Arboricultural Officer, I am satisfied that the protection of the trees and root protection areas could be achieved by an appropriately worded condition.
9. Given the above, the appeal scheme would not result in significant harm to trees and would therefore comply with Policy HE3 of the CS insofar as it seeks to ensure that development does not harm the landscape character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

Appropriate Assessment

10. The appeal site lies within the zones of influence for the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site as well as the Holt and West Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Dorset Heathlands are an extensive network of lowland heath and the qualifying features of the Holt and West Moors SSSI includes dry heathland, wet heath which also include amongst other things the rare Marsh Gentian and Marsh Clubmoss as well as bog vegetation which notably contains the rare Brown Beak-sedge. These habitats support a rich and typical fauna for heathland birds, reptiles and invertebrates including amongst other species the Hobby Falco and Nightjar, the rare Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, Heath Grasshopper and Bog Bush Cricket.

11. It has been established that new residential development within the zone of influence of the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site and the Holt and West Moors SSSI would likely result in harm to the protected areas through additional recreational pressure either alone or in combination with other proposals.
12. The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document highlights, amongst other things, that extensions to residential dwellings where there is no net increase in dwellings i.e. extensions to houses are permitted to within 400 metres of the Dorset Heathlands without the need for mitigation.
13. Natural England has been consulted as part of this Appropriate Assessment and is content that no mitigation is required as the appeal scheme would not result in harm to the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site or the Holt and West Moors SSSI.
14. Accordingly, I conclude that given the appeal scheme is for extensions to an existing dwelling and would not result in a net increase in dwellings, it would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of either the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site or the Holt and West Moors SSSI.

Conditions

15. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions. I have amended the wording of suggested conditions for clarity and to ensure accordance with the tests set out in paragraph 57 of the Framework.
16. In addition to the standard time limit condition (1), I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans to provide certainty (2).
17. I have imposed a condition requiring the external materials of the proposal to match those of the existing building to prevent the erosion of the area's character. (4). A condition requiring the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement and accompanying tree protection plan is necessary to protect hedgerows and trees (3).
18. To prevent harm to ecology matters including protected species, I have attached a condition requiring the appeal scheme to be implemented in accordance with the lighting and enhancement measures detailed in the submitted Preliminary Roost Appraisal (5).
19. Finally, it is necessary to attach a condition ensuring the development is occupied for purposes ancillary to Pilford Cottage in the interests of living conditions of existing and future occupiers (6).
20. It is necessary for condition 3 to take the form of a 'pre-commencement' condition to have its intended effect regarding the protection of trees as well as hedgerows.

Conclusion

21. The material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

B Astley-Serougi

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 04 Rev D (Proposed Floor Plans), 05 Rev D (Proposed Elevations), 07 Rev A (Proposed Site, Block and Location Plans).
- 3) No site clearance, preparatory work or development shall take place until a tree protection plan and an arboricultural method statement in accordance with the British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or in an equivalent British Standard if replaced) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The arboricultural method statement shall include:
 - i) a specification for protective fencing to trees and hedges during both demolition and construction phases and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing;
 - ii) a specification for scaffolding of building works and ground protection within the tree protection zones;
 - iii) a schedule of tree work;
 - iv) details of the area for storage of materials, concrete mixing and any bonfires;
 - v) plans and particulars showing proposed cables, pipes and ducts above and below ground as well as the location of any soakaway or water or sewage facility;
 - vi) details of any no-dig specification for all works within root protection area for retained trees; and
 - vii) details of the supervision to be carried out by the developer's tree specialist.

The scheme for the protection of the trees shall be carried out as approved.

- 4) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
- 5) The development hereby permitted shall not be first brought into use unless and until the lighting, and enhancement measures as detailed in the Preliminary Roost Appraisal, by Cherry Tree Ecology Ltd, dated 5 March 2024, have been completed in full. The mitigation and enhancement measures shall be maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.
- 6) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential dwelling known currently as Pilford Cottage, Pilford Lane, Colehill, Dorset, BH21 7AR.

=====END OF SCHEDULE=====