
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2018

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/17/3183508
Plovers, Main Road, East Boldre, SO42 7WU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Moyse against the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 17/00482, dated 2 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a rear ground floor extension; a first floor extension; a replacement garage; new access gates and parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a rear ground floor extension; a first floor extension; a replacement garage; new access gates and parking space at Plovers, Main Road, East Boldre, SO42 7WU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 17/00482, dated 2 June 2017, subject to the following 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 the following approved plans: Drg Nos Moy/8A, Moy/24, Moy/34A, Moy/36, Moy/100, Moy/101B, Moy/103B, Moy/104B, Moy/105A and Moy/106.
 - 3) No development shall take place above slab level until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no further extension (or alterations) shall be erected other than those expressly authorised by this permission and which would otherwise be permitted by Classes A, B or C of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Forest South East Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Plovers is a detached bungalow set within a loose-knit ribbon of residential development along the east side of Main Road, with open Forest heathland to the west side of the road. It sits within the Forest South East Conservation Area (CA). The Authority's Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) identifies twelve character areas and describes the area as a whole being a mixture of buildings of varying ages and styles, but best known for its cob and thatched roofed cottages of the 18th and early 19th centuries and its small brick and slate roofed two storey houses of the later 19th century. Other features of importance to the historic landscape are the survival of the historic boundary banks and major trees, ditches, hedges and field systems that illustrate the many centuries of land usage. The CACA identifies that the historic character of the area is under pressure from, amongst other things, the loss of some of the smaller cottages through their expansion or replacement by large modern houses which do not respect the vernacular character or materials of the area, and incremental changes to traditional buildings. The appeal property is located within the East Boldre to East End character area which is formed by a strip of linear residential development over 4km long along the Forest edge, with dwellings historically either facing to the Forest or with a gable end onto the Forest or the road.
4. Plovers dates from the 1950s and is of no architectural or historic interest other than representing a residential plot facing the Forest within the linear historic pattern of development for the area. It is not a small, traditional cottage and the scale of enlargement that is proposed would satisfy the limits imposed by Policy DP11: *Extensions to Dwellings* of the Authority's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, adopted in 2010. These seek to ensure that the local distinctive character of the area is retained by providing a mix in the size and range of housing stock.
5. The original dwelling has been altered in a number of ways through incremental additions. It has an articulated form with an 'L-shaped' footprint, staggered elevations, and a stepped ridge despite its single-storey height. The proposal would include works that would effectively square-off the building's footprint to the rear; extend its forward projecting part at its northern end upwards to create an upper storey at this point; and to convert the hip ends to gables. In addition, an existing attached car port to the southern side would be demolished in favour of a new detached garage to be constructed to the rear.
6. The proposed works would unashamedly remodel and transform the existing appearance of Plovers. But this does not necessarily equate to harm. There would be an increase in bulk to the building through the addition of an upper floor in part, and an elongated ridge. However, the span of the dwelling would not increase across the width of the plot and I do not share the Authority's view that the new garage would unacceptably erode space to the south side of the building by removing an important visual break with the neighbouring plot. The garage would be significantly recessed behind the dwelling and would be

an obviously separate and subservient element that would contribute little to any perceived additional bulk, enabling the new profile of Plovers to dominate alone. Space to each side of the property would be evident and sufficient to ensure that the dwelling would sit comfortably on its plot without creating any sense of overdevelopment.

7. The additional height would be noticeable but the dwelling would be appropriately in scale. The new first floor element would have a modest width and would sit in harmony with a single-storey side wing; a building form that is not alien to the area. Whilst visually different to the existing dwelling, the proposed works would reflect its articulated form. Moreover, contrary to the opinion expressed within the officer's report that the works to the front would appear 'tacked on', I find that the overall composition of the dwelling would appear unified and coherent. Although it may be unconventional to extend upwards to the front, thereby creating a new addition that would be dominant and more prominent, I can detect no policy presumption specifically against such development. In this case the result would be a building that would appear compatible with the scale of dwellings along Main Road and comfortable in its setting. It would remain recessed well behind the road with no diminution of space to the front and set behind mature hedging and vegetation that would remain as established and important features of the site and wider locality.
8. The Authority accepts that the proposed materials would be acceptable, with an appropriate balance struck between traditional uses and contemporary styling. A suggestion that the works would introduce large amounts of fenestration that would create unacceptable amounts of light spillage towards the road and open forest beyond is unsupported by any substantive evidence. I am not persuaded that the 'window to solid ratio' of the walls to the front elevation would be overly extensive. Furthermore, the dwelling would remain set behind dense screening that is acknowledged within the officer's report. Any light spillage towards the forest would therefore be minimal and not excessive for a dwelling in this location.
9. I accept that contemporary architecture may not always sit comfortably within this rural setting. But in this case the proposal would not be overtly modern or harsh in its setting. The proportions and pitched roof form would reflect elements of the local vernacular, as would the cat-slide form of the roof to the porch, and the choice of materials. The resulting building would adequately reflect the established and diverse pattern of development along Main Road in terms of setting, scale, form and materials. Key character features of the historic landscape would be unaltered and overall, I find that the character and appearance of the CA would be unharmed and preserved, ensuring that its significance as a heritage asset would be unaffected.
10. Whilst the extensions may not avoid impacting on the scale and core of the existing dwelling, I find no merit in attempting to retain its current appearance, which is uninspiring and more sub-urban than rural in character. There would be a noticeable improvement to the appearance to the building overall. As such I find no conflict with the aims and objectives of the Authority's *Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document* December 2011 as it seeks to help achieve high standards of design in development proposals while retaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the natural and built environment. My

findings also lead me to conclude that there would be no conflict with DPD Policies DP1: *General Development Principles* or DP6: *Design Principles*, insofar as they promote high quality design that is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting. Neither do I find conflict with the part of Policy DP11 that seeks to ensure that extensions to dwellings are appropriate to the existing and its curtilage, or with Policies CP7: *The Built Environment*, or CP8: *Local Distinctiveness*, as they seek to protect, maintain or enhance important sites and features of the built environment, and safeguard the National Park's character.

Conditions

11. The Authority has suggested several conditions which I have considered against the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework and the national Planning Practice Guidance. Where necessary I have amended some of the wording for clarity.
12. A condition specifying the relevant drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area it is necessary to secure details of the proposed materials.
13. The proposal would increase the floor space of the existing dwelling by just under the 30% that is permissible under Policy DP11. I consider therefore that exceptional circumstances exist that would justify a condition restricting further extensions to the property, which would be necessary to avoid conflict with the aim of the development plan. However, I have been presented with no information to explain why this should apply to outbuildings that would be used for purposes incidental to the main dwelling and neither is there evidence to suggest that it would be possible to construct a new mezzanine within the property at some point in the future. I have therefore omitted these restrictions from the conditions that I have imposed.
14. Given the size of the plot and the domestic nature of the proposal, I consider it unlikely that materials, machinery or any resultant waste materials would be stored beyond the curtilage of the site. A condition regarding this matter is therefore unnecessary.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given, I find that the character and appearance of the CA would be unharmed and therefore preserved. In the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR