



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2022

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/21/3288303

Willow House, Copythorne Common, Copythorne SO40 2PG

- 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 Mr & Mrs Parker against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 21/00824, dated 7 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of an oak framed garden room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of an oak framed garden room at Willow House, Copythorne Common, Copythorne, SO40 2PG, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00824, dated 7 September 2021, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal accords with local policies that seek to limit the scale of extensions to rural dwellings in order to maintain a varied housing stock and minimise the impacts of buildings on the National Park.

Reasons

3. The host dwelling is a substantially large, detached dwelling set within a remote forest location within the National Park, with only one other near neighbouring dwelling. It has generous gardens to both front and rear.
4. The large dwelling is formed from three distinct elements, the central, presumably original cottage is a two storey brick building with double pitched roof. The western side wing is a two storey, gable fronted, timber-clad element at near right-angles to the host dwelling. The other element on the eastern side is a single storey, pitched roof, entrance wing extension, also in red brick.
5. The proposal seeks to add a lightweight, predominantly glazed garden room extension to the rear of the building to link part of the original cottage to the adjoining single storey element. The garden room would have a floor area of around 12 sqm and would have a flat roof with a central, hipped-roof, glazed lantern feature.
6. Policy 36 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) (Local Plan) sets out that extensions to dwellings outside the 'Defined Villages', the extension must not increase the floorspace of the existing dwelling by more than 30%. The dwelling is outside of any of the Defined Villages listed within the Local Plan and the scale of the extension is to be compared to the 'existing dwelling'

as it stood in 1982. The rationale behind the Policy is explained in the preamble as a means to retain the locally distinctive character of the New Forest's built environment, maintain a balance and mix of housing, including a stock of smaller sized dwellings.

7. From the undisputed evidence of the Council, the dwelling stood at 211 sqm in 1982 before extensions added around the late 1980s took it to a total floor area of 333 sqm. As such, the 30% extension tolerance permitted under the Policy was exceeded some time ago.
8. In view of the above, I can only conclude that, considered in numerical terms in the context of previous extensions, the proposal conflicts with Policy 36 of the Local Plan.
9. However, the appellant's case is that the Policy objective of maintaining a varied housing stock cannot be achieved by preventing the proposal because the dwelling is already substantial in scale and is likely to be beyond the financial means of a great number of potential purchasers, even before any modest extension of around 12 sqm is added.
10. The Council do not raise any concerns in relation to the siting, design or appearance of the extension, nor its visibility in a wider sense in terms of protecting the New Forest's built environment. In my view, the garden room extension would be discreetly sited on the northern elevation, it would be acceptably designed and the resultant dwelling would continue to be well-presented. I also noted that the dwelling currently has few rooms with large, glazed openings, which would make the proposal a welcome lightweight addition to allow a transition between home and garden.
11. Consequently, I do not regard that withholding permission for such a modest addition, considered relative to the original or current size of the dwelling, particularly in the absence of any other harms, would meaningfully contribute to meeting the objectives of the Policy.

Conditions

12. In addition to the statutory time limit condition, a plans condition is necessary in the interests of certainty. A condition is also necessary to ensure that materials of construction match those used in the existing dwelling.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. Taking all of the above into account, whilst the proposal raises a specific conflict with the development plan, in particular Local Plan Policy 36, it does not conflict with the development plan as a whole. In any event, I regard the other factors outlined above indicate that a decision should be taken other than in strict accordance therewith.
14. The appeal is, therefore, allowed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Block/Site Plan, Ref DR1
 - Site Location Plan, Ref DR2
 - Proposed, Ref 49029-5
 - Proposed, Ref 49029-6
 - Proposed Roof Plan, Ref 49029-7
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling, Willow House.