



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2026

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6000777

The Laurels, Road through Exbury, Exbury, Southampton, Hants SO45 1AH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Lizzie Anders against New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application reference is 25/00536FULL.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at The Laurels, Road through Exbury, Exbury, Southampton, Hants SO45 1AH in accordance with the terms of the application, reference 25/00536FULL 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 drawing nos TQRQM25128092513150 – The Laurels Location Plan, 021 – Ground Floor Plan Proposed, 023 – First Floor Plan Proposed, 025 – Roof Plan Proposed, 031 – All Elevations Proposed, 11758/02 - Existing Floor Plan, 11758/02 – Elevations.
 - 3) No development shall take place above slab level until samples or exact details of the facing and roofing materials and details of rooflights have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall only be carried out in accordance with the details approved.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal relates to a planning application that was not determined by the New Forest National Park Authority (the Authority) within the prescribed period. I note that the Authority would have refused planning permission should it have made a decision on the proposal. I have had regard to the parties' submissions in establishing the main issue which I set out below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the New Forest National Park (NP) as a nationally important landscape.

Reasons

4. The Laurels is a traditional semi-detached, 2-storey brick faced dwelling within the NP. It was originally built for the Exbury Estate as an estate cottage circa 1800 but has been extended since 1982 with a 2-storey addition at the rear. This extension has left the front elevation largely original. The original hipped roof, chimney stack and gable end are also intact. It is these features, rather than the rear extension and garden, that are of aesthetic and historical value and contribute to the setting within the NP. The attached dwelling, Ramblers, dating from the same time, has also been extended with a 2-storey addition at the rear. This extension projects significantly further rearwards than the appeal dwelling.
5. The proposal would be subservient in scale, location and design to the appeal dwelling because it would be only single storey, simply detailed and sited at the rear and not visible from public visual receptors. It would also be visually contained within a space against the existing dwelling and the significantly higher and deeper 2-storey extension at Ramblers. As such there would be no suburbanising effect or visual erosion of the NP's nationally important landscape character and appearance.
6. The proposal would result in additional habitable space being created but it is limited in scale and would not increase bedroom space and overall occupancy levels. It would not change the character or intensity of the use of the property as a 3 bed, semi-detached dwelling. As such it would not cause an imbalance in the range and mix of housing stock available. It would also not result in any harmful change to the contribution that the property makes as a small/modestly sized dwelling to the character and local distinctiveness of the NP.
7. The proposed additional floorspace conflicts with policy DP36 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (NFLP) because the total habitable floorspace of a small dwelling would exceed 100m² and there is no evidence before me of exceptional circumstances to meet genuine family needs. However, I afford this conflict limited weight because, for the reasons above, there would be no harm to the distinctive character of the built environment, nor the range and mix of housing stock available in the NP. There would also be accordance with policy SP17 of the NFLP which seeks to ensure that there is no erosion of the NP's local character or gradual suburbanising effect resulting individually or cumulatively from the proposal. Similarly, for the reasons I have given, there is also accordance with policy DP2 of the NFLP insofar as it relates to the effect of the proposal on the landscape character, amenity and natural environment of the NP. Finally, there is no conflict with DP18 of the NFLP which requires all new developments to achieve the highest standards for new design.
8. In reaching these findings I have had regard to the New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD 2022 (DGSPD) and its specific advice in paragraph 3.13 that the design and appearance of extensions should complement and be subservient to the main dwelling. I also, in reaching these findings, sought to further the statutory purposes of the NP as required by Section 11A(1A) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which was amended by section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. I have given great weight to conserving and enhancing the NP's landscape and scenic beauty as per the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework).

Other Matters

9. I note that policy DP36 of the NFLP has been carried forward through successive local plans for the area and that, when the NFLP was adopted in 2019, the examination inspector endorsed the policy as a useful tool in ensuring that extensions would not cumulatively erode the modest scale and rural character of dwellings. I also acknowledge that the policy is carried forward, as policy DP50, in the emerging New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2024 – 2043 (LPR). I afford the LPR limited weight as a material consideration given its pre-examination status. Furthermore, I have outlined in this decision why conflict with the policy is not determinative in this instance.
10. The appeal site is located within the Exbury Conservation Area (CA). The Character Appraisal prepared by the Authority for the CA identifies the appeal property as one of 35 buildings of local, vernacular or cultural interest, non-designated heritage assets. It is the historic and aesthetic values of the original part of the dwelling and its setting within a streetscene of other buildings dating from the same very late 18th and early 19th century period which contribute to both the CA's and the building's significance. I also noted the area's tranquillity which also contributes to the CA's significance.
11. The proposal's small scale and siting hidden from public view would mean that the significance of the CA and the building are unharmed. The character and appearance of the CA would be preserved. As such there would be accordance with policy SP16 of the NFLP which sets out that proposals should protect, maintain or enhance nationally, regionally and locally important sites and features of the historic and built environment. There would also be accordance with policy SP15 of the NFLP which advises that new development should avoid unacceptable environmental impacts on the NP and its special qualities, specifically referencing tranquillity as a quality.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. I have also imposed a condition requiring details of the facing and roofing materials to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Brick and slate have been specified on the application form but exact details are required to ensure that the materials complement those found on the existing building.
13. The Authority has also suggested a condition restricting permitted development rights. Such a condition, in this instance would not relate to the development under consideration and would be unreasonable in its extent of restriction.
14. The Authority has also suggested that a condition that prevents any external lighting to be installed on the site unless such proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by them. I acknowledge the intentions behind this suggestion in terms of protecting the NP's dark skies which are an intrinsic part of its landscape character. However, in this instance, such a condition would extend beyond the scope of development that can be controlled under this appeal. It is also not necessary because, whilst the proposal includes windows and rooflights, it would cover a part of the existing elevation that also includes patio doors and a

window. There would be no material change in the extent of openings on the rear elevation. The condition is unnecessary and unreasonable.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, having considered the development plan as a whole and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Sharp

INSPECTOR