

SIDMOUTH TOWN  
(Sidmouth)

07/0764/FUL

Target Date: 08.05.2007

Applicant: Mr & Mrs M Stamp  
Location: Cutlers Hill House, Higher Greenway Lane, Sidmouth  
Proposal: Extensions and alterations to dwelling

### **CONSULTATIONS**

#### County Highway Authority

No comment

### **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL**

Approve. As this is an extremely visible position, the Town Council would hope non-reflective materials are to be used.

### **WARD MEMBER(S)**

The initial comments of the Ward Member(s) are –

Cllr G Liverton

“Suggested Action: Support the application

In the event my recommendation and that of the planning officer differs, I wish the application to be referred to the Development Control Committee: Yes

Reasons For Action:

Although this is visible being on a hill I believe providing this house has non reflecting materials I see no reason for refusal.

There is room for this property and is something more modern, also an improvement to what is there now.

In the event that this application comes to Committee I would reserve my position until I am in full possession of all the relevant facts and arguments for and against.”

### **PLANNING POLICIES**

#### Government Guidance

PPS7 - Sustainable development in rural areas

#### Devon Country Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy CO3 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Policy CO6 – Quality of new development

## East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy S4 – Countryside protection

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy D1B – Sustainable Construction

Policy H10 – Extensions to Dwellings in Open Countryside

Policy EN1 – Development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

Cutlers Hill House is an isolated two storey cottage situated on rising ground against a backdrop of the Bulverton Hill plantation to the north west of Sidmouth. There are no neighbours and the property sits in a cultivated garden area of just under 1 hectare.

A public footpath follows the line of the north western boundary of the site and the access drive within the grounds of the house. The drive itself is over 100 metres long.

The existing house is a modest 2 storey property with a single lean-to attached garage and entrance lobby on the north side. The house was built in the 1940's and is timber clad with dark red tiles. The attached garage is rendered with a corrugated roof.

A plain gable east elevation is the main aspect of the house visible in the landscape.

Internal accommodation consists of a ground floor sitting room and kitchen/dining room, and a 2 first floor bedrooms and bathroom.

Total floorspace of the living accommodation within the house is approximately 90m<sup>2</sup>, excluding the garage and entrance lobby.

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development is to extend and redevelop the property to create a modern, energy efficient dwelling with a contemporary appearance.

The existing dwelling will remain but almost none of it will be visible. Two extensions in effect will be provided, including an extension to the west which will involve digging into the hillside.

The second extension will be to the south on a single level.

The existing garage and entrance lobby will be demolished.

The proposed ground floor of the dwelling will contain two bedrooms and entrance hall and the first floor (upper ground floor) will provide a sitting room, dining room, guest bedroom and kitchen externally at this level the new southern wing will have a balcony and area of decking.

The extended dwelling will change in appearance significantly by the introduction of 2 opposing asymmetrical roof forms.

The outline of the original dwelling is indicated on the attached plans.

Total floor space in the extended dwelling will be approximately 225m<sup>2</sup>, not including external balcony or decking areas.

External walls will be render and timber cladding, with either natural slate or contemporary metallic roof covering. The balcony will have stainless steel railings on steel columns.

Other elements of note include thermally efficient panels and passive solar heating from larger window openings and possible solar panels and a heat pump.

## **CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

The dwelling is a prominent feature in the landscape when viewed from one or two key locations. The attached photographs show the views from the east. The site is also visible close to from the public footpath.

The proposed development raises 2 key policy issues.

Local Plan Policies D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) and H9 (Extensions to Dwellings in Open Countryside) are particularly relevant, as are Structure Plan Policy CO3 and Local Plan Policy EN1 with regard to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In terms of design it is accepted that the existing building is of little architectural merit and the proposed extended dwelling will have an improved appearance, whilst incorporating energy efficiency measures.

Nevertheless, the resulting dwelling will be substantially larger than the existing. This is a particular concern in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Local Plan Policy H9 contains criteria relating to size and impact on the landscape which are not met by this proposal. In addition paragraph 5.51 in the Local Plan, which is the preamble to Policy H9, also contains the following statement,

'If not carefully controlled, the cumulative impact of development that extends or replaces dwellings can lead in the long term to the urbanisation and erosion of the character of countryside areas. Also, as such development tends to increase the size of dwellings, it could reduce the number of smaller dwellings at the cheaper end of the market, thus creating an imbalance in the housing stock prejudicial to meeting local needs. For these reasons, it is considered important to control the size of extensions and replacement dwellings. Notwithstanding this consideration small dwellings can be extended to meet modern housing requirements whilst maintaining their status as modest dwellings capable of making a contribution to local housing need.'

It will be noted that this proposal is a substantial increase in size. This point is accepted by the applicants and in support they also state that the additional space has been used to create larger sized rooms and will only result in creating a 3 bedroom property in place of a 2 bedroom house. The extensions have also been designed to minimise the impact from the main distant viewpoints and it is argued that they will sit comfortably in the landscape.

A further point made by the applicant is that the proposals could be revised by reducing the width of the south extension without reducing its visual impact from the east and only result in a 12% increase in floorspace. This argument is based on accepting the existing attached garage as part of the existing floorspace.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The existing dwelling is small, but prominently situated in the landscape. The proposed changes will result in the dwelling being more visible and substantially increased in size. The whole character of the property will change and in this instance the possible improvement in appearance will not outweigh the objections insofar as the increase in size and visual impact is concerned.

The criteria of Local Plan Policies EN1 and H9 with regard to scale have not been addressed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE for the following reason

1. The proposed development will result in a substantial increase in size of the existing small dwelling, completely changing its character and resulting in an increased impact on the landscape which is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposals will therefore be contrary to the provisions of Structure Plan Policy CO3 and Policies EN1 (Development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and H9 (Extensions to Dwellings in Open Countryside) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2006.
2. The proposed extensions will result in a dwelling which will be substantially larger than the original dwelling. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policy H10 of the East Devon Local Plan.

### List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.