

COTLEIGH
(Otterhead)

06/1526/FUL
(FULL)

28 July 2006

Applicant: Mr Rodway

Location: Hawkins House
(Grid Ref: 321182 102715)

Proposal: Demolish dwelling and sheds and erection of replacement dwelling
and detached garage/store

Consultations

County Highway Authority
No comments

Environment Agency
No objections subject to standard
observations.

Environmental Health Officer
No comments received.

Representations

Original plans:
11 letters of objection have been received.

Summary of Objections

- Loss of house with historic interest
- New house, suburban and out of keeping with AONB
- New house built off footprint and orientated differently to existing
- No evidence that house will be more energy efficient and sustainable
- Landscaping inadequate
- Condition of cottage apparent and has been bought as a commercial venture
- Name of property been changed to disguise intentions and confuse local residents
- Other residents have proposals for new dwellings turned down

3 letters of support, one from a former occupant, stating:

"I back the proposal as if it had not been the new owner it would have been me and my family doing exactly the same thing and then the villagers would not have uttered a word".

Amended plans:

3 letters of objection on following grounds –

- still out of character and do not address reasons for objection
- make appearance worse

2 letters of support on the following grounds –

- A bit of thought has gone into the new design and will save energy and harmful emissions.
- The cost of remedying the numerous problems would not be cost effective, a better solution would be a new energy efficient replacement house.
- Design will fit perfectly into its surrounding.

Parish/Town Council

Original plans:

"Cotleigh Parish Council strongly objects to this application because:-

1. It contravenes the following clauses of the East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011
 - a) Page 21 Policy S4 (Countryside Protection)

b) Page 223 Policy C4 (AONB)

2. It involves the unnecessary demolition of one of the few remaining historical 19th century workman's cottages left in Cotleigh, and therefore the loss of part of the village's heritage.
3. Four previous planning applications to build new houses in Cotleigh have been refused.
4. The proposed new house will be built on a new site albeit close to the footprint of the one to be demolished.
5. The track past the house is rarely used and is not considered hazardous.
6. Contrary to the views expressed by the applicant, the proposed new house neither 'enhances and complements the old' nor does it 'enhance the natural beauty and distinctive character of the area'. With its porches, balcony and glazed garden room, it is basically an urban pasticcio, and does not blend with local rural buildings or the environment.
7. If the application is approved, it would create a most unfortunate precedent, not only in Cotleigh, but in villages of East Devon.
8. The Council consider that restructuring and renovation of Hawkins House (formerly Dovecot) would produce a larger modern dwelling yet retaining in part the character of its former use and Cotleigh's character.
9. If this application is approved, the Council strongly recommend that a clause in the approval should state that the existing Hawkins House (formerly Dovecot) should be demolished within 2 – 3 months of the completion of the new house.
10. The Council note that the applicant's wife and daughter are employed by East Devon District Council in its planning department.

Amended plans: comments not yet received.

Ward Members

Councillor D Key:

11 July 2006 - "Object to the application. This is a substantial property and should not be demolished but can be extended if necessary."

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."

24 July 2006 – " Object to the application.

I am very concerned with the remarks made in the supporting statement I have received and wondered why they purchased the property.

Structure, damp, design, uneven floor surely would have been seen when viewing this property, there are no flat parts of roofing, the extensions are monopitch and can easily be identified by the pictures supplied.

According to the Parish Council the previous owner sold the property due to losing her husband after living there for several years and wanted to downsize into Honiton not because of any defects.

I am still of the opinion that this house should remain in situ with alterations and extensions if needed which could be dealt with by a good professional builder.

If the Planning Officer differs from my recommendation I wish the application to come to Development Control Committee.

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.”

Applicant

Building extended to present form in 1940's.

Layout makes building impractical and unsafe.

Building single un-insulated walls, built against elevated road and is damp.

Roofs need replacing.

Outbuildings cramp turning area.

Cost of renovating building exceeds cost of new build.

Wish an innovative building, not a standardised design.

Elderly relative will be living with them and accommodation designed to be flexible.

Native planting will be carried out.

Location

The property is in a rural location approximately 1 km north east of Cotleigh and 400 m east of Holmsleigh Green. It is set within a scenic valley within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The property itself is a cottage of traditional form, which has two large linked two storey extensions on the rear. The extensions have monopitch roofs and these and the main roof have been turnerised. The house was built against the road and there are a linear set of outbuildings to the north. The overall effect is one of an overextended property with an unsympathetic and non-traditional form.

The Proposed Development

The proposal is a full application for a two storey replacement dwelling. It is set to the side and rear of the existing dwelling and is orientated to make the most of the view and afternoon-evening sun. The proposal is for a house constructed in block and render with a slate roof and timber windows. The front is traditional in appearance with an open porch and farmhouse style chimney. To the rear a two storey element is proposed with glazed panels and a Juliet balcony at first floor, and a sun room running along one half of the building. The existing outbuildings are to be demolished and a triple garage constructed in their place.

Planning Policy

Devon Structure Plan (2001 – 2016)

- C03 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- C06 Quality of new development

Adopted East Devon Local Plan

- D1 Design and Local Distinctiveness
- EN1 Development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- S4 Countryside Protection
- H9B Replacement of dwellings in the open countryside

Observations

The property belongs to an employee of East Devon District Council.

The proposal to demolish the existing dwelling has generated concern that it ought to be retained. The applicants advise that the roof is in need of replacement, the two large rear extension constructed in the 1940's need removing and reconstructing, all the windows need replacing and the property does not have the benefit of insulation and damp proofing. Whilst this is not unusual in older properties, the requirements of building regulations and the difference in VAT between renovation and new build means it is often more cost effective to build a new dwelling rather than renovate/partly rebuild the existing house. This is not an uncommon scenario.

In planning terms the house is not listed or in a conservation area, nor does it affect the setting of a listed building, and it can be demolished without planning consent, provided notification is given to the Local Authority. Whilst the concerns of the Ward Member and Parish Council are noted, there are no overriding reasons why the existing house cannot be demolished.

The key planning issues are the design of the property and the impact on the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Design Approach

Following discussions with the applicant the design of the house has been amended to incorporate more elements of vernacular architecture. The front has been amended with a projecting gable and lean to porch being removed, a more varied pattern of fenestration included and a traditional porch added. The front now has more of the character of a traditional farmhouse. The rear of the property has a larger area of glazing facing south west, to take advantage of the views and solar warmth. This approach has been encouraged by officers.

Impact of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The new house will achieve an acceptable standard of design incorporating features of vernacular dwellings characteristic of the area. It will be an improvement over the existing misshapen dwelling and is not considered detrimental to the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Other Matters

The only other issue of substance raised by the objectors is that "local residents" have been refused new building development. It is understood that this is referring to a proposal for an agricultural worker's dwelling which was refused as it did not meet the specified tests for such properties and other greenfield development. This is an entirely different situation to a replacement dwelling.

Conclusion

Considerable concern has been raised over the loss of the traditional cottage, and the remnants of outbuildings, but the building has no significant architectural or historic interest and the Council could not insist on its retention. The proposed replacement dwelling is of good design and incorporates vernacular features characteristic of the area. Policy allows the construction of the new house off the footprint of the existing and re-orientating the house to take advantage of the views is understandable and good practise. The house in the proposed position is no more intrusive than the existing as it enables the owners to live in their present property until the new one is habitable.

It is considered reasonable to prevent further uncontrolled extension of the property by removing the permitted development rights.

Recommendation APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

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1. No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include provision for tree and shrub planting, hard landscaping and any walling, fencing or other boundary treatment. The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within one year of the substantial completion of (the buildings, conversion, change of use). Any plants or trees which, within five years from the date of the substantial completion of (the buildings, conversion, change of use), die, become in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority irrecoverably diseased or damaged or are removed, shall be replaced during the next planting season following their demise with specimens of a similar size and species unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason – In the interests of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area)
2. Prior to commencement of the works hereby approved, samples of the roofing material shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with approved details.  
(Reason – To protect the character of the countryside and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no works shall be undertaken within Schedule 2 Part 1 Classes A, B, or E for the enlargement, improvement or other alterations to the dwelling hereby permitted, other than works that do not materially affect the external appearance of the buildings, or for the provision within the curtilage of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool, [other than any enclosure approved as part of the landscape management scheme]  
(Reason - The space available would not permit such additions with detriment to the character and appearance of the area or to the amenities of adjoining occupiers.)#
4. On or before the day on which the dwelling hereby permitted is first occupied for residential purposes, the existing dwelling on the site shall cease permanently to be used for residential purposes and shall be demolished forthwith and the site of the demolished dwelling shall be used as part of the curtilage of the new dwelling.  
(Reason - In the interest of the character and appearance of the locality.)

**List of Background Papers**

The file containing all letters, consultations, and documents referred to in the report.