

YARTY  
(Membury)

07/1637/FUL

Target Date: 02.08.2007

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Marsh

Location: Hazledene, Membury, Axminster

Proposal: Extensions and alterations to include dormer windows

### **CONSULTATIONS**

#### County Highway Authority

No objections

### **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council supports this application and consider the design of the proposed dwelling to be less "incongruous...and detrimental to the character and appearance of the...AONB" than the existing building.

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

The initial comments of the Ward Member (Councillor Diviani) are:

My preliminary thoughts on this application are that it should be approved. I consider the idea that a building which lacks merit can have merit is tautologous (some of the previous reasoning, now subject to appeal.) This new design is a considerable improvement on the existing structure and will provide suitable accommodation for this farming family. If a contrary view is being taken, I would be grateful that you advise me that I can furnish you with the necessary policy numbers etc. Looking at the Appeal stats, it strikes me that the Inspectorate is taking a much more relaxed view on development and extensions.

In the event that this application should come to Development Control Committee I would reserve my position until further argument for and against has been presented.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

<b>App no. Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
07/0020 Alteration and Extension	Refused- Appeal withdrawn	16.02.2007

### **PLANNING POLICIES**

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

C06 – Quality of New Development

C03 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

EN1 – Development Affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

H10 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside

S5 - Countryside Protection

### **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The site refers to a detached chalet bungalow located on the edge of the village of Membury within open countryside and within an AONB. The dwelling lies centrally within its domestic curtilage, with fields to the east and south, the highway to the north and a neighbouring dwelling to the west.

The dwelling has a distinctive character. The character is informed by its locally distinctive full gables and relatively uncluttered roof elevations. The dwelling has a simple pitched form in-keeping with the rural setting with a rear gable set down from the roof. There is also a flat roof side extension on the south elevation and a dormer window in the front roof pitch. The dwelling is a mix of render, brick and weatherboarding under a pan tiled roof. The dwelling has a modest footprint which is positioned centrally in the plot. It currently has a floor area of approximately 208 square metres (2238 square feet).

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposal seeks full planning permission for extensions to the dwelling. The proposed development includes the following aspects:

- The replacement of the front dormer window with three smaller pitched dormer windows, set down from the ridge.
- A brick chimney on the north elevation extending to 7m in height
- Replacement kitchen windows in the front ground floor elevation
- Replacement of the flat roof side extension with a pitched roof, two-storey extension the height of which will match the dwelling. The extension would be joined by a small link on the SE corner.
- Installation of four pitched roof dormer windows to the extension. Two dormer windows would be sited on the south elevation and two would be sited on the north elevation.
- Installation of first floor windows to the west and east elevations of the proposed extension.
- Erection of a conservatory on the west (rear) elevation.
- Increase the height of the rear gable by 1m so that it projects from ridge height including the installation of a first floor window facing west.
- All new materials to be a mix of brick and render to match the dwelling and matching tiles to the roof.

### **CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

This is a resubmission of a previously refused application- (Application reference 07/0020). This was the subject of an Appeal which has subsequently been withdrawn. No explanation has been offered as to why the appeal was withdrawn. The application sought alterations and extension to the dwelling. The proposed development included the following aspects:

- The replacement of the front dormer window with two smaller pitched dormer windows, set down from the ridge.
- A brick chimney on the elevation extending to 7m in height
- Replacement kitchen windows in the front ground floor elevation
- Replacement of the flat roof side extension with a pitched roof, two-storey extension the height of which will match the dwelling. The extension would be joined by a small link on the SE corner.
- Installation of four pitched roof dormer windows to the extension. Two dormer windows would be sited on the south elevation and two would be sited on the north elevation.
- Installation of first floor windows to the west and east elevations of the proposed extension.
- Erection of a conservatory on the west (rear) elevation.
- Increase the height of the rear gable by 1m so that it projects from ridge height including the installation of a first floor window facing west.
- All new materials to be a mix of brick and render to match the dwelling and matching tiles to the roof.

The previous application elicited no comments from the Parish or the Ward Member.

The application was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extension to the south elevation, by virtue of its height, footprint, bulk, design and appearance, lacks architectural cohesion with the host dwelling and serves to dominate the host dwelling causing an erosion of the original character and appearance of the dwelling. The extension would also appear visually intrusive into the surrounding countryside and represent an incongruous development that would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the landscape designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
2. The proposed series of dormer windows on the host dwelling and the extension would serve to clutter the first floor and collectively erode the relatively simple form and appearance of the dwelling at first floor level and appear urban in character, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the dwelling. These elements, by virtue of their urban and cluttered appearance would also detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
3. The proposed chimney on the east elevation of the dwelling, by virtue of its material finish, height, siting and appearance would detract from the front elevation of the host dwelling to the detriment of its character and appearance. The proposed chimney, by virtue of its height, siting and appearance would also be incongruous and visually intrusive to the surrounding landscape designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**The starting point for consideration is to what extent the previous reasons for refusal have now been overcome.**

The resubmission is therefore substantially the same as that which was refused except that a chimney has been moved from the eastern elevation to the northern elevation and a third dormer has been added on the eastern elevation.

The main issues with the application concern the impact that the proposed development would have on the character and design of the property, the landscape and its setting and neighbour amenity.

#### Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Dwelling:

Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan allows extensions provided that they do not:

- 1) Detract from the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or landscape; or
- 2) The dwelling plus the extension combined will be substantially larger than the original dwelling in terms of size, scale, height or mass; or
- 3) The creation of a separate dwelling unit; or
- 4) Within the East Devon and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, harm the natural beauty of the landscape.

The proposed extensions, if permitted will result in a dwelling with a floor area of approximately 300 square metres (3228 square feet) as compared to the existing area of approximately 208 square metres ( 2238 square feet). The percentage increase in floor area amounts to around 69%.

The dwelling has a distinctive rural character, informed by its simplicity of architecture and subservient rear gable and although there are small projecting elements, the main building remains dominant amongst the other projecting forms. The proposed extension to the south elevation is not integral to the host dwelling, but linked at each corner. The resultant buildings would appear therefore to be two separate blocks which overlap at each corner. The large mass perpendicular to the host dwelling would match the height of the host dwelling and by virtue of its large footprint (11.5m x 6.5m) result in a significant over-extension of the property which has no architectural cohesion to the host dwelling. The extension would be significantly detrimental to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

The series of dormer windows on the proposed extension and existing roof slope serve to detract from the relatively uncluttered roof slope as existing and erode the rural character of the dwelling. The collective dormer windows would give a cluttered and rather urban appearance to the dwelling which would also erode the original character and appearance of the dwelling. While extensions and alterations to properties, particularly where they have a modest impact on the public realm are acceptable, they should maintain a degree of architectural cohesion and balance.

The rear projecting gable would be raised and project from the ridge. The proposed gable element would lose its subservient appearance and become of equal height to the roof which is also significantly detrimental to the original form of the dwelling, particularly when viewed from the north and south. This element would be disproportional to the host dwelling and constitute poor design causing an erosion of the original form, character and appearance of the dwelling. Such a result is considered contrary to the aims of planning policy and design guidance, which encourages good quality and sympathetic design solutions.

The large brick chimney is now considered to be acceptable given that it would be on the northern gable end.

There is no objection to the adjustment of the windows to the front elevation of the dwelling.

There is no objection to the conservatory which is at ground floor level and of an appropriate scale and material finish.

### Impact on the AONB:

The site is well-screened from the highway to the north but relatively open from the other surrounding directions, particularly the south. The first floor extension would present a significant block that in terms of massing, height and footprint would appear significantly incongruous to the surrounding landscape.

The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where landscape has the highest degree of protection. It is considered that the collective dormer windows and the first floor extension to the south elevation would represent obtrusive development that would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the surrounding landscape designated as an AONB.

### Impact on Neighbouring Dwelling

There is one neighbouring dwelling to the west of the site. The dwelling is located 21m from the rear elevation of the host dwelling. There is a vertical timber boarded fence separating the gardens and the east elevation of the neighbouring property is blank. The host dwelling currently has no first floor windows facing west towards the neighbouring property. Therefore the neighbouring dwelling and its rear garden has a high degree of privacy. The pair of proposed first floor windows by virtue of their proximity, elevation and position could overlook the rear garden of the neighbouring property. However the proposed window on the rear of the host dwelling would be a bathroom window and could therefore be conditioned to be obscure glazed to mitigate potential overlooking. The first floor window on the rear of the extension would be approximately 20-25m from the rear garden but would serve a hallway, which is not a primary living area. The combination of distance and the function of the window in a hallway would also be likely to be acceptable.

The proposed development would not be overbearing to the neighbouring dwelling.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The site is located outside of any built up area boundary within the countryside. Within the countryside development should be controlled to protect and conserve its attractiveness and will normally only be permitted where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities of the area. It is considered that the proposed extensions and alterations would represent a discordant and inappropriate form of development and its scale and size would dominate the main bungalow and would represent an over large extension within the open countryside. Reasons 1 and 2 set out below are a repeat of the previous reasons attached to the refusal notice dated 16/2/07. Officers note the comments of the Ward Member who refers to the potential of losing the decision on appeal. Officers take the view that design is important. This is reflected in government advice backed up by the need for Design and Access statements in sensitive areas such as AONBs. Planning authorities still have a duty to reject poor design. The fact that the existing building is not outstanding in design does not mean the LPA should grant a significant amount of new extensions which are completely out of scale.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extension to the south elevation, by virtue of its height, footprint, bulk and design, lacks architectural cohesion with the host dwelling and serves to dominate the host dwelling causing an erosion of the original character and appearance of the dwelling. The extension would also appear visually intrusive into the surrounding countryside and represent an incongruous development that would

be detrimental to the character and appearance of the landscape designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposed development is considered contrary to the aims of national planning guidance, Policy CO6 (Quality of New Development) and C03 (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) of the Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 and Policies H10 (Extensions to dwellings in the Open Countryside), Policy EN1 (Development Affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011.

2. The proposed series of dormer windows on the host dwelling and the extension would serve to clutter the first floor and collectively erode the relatively simple form and appearance of the dwelling at first floor level and appear urban in character, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the dwelling. These elements, by virtue of their urban and cluttered appearance would also detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposed development is considered contrary to the aims of national planning guidance, Policy CO6 (Quality of New Development) and C03 (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) of the Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 and Policies H10 (Extensions to dwellings in open countryside), Policy EN1 (Development Affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011.

#### List of Background Papers

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