



Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 9/11/21

gan J P Tudor BA (Hons), Cyfreithiwr
(ddim yn ymarfer)

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion
Cymru

Dyddiad: 20/01/2022

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9/11/21

by J P Tudor BA (Hons), Solicitor
(non-practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh
Ministers

Date: 20/01/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L9503/A/21/3282631

Site address: Coed-Derw St. Brides Hill, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire SA69 9NP

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- 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 Andrew Evans (St Brides Spa Hotel Ltd) against the decision of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing garage/workshop, and other extensions. Modernisation of existing building and new two storey extension to form a change in use to provide Key worker accommodation (C3 class) which comprises, 18 No. self-contained studio rooms. The proposal provides 9 No. parking spaces at the front and rear of the property with one being a disabled space. There is also provision for six cycle stands at the rear.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant advises that following the refusal of the proposal which is the subject of this appeal, an amended scheme was submitted to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA), which has subsequently been approved. Therefore, I have considered that approved scheme (NP/21/0251/FUL) as the fallback position (the fallback).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with regard to outlook; and,
 - the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a roughly rectangular parcel of land comprising a large, detached, two-storey residential property, dating from the late 19th or early 20th century. It has a two-storey rear annex and various later additions including a front dormer, side garage and

two single storey lean to extensions, along with a three storey element and fire escape stair, to the rear. The additions appear to have facilitated its use as holiday accommodation in the past, like several other buildings along the road. The house is one of a line of substantial properties on the western side of St. Brides Hill, most of which benefit from generous rear gardens. It is located within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNP).

5. It is proposed to demolish the existing garage/workshop and rear additions and replace them with a new two storey rear extension which would, in combination with the main house, provide a total of 18 self-contained studio rooms along with associated parking spaces to the front and rear. The building would be used to provide accommodation for staff working at the nearby St. Brides Spa Hotel.

Living conditions of neighbouring occupiers

6. Policy 30 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 (adopted September 2020) (LDP) indicates that development will not be permitted where it has an unacceptable adverse effect on amenity, particularly where, among other things, it would have a detrimental effect on the quality of the environment currently enjoyed by people living, working or visiting the PCNP. The policy's supporting text defines 'amenity' as those elements in the appearance and layout of town and countryside which make for a pleasant life rather than a mere existence.
7. The proposed flat-roofed addition would extend about 15.9m into the rear garden. Although it would replace existing extensions and its footprint would be marginally smaller, those existing extensions are mostly single storey whereas the new addition would be two-storey and extend well beyond them. While, unlike the existing additions, it would be set in from the side boundaries with planting also proposed, the overall depth, height, scale and massing of the new extension would result in a dominating and significant overbearing impact on the outlook from the rear windows and gardens of the adjacent properties on either side, particularly from 'Springfield' to the north.
8. Indeed, the appellant accepts that the proposed extension would breach the 45 and 25 degree lines in relation to a rear kitchen window at Springfield, albeit to varying extents (as illustrated on Drawing Nos 1801-PL-07 Rev A and 1801-PL-03 Rev A). While not conclusive, such tests can be a useful guide in assessing whether a proposal is likely to cause harm. I note that the appellant submits that, given the distance from the relevant window, any harm would be negligible, but the accepted breaches nonetheless offer support to the view that the extension would be overbearing. In any event, as the extension would rise well above boundary walls, it would appear prominent from neighbouring properties, notwithstanding existing and proposed planting. Moreover, even aside from views from rear windows, given its scale and proximity, the substantial two-storey built form of the proposed extension would also have a significant overbearing impact on occupiers of Springfield when using their garden.
9. I conclude, therefore, that the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with regard to outlook. It follows that, of the various policies cited by PCNPA, in this regard the proposal would most directly conflict with LDP Policy 30, the relevant content of which is set out above.

Character and appearance

10. As noted above, most of the sizeable properties along this part of St Brides Hill benefit from spacious, mainly open rear gardens, which positively contribute to the character of the area. While the appeal property has already been extended to the side and rear, a reasonably sized area of open garden remains. The proposed extension would stretch

further into the rear garden than the existing additions, which are, in any case, mostly single storey and abutting side boundaries. They would be replaced by a more central two storey flat-roofed block with a footprint roughly similar in size to the main house, albeit differently oriented. While its contemporary design and materials would be acceptable, the cumulative impact of its overall scale and bulk would result in a much more substantial built form in the garden compared with the existing additions at the property.

11. Although several neighbouring properties have been extended to the side or rear and have outbuildings, they still appear to enjoy significant open garden spaces. In contrast, the scale and form of the proposed extension, attached to the main house, together with its rear parking and turning area would appear significantly larger and occupy much of the garden. Aspects of the design of the existing additions to the appeal property are unprepossessing and their removal would potentially improve the appearance of the rear elevation. However, overall, the scale of the proposed replacement structure would negatively affect the otherwise pleasant, open character created by the outdoor spaces to the rear of most properties in the immediate vicinity. While public views from the street would be limited, the sizeable development and its adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area would be apparent from various surrounding properties.
12. The appellant refers to extensive development to the rear of the Claremont Hotel to the north, but that property is at the end of the row and forms part of a small, discrete enclave of hotels, along with the Main House Hotel and the Merlewood Hotel, which are served by their own access road. Therefore, the character and position of that group of buildings is distinct from Coed-Derw, which is set within a row of houses characterised by spacious and relatively open rear gardens.
13. Given the above, I conclude that the proposed development would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would fail to comply with Policies 8, 14, 29 and 30 of the LDP which together seek to protect the special qualities of the PCNP by, amongst other things, safeguarding locally distinctive characteristics, avoiding development that is of a scale incompatible with its surroundings, and/or that is visually intrusive.

Conclusion

14. It is acknowledged that the proposal would provide accommodation for employees of a nearby local hotel business, which contributes significantly to the economy of the area. However, those and other benefits, including the replacement of some poorly designed existing additions to the rear of the property, do not outweigh the identified harm to living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and to the character and appearance of this part of the PCNP. The proposed development would, therefore, conflict with the LDP considered as a whole. Moreover, an alternative or amended scheme that would not cause significant harm may be possible.
15. Indeed, as noted above, an amended scheme with a reduced number of studio rooms and parking spaces was subsequently approved by PCNPA. While I have considered that fallback position, amongst various design changes, the depth of the extension has been reduced and part of it is set in further from the northern boundary. Overall therefore, I consider that the fallback scheme is materially different from the appeal proposal and would not be as harmful, in terms of its effects on living conditions and on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the existence of the fallback would not justify allowing the appeal proposal.

16. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
17. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act). I consider that this decision is in accord with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Minister's well-being objectives as required by section 8 of the Act.

JP Tudor

INSPECTOR

Richborough Estates