



Appeal Decision

by Paul Selby BEng (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 27/03/2024

Appeal reference: CAS-03197-V2V5T0

Site address: Rose Cottage, Grange Wood, Knollbury, Magor NP26 3BX

- 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 Carlo Bertorelli against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/2023/01617, dated 14 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 10 January 2024.
 - The development is Proposed new boundary wall and gateway to dwellinghouse.
 - A site visit was made on 18 March 2024.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the appeal was made, a new version of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) has been published (edition 12). This largely consolidates previously published content, and I am satisfied that it does not raise any new matters which would have a significant bearing on this decision. Whilst the appeal application is not supported by a green infrastructure statement (GIS), as sought by PPW, I am dismissing the appeal and so did not invite the submission of a GIS.

Main Issue

3. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site accommodates a detached residential property which faces a paved driveway and has a rendered flank wall fronting the highway. Located close to the M4 motorway in visual range of the settlement of Undy, the site lies near to other detached dwellings situated within generous plots. Other developments, including wind turbines, also form part of the surrounding landscape. Nonetheless, the immediate area is of tangibly rural character, being influenced primarily by the modest width of the lanes from which the site is accessed, which are predominantly bounded by hedgerows. Consequently, the experience of crossing the motorway in a northerly direction is one of leaving a settlement and entering the countryside.
5. Travelling north, the dwelling is prominently sited at the junction of two lanes. Its siting indicates that either it or a precursor has been present on this plot for a considerable time. Although the property has evidently been renovated and extended, its simple

pitched roofed form, regular fenestration and rendered finish has a benign influence on the rural character of the immediate area.

6. The appeal scheme comprises two walls to either side of a vehicular access point. The northernmost wall would be set back slightly from the dwelling's flank, and neither would be of significant length. However, both walls would be situated close to the highway and would be readily visible on the approach from the south. Whilst not wholly enclosing the driveway, their notable height, angular geometry, solid form and featureless finish would appear overwhelmingly austere. Their solidity would considerably urbanise the plot, jarring with the rural context to an extent which would substantially harm the area's character. The similar rendered finish to the dwelling would not alleviate this harmful visual effect.
7. Other dwellings nearby feature wholly or partially enclosed driveways. However, their front boundary treatments differ materially to that proposed, being composed of materials of more rustic appearance, including soft landscaping, and/or by having greater visual permeability at eye level. Whilst I have considered whether mitigation in the form of landscaping could acceptably overcome the identified harm, I am not able to conclude that this would be feasible, given the walls' notable height, their proximity to the carriageway and the need to secure acceptable visibility at the access point.
8. I acknowledge that the walls would increase the level of privacy within the appellant's property but any benefits of the proposal in this regard would not overcome the identified harm. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the area's character and appearance, in conflict with the objectives of policies DES1 and LC5 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan, which amongst other things seek for developments to respect local character and distinctiveness and avoid unacceptable adverse effects on the special character or quality of the landscape.
9. I have had regard to the other matters raised but none alters my decision. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
10. 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. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

Paul Selby

INSPECTOR