



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2024

**by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

Decision date: 16 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/24/3343016

Hill Brow Farm, Verrington Lane, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 8BN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Giles and Nicola Garton against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02541/HOU.
 - The development proposed is a 1.5 storey extension and replacement of lean-to conservatory to garden room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a 1.5 storey extension and replacement of lean-to conservatory to garden room at Hill Brow Farm, Verrington Lane, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 8BN, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/02541/HOU and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawing numbers 1 of 13, 2 of 13, 3 of 13, 4 of 13, 5 of 13, 6 of 13, 7 of 13, 8 of 13, 9 of 13, 10 of 13, 11 of 13, 12 of 13 and 13 of 13.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building in accordance with the details on the application form.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Hill Brow Farm is a detached bungalow located in open countryside adjacent to several farm buildings which form part of the wider site. Access is via a track through a sparsely scattered small group of detached dwellings. It was originally permitted as an agricultural worker's dwelling in accordance with policies which restricted new dwellings in the countryside. The condition

- restricting occupation of the dwelling to an agricultural worker was removed on appeal in 2015.
4. The relevant policies in this case include EQ2 and HG8 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) (the local plan). EQ2 relates, among other things, to the design quality of development and requires development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the district. HG8 sets out restrictive criteria for replacement dwellings and extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside. It allows for the latter if the extension would be of a size and design appropriate to the landscape character of the location and would not be disproportionate to the scale of the original dwelling.
 5. The existing bungalow is of limited architectural merit with a simple form, built from reconstructed stone under a tiled roof. The loft area is unsuitable for conversion due to the internal roof trusses. The appellants describe the proposal as 1.5 storeys whereas the Council describes it as two storeys.
 6. Although it would have two full height storeys internally, the first floor would be partly contained within a new roof at a level equivalent to the loft and the overall height of this roof would be no more than 1m higher than the main ridge of the bungalow. It would not strictly be subservient to the main part of the bungalow. I consider that, although the design lacks some character, it would be acceptable in the context of the existing building. It would be relatively modest in proportion to the size, scale and footprint of the existing bungalow and would not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building. It would improve the standard of the accommodation which is somewhat cramped internally.
 7. It would be located in the gap between the bungalow and the large double garage to the side which would partially screen the northwest elevation and it would therefore blend in reasonably well with the variety of forms of the various outbuildings and farm buildings within the wider site.
 8. The bungalow is in a secluded location surrounded by well established dense vegetation at the end of a long access track where it is not visible in public views. Insofar as it would be viewed at all, it would be seen in the context of the mix of farm and other buildings and would not appear detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing building, or the wider landscape.
 9. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or the wider landscape and that it would be consistent with local plan policies EQ2 and HG8.
 10. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Conditions

11. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the tests set out in the Framework. A condition detailing the plans is necessary to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to the materials is necessary in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR