

Planning Committee Report LA01/2016/1072/F	23rd May 2018
PLANNING COMMITTEE	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets
Outcome	Pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
Lead Officer	Development Management & Enforcement Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	N/a

<u>No:</u> LA01/2016/1072/F	<u>Ward:</u> MACOSQUIN
<u>App Type:</u> Full Planning	
<u>Address:</u> 804 Seacoast Road, Castlerock, Coleraine, BT51 4SD	
<u>Proposal:</u> Proposed new two storey replacement dwelling	
<u>Con Area:</u> n/a	<u>Valid Date:</u> 12.09.2016
<u>Listed Building Grade:</u> n/a	
Agent: 2020 Architects, 49 Main Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6AN	
Applicant: Mrs Anne Blakely, 804 Seacoast Road, Castlerock, Coleraine, BT51 4SD	
Objections: 0	Petitions of Objection: 0
Support: 0	Petitions of Support: 0

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal- www.planningni.gov.uk

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in sections 7 and 8 and resolves to **REFUSE** planning permission subject to the reasons set out in section 10.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located on the Seacoast Road between Downhill and Benone and comprises an existing roadside dwelling set within a larger grass site. There is a static caravan to the rear of the existing dwelling and a small outhouse in the south-western corner.
- 2.2 Access to the site is from an existing gravel drive on the western side of the dwelling. The existing dwelling is single storey in scale with a gable frontage onto the road. There appear to have been later, smaller additions made to the dwelling. The site occupies a slightly elevated position in relation to the road, but in itself is relatively flat. A timber post and wire fence runs along the western site boundary. The eastern site boundary is defined by a timber post and wire fence. A grass bank defines part of the roadside boundary.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is characterised by modest detached dwellings and small holiday homes which are a feature of the Seacoast Road. The adjacent site to the west of the application site has been cleared with a set of foundations.
- 2.4 In the Northern Area Plan 2016 the site is located in the countryside, outside of any defined settlement development limits. The site is located within the Binevenagh AONB.

3 RELEVANT HISTORY

There is no planning history on the site itself. A search of the surrounding area showed:

C/2005/0752/F Replacement Dwelling 802 Seacoast Road, Downhill, Co. Londonderry Permission Granted: 28.06.2006

4 THE APPLICATION

- 4.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for a new two storey replacement dwelling.
- 4.2 This application was submitted in September 2016 by the then agent, ATP Architects. There was communication with ATP Architects in an attempt to seek an acceptable design solution up until December 2016. On 22nd December 2016, Council received a letter from the applicant informing that a new agent, 2020 Architects, were now being employed. On 8th February 2017, the case officer sought an update from 2020 Architects, with revised plans received on 1st March. On 31st March, the case officer contacted 2020 Architects and advised of the concerns that officers had with the proposal. A meeting then took place on 4th May 2017 where these concerns were further explained. Further revisions were received on 2nd June with feedback provided on 19th July. On 25th July the agent sought an additional meeting. However as a meeting had already taken place, the agent was implored to substantially amend the proposal as articulated on previous occasions. On 4th August the case officer confirmed that a flat roof would be unacceptable on this site, consistent with the approach on other proposals within this locality. Further revised plans were received at the end of August. On 2nd October, the agent was advised about ridge heights and what may be acceptable, but it was reaffirmed that a full 2 storey dwelling is likely to be unacceptable. Further amended plans were received at the end of October. In February 2018 the agent was informed that the plans were still unacceptable, and the application was referred to the Planning Committee. Revised plans were then received in March 2018 and formally submitted 12th April 2018. The latest plans are the plans received 13th April 2018.

5 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

5.1 External

Neighbours: There are no objections to the proposal

5.2 Internal

Environmental Health Department: No objections

NI Water: No objections

DFI Roads: Amended Plans required to show all roadside detail within the extent of the visibility splays (120m on each side of the access)

DAERA Water Management Unit: No objections

Loughs Agency: No objections

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The development plan is:
- Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP)
- 6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.
- 6.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies.
- 6.5 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.
- 6.6 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the “Considerations and Assessment” section of the report.

7.0 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The Northern Area Plan 2016

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Planning Policy Statement 2: Natural Heritage

Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking

Other Guidance:

Building on Tradition “A sustainable design guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside”

8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to: principle of development; scale and massing; design; integration and rural character; impact on the AONB.

Principle of Development

8.2 The policies outlined in paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS and Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 state that there are a range of types of development which are considered acceptable in principle in the countryside. Other types of development will only be permitted where there are overriding reasons why that development is essential and could not be located in a settlement, or it is otherwise allocated for development in a development plan. The application was submitted for a proposed new two storey replacement dwelling. The proposal is therefore assessed against Policy CTY 3.

8.3 Policy CTY3 of PPS21 states that planning permission will be granted for a replacement dwelling where the building to be replaced exhibits the essential characteristics of a dwelling and as a minimum all external structural walls are substantially intact. CTY3 also states that for the purposes of this policy all references to “dwellings” will include buildings previously used as dwellings.

8.4 The dwelling to be replaced exhibits the essential characteristics of a dwelling, with external structural walls substantially intact at the date of the site inspection. The building is single storey with the roof intact, and internally divided rooms. The proposal satisfies this part of the policy.

8.5 Proposals for a replacement dwelling will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are met which are assessed and considered in the following paragraphs:

-the proposed replacement dwelling should be sited within the established curtilage of the existing building, unless either (a) the curtilage is so restricted that it could not reasonably accommodate a modest sized dwelling, or (b) it can be shown that an alternative position nearby would result in demonstrable landscape, heritage, access or amenity benefits;

8.6 The proposed replacement dwelling is sited within the established curtilage of the existing dwelling, but would be positioned further back into the site. It complies with this first criteria.

Scale and Massing

-the overall size of the new dwelling should allow it to integrate into the surrounding landscape and would not have a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building;

8.7 On approaching the site from the west, along Seacoast Road, critical views of the site open up as you approach the neighbouring site at No. 802. Approaching the site from the east, views are slightly obscured by existing vegetation to the east of the site but open up as the site is approached. Critical views are also achieved from the railway line along this scenic stretch.

8.8 Following the receipt of the latest set of amended plans, date received 13th April 2018, the design proposes a new dwelling which, by virtue of its scale and mass, would have a visual impact significantly greater than that of the existing single storey dwelling. The design of the proposed dwelling, while reducing the overall proposed ridge height from a previous height of 6.9m to 6.5m, still retains the features and characteristics of a two storey dwelling.

8.9 The fenestration arrangement to the front elevation includes large picture windows at first floor level which exacerbate the overall scale and massing of the proposed new dwelling. The new dwelling would fail to integrate into the surrounding landscape.

8.10 The overall size of the new dwelling does not allow it to integrate in the landscape and has a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building. The proposal therefore fails to meet this criterion.

Design

-the design of the replacement dwelling should be of a high quality appropriate to its rural setting and have regard to local distinctiveness;

8.11 While design should not be arbitrarily dictated, it is important to ensure any proposed designs are appropriate to their setting in line with policy. To this end “Building on Tradition” guidance was published in 2012; the purpose of which is to address current trends in relation to poor standards of design that, if left unchanged, will gradually erode what is valued and considered special about our environment.

8.12 This design guide considers a number of themes relating to rural design and specifically deals with replacement opportunities. Paragraph 5.4 of this guidance outlines the forms generally considered appropriate. In doing so, it does not apply a narrow approach, rather it states that our countryside contains a wide variety of building shapes and forms mainly comprising the long, low form of the narrow gable farm house, as well as the two storey house and one and a half storey cottage. What is common to these various forms is that they tend to be fairly simple and comprise key regional aspects as outlined in 5.4.1 including long and low buildings, few add-ons, vertical emphasis to gables, narrow plan and 35-55 degree roof pitch. The guidance also outlines a number of commonly occurring elements that can result in poor or unacceptable design and which should be avoided including complex house shapes, complex roof shapes, large scale, awkward form, dormers within the roof, mix of dormer types, excessive mix of bay windows and roof dormers and chimney breasts that project from the gable. The design guide asserts that replacement projects will tend to be most successful where they defer to the form and shape of the building they are replacing. The design guide provides a fairly wide scope in relation to what is considered appropriate design.

8.13 Various design revisions have been sought throughout the processing of the application as set out in Paragraph 4.2. The current design of this dwelling reads as a two storey dwelling, which appears too dominant and prominent on such a sensitive site, notwithstanding the roof height is 6.5 metres above finished floor level. This is achieved as

the dwelling has a shallow roof pitch which creates a horizontal, rather than vertical, emphasis to the gables which is unacceptable.

8.14 The design fails to reflect the unique coastal setting of Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is characterised by modest detached dwellings and holiday home buildings, a feature along this stretch of the Seacoast Road. The scale and dominance of glazing to the first floor is considered inappropriate, and fails to result in a design which reflects the scale of the dwelling that is being replaced, and the unique character of the surrounding area.

8.15 Furthermore, the current proposal fails to provide an appropriate design which responds to the character, distinctiveness and coastal setting of this location. The scale and mass of the proposal, with its two storey appearance and low roof pitch, creates a design which lacks simplicity or subtlety associated with good quality rural design. It has similarities to a modern caravan, perched upon a single storey plinth.

8.16 The proposal fails to meet this criterion in the policy due to the scale and design the proposal, in that, the proposal has a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building. Its design is not appropriate to the rural area, as set out in Paragraphs 8.13-8.15, or have regard to the local distinctive coastal setting along this section of the Seacoast Road.

-all necessary services are available or can be provided without significant adverse impact on the environment or character of the locality;

8.17 NI Water was consulted in respect of this application. There is a public water supply and foul sewer within 20m of the proposal. Consultation and application to NI Water is required to determine how proposals can be served and to obtain approval to connect. All necessary services are available and can be provided without an adverse impact on the character of the locality. This part of the policy is met.

Road Safety

-access to the public road will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.

8.18 Further to consultation with DFI Roads, a revised 1:500 scale plan based on an accurate ground survey showing all roadside detail within the extent of the visibility splays (120m on each side of the access) is required. DFI Roads also require three parking spaces indicated within the site with the appropriate turning space. As the splays are not currently indicated on the site location plan an amended site location plan is also required. As the principle of development was not considered acceptable no further information was requested. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy AMP 2 of PPS 3.

Integration and Rural Character

8.19 Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 and paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS state that all proposals must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings. In terms of integration and the impact on rural character, the proposed new dwelling would be a prominent feature in the landscape as a result of its scale, mass and inappropriate design. The design fails to reflect the distinctive characteristics of the setting and would fail to blend with the existing landform and natural features of the site. Given the limited vegetation on the site the proposal would fail to suitably integrate within the site and the wider landscape, and would result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the area. The proposal is contrary to Policy CTY13 and Policy CTY 14 of PPS 21. Critical views are as set out in Paragraph 8.7.

Impact on the AONB

8.20 The site is located in the Binevenagh AONB. Policy NH 6 of Planning Policy Statement 2 – Natural Heritage states that planning permission for new development within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will only be granted where it is of an appropriate design, size and scale for the locality and all the following criteria are met:

a) the siting and scale of the proposal is sympathetic to the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in general and of the particular locality; and

b) it respects or conserves features (including buildings and other man-made features) of importance to the character, appearance or heritage of the landscape; and

c) the proposal respects:

- local architectural styles and patterns;
- traditional boundary details, by retaining features such as hedges, walls, trees and gates; and
- local materials, design and colour.

As outlined in Paragraphs 8.11-8.16 the design of the proposal remains unacceptable. The proposed design, along with its size and scale of the dwelling are not considered appropriate in this location and is unsympathetic to Binevenagh AONB. The proposal fails to respect the distinctive features and character of the surrounding landscape. The proposal has no regard or respect of the local architectural styles and patterns. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy NH 6 of PPS 2.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal is considered unacceptable in this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016 and other material considerations. The proposed design of the replacement dwelling creates a significantly greater visual impact than the existing building. Its size, scale, and detailing, is not appropriate to its rural setting and fails to have regard to the local distinctiveness and AONB location. The access and parking arrangements are unsatisfactory. Refusal is recommended.

10 REFUSAL REASONS

1. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.73 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policies CTY1 and CTY3 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the overall size of the proposed replacement dwelling would have a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building; and the design of the replacement dwelling is inappropriate to its rural setting and does not have regard to local distinctiveness; and the access to the public road will prejudice road safety.
2. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.70 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY13 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposed building is a prominent feature in the landscape; the proposed site is unable to provide a suitable degree of enclosure for the building to integrate into the landscape; the design of the proposed building is inappropriate for the site and its locality; and therefore would not visually integrate into the surrounding landscape.
3. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 6.70 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 14 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the building would, if permitted, be unduly prominent in the landscape and would therefore result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the countryside.
4. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.187 of the SPPS and Policy NH 6 of Planning Policy Statement 2, Natural Heritage in that the development, if permitted, would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of this designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
5. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not prejudice road safety in accordance with Policy AMP 2 of Planning Policy Statement 3 – Access, Movement and Parking.

Site Location Map

