



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by **C Cooper-Young MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001802

St Just, Bashley Common Road, New Milton, Hampshire BH25 5SG

- 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 Mrs Elinor Davies against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is 25/00324FULL.
 - The development proposed is single storey side extension and loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of the proposal from the planning application form, which varies from that on the decision notice and appeal form. I have taken this description of development, as there is no evidence that the change has been agreed.
3. The appeal site is within the New Forest National Park (the National Park). Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended) requires me to seek to further the purposes specified in section 5(1) of the Act. This includes the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
4. The appellant contends that the loft conversion is not development as outlined at section 55(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act), but rather an operation taken not to involve development, as detailed at section 55(2). However, the loft conversion is described as forming part of the proposed development on the application form and accompanying plans subject of the above referenced planning application, considered and refused by the New Forest National Park Authority (the Authority), and the subsequent appeal, which is before me.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are;
 - 1) whether the proposed extensions and alterations adhere to the local strategy for extensions to existing dwellings, and;
 - 2) whether the proposal would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the New Forest National Park.

Reasons

Local strategy for extensions

6. The appeal site comprises St Just, a semi-detached dwelling set back off the highway, in a rural location on the outskirts of New Milton. St Just is a two-storey, render-finished dwelling with concrete roof tiles, parking to the side, and garden areas to the side and rear.
7. Policy DP36 of the Local Plan New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) (LP) seeks to limit the cumulative size of additions to dwellings in order to safeguard the locally distinctive character of the New Forest and ensure the retention of a balance in the housing stock. For dwellings which are not small dwellings and are outside the defined villages, as is the case with the appeal property, the policy states that extensions must not increase the floorspace of the existing dwelling by more than 30%.
8. Paragraph 7.82, of the supporting text for Policy DP36, explains that the term 'existing dwelling' means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use postdates 1 July 1982.
9. The Authority outline that the floorspace of the existing dwelling was 90.3 square metres (sqm), whereas the appellant approximates the floorspace of the existing dwelling at 100sqm. In these scenarios, the result of a 30% increase would equate to be approximately 27sqm or 30sqm.
10. St Just has previously been extended. Cumulatively, the previous enlargement of the property (side porch and conservatory in 2014) and the appeal proposal would give rise to a total additional floorspace of approximately 37sqm. This would represent either a 41% or 37% increase in the amount of floorspace of the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1982. Whilst Policy DP36 does not refer to loft conversions specifically, the appeal scheme would extend the floorspace of the existing dwelling.
11. As such, I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal, when considered cumulatively against either the Authority's calculation of 90.3sqm or the appellants of 100sqm of existing floorspace, would fail to comply with the local strategy for extensions to existing dwellings and exceed the 30% increase allowed under Policy DP36.

National Park

12. The appellant states that only the roof ridge and gable end are visible from the highway, therefore only limited aspects of the development would be visible in the public realm. However, Policy DP36 seeks to minimise both the impact of buildings on the local distinctive character of the built environment, through imposing size limits to extensions, and preserve the range and mix of housing stock available within the National Park. The Policy, therefore, has a strategic element.
13. The development proposes to replace a relatively small bedroom with a staircase and double en-suite bedroom within the loft space and extend the existing porch. The appellant outlines that the alterations to the living accommodation would improve the functionality of the dwelling and not add any significant value to the property. However, I have no evidence before me of St Just's current value, nor

any estimated value following the proposed works. As such, I attribute little weight to these matters in determining this appeal.

14. I appreciate that the design of the proposed extension and alterations would reflect the context of the host dwelling. I also accept that the proposal is relatively modest in scale and the use of the dwelling may not intensify as a result of the proposal.
15. Taken in isolation, the impact of the proposal would be localised, and the development would not be harmful to the wider landscape. The proposed development would therefore have a neutral effect on the landscape.
16. However, the incremental increase could, taken together with other similar development, incrementally undermine the objectives of the Policy with potential to undermine both the character and appearance of the National Park and thereby chip away at its purpose.
17. In coming to this finding, I have had regard to the statutory duty, which provides that, amongst other things, a relevant authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. I therefore find that the proposal would be contrary to my statutory duty.

Other Matters

18. My attention has been drawn to the extension of adjacent properties namely, St Mawes and Kingscliffe. However, I am unaware of the particular planning history for these sites, or the dates that these extensions were undertaken, and there is limited other information before me outlining the full circumstances under which they were completed. Therefore, I cannot draw any direct comparison with the appeal proposal.
19. It has also been highlighted that, at present, the owner of St Just also owns land in the immediate vicinity of the site which includes stabling, field shelters and an all-weather ménage, thus taking the potential sale value of the property beyond that of a small dwelling. In terms of Policy DP36, St Just is not a small dwelling. Moreover, it is feasible that the equestrian land could be sold, separating it from the ownership of St Just.
20. I note that the Parish Council does not object to the proposal. However, support, or a lack of objection, to a scheme is not, in itself, a reason to allow development. I have in any case, determined this appeal on its own particular merits, having regard to planning policy and practice.

Conclusion

21. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict.
22. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

C Cooper-Young
INSPECTOR