

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Bryony Hanlon

Parish: Tavistock **Ward:** Tavistock North

Application No: 1846/20/HHO

Agent:

Mr Edward Persse
EJFP Planning Ltd.
49 Bannawell Street
Tavistock
PL19 0DP

Applicant:

Mr & Mrs Symons
12 Watts Road
Tavistock
PL19 8LF

Site Address: 12 Watts Road, Tavistock, PL19 8LF

Development: Householder application for demolition of stone garden wall and creation of single-storey kitchen extension, widening of drive entrance.



Recommendation: Refusal

Reasons for call-in:

Cllr Moody has called the application to Committee due to his view that “the wholehearted support by the Tavistock Town Council of the application for the reasons given, their recognition of the high standard of the heritage reported submitted by the applicant, the support of the neighbouring residents, the subservient nature of the extension relative to the house and wall, and the existence of numerous other more dominant extension which have been historically added to other dwellings in Watts Road with approval of the LPA”.

Reasons for refusal:

The proposed extension and the new metal gate by reason of their scale, massing and design are considered harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, contrary to adopted policies; SPT1 (2iii, 3v) Delivering sustainable development, SPT2 (10) Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities, SPT11 Strategic approach to the historic environment, SPT12 (4, 5) Strategic approach to the natural environment, DEV20 (2, 3, 4) Place shaping and the quality of the built environment, DEV21 (1, 2, 3, 6) Development affecting the historic environment, DEV22 (1, 2, 5, 6) Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, DEV23 (1, 2, 3, 7) Landscape character, the guidance contained within the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2020, policies P3 and C2 of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including but not limited to paragraphs 127, 130, 184 and 189-202.

Key issues for consideration:

Design, scale and massing, neighbour amenity, highways safety, impact on the Tavistock Conservation Area and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

Site Description:

The site is located within the built form of Tavistock, c. 0.5km north west of the town centre. The site falls within the Tavistock Conservation Area and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site. The site hosts a single, semi-detached dwelling with off road-parking and turning to the north and a large garden to the south. The principal architectural elevation faces south to take advantage of the elevated views over Tavistock. The north elevation faces Watts Road but there is a degree of separation from the road and the site is enclosed by a stone wall, punctuated with the existing vehicular access. The dwelling is a grand building, with a strong vertical emphasis and a traditional placement and proportion of fenestration. The building is finished in painted render and set under a slate roof.

The Proposal:

The applicant wishes to widen the existing vehicular access by removing a short section of stone wall and moving the existing stone pier; a new wider metal gate would replace the existing timber five bar gate. The applicant also wishes to demolish a stone wall within the courtyard to the north of the dwelling to accommodate a new kitchen extension. The extension comprises a lean-to design with a monopitch roof that connects to the main dwelling and a small, flat-roofed section at its northernmost extent, which provides a lobby and storage cupboards. The scheme contains patent glazing within the monopitch roof section of the proposal surrounded by a slate roof; the flat roofed section is proposed to be finished with either lead or a standing seam metal roof. The proposal includes PPC aluminium windows and doors and is proposed to be finished in painted render.

Consultations:

- County Highways Authority No comments received
- Town Council Support
- WDBC Heritage Officer Object

The possible extension of this property in this location has been the subject of considerable discussion along with the possible widening of the vehicle entrance.

The widening of the entrance would be acceptable provided the gate pier was either re-located or re-built in identical form with its distinctive cornice and capping. It is not clear that this is guaranteed. The existing rural field gate is not appropriate but the proposed design is also lacking the kind of status which would reflect the quality of the dwelling and location. This proposal does not preserve or enhance the contribution the entrance makes to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The fact that the villas on Watts Road were designed to face south over the town is part of their essential character. The yards to the north have always been used for stores and ancillary structures. In this case the substantial stone wall is a survival that appears to have served to hide the service yard and also have formed part of a store structure in the 19th century. This could have informed the design process, either incorporating the wall or re-using stone in a positive manner. The removal of the wall is a loss of a character feature within the conservation area.

The form of the proposed design is awkward, with the flat roofed element having the appearance of being 'stuck on'. Modern materials are proposed but do not in themselves give a distinct identity that is suggestive of architectural quality. The proposal also involves the removal of effectively all of the rear wall at ground floor level which is a loss of integrity of the building as a heritage asset within the conservation area.

For these reasons the proposals would result in 'less than substantial harm' to the house as a heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to the Tavistock Conservation Area. Such harm is contrary to DEV21 as well as the relevant NPPF paragraphs.

With regard to the World Heritage Site the development of the middle class aspirational villas of Watts Road, Glanville Road and elsewhere does reflect the growth of Tavistock during the 19th century. Whilst it is difficult to identify direct links between these developments and individuals active in mining the villas do make a recognisable contribution to the WHS as part of the OUV Attributes pertaining to 'Mining Settlements and Social Infrastructure', whoever actually lived there. Policies P3 and C2 of the WHS Management Plan are particularly applicable along with DEV22.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Representations:

Representations from Residents

Two letters of support has been received and include the following points:

- I am writing in support of the above planning application. Having looked at the plans associated with the proposed development it is my view that they are entirely in keeping with the character of Watts Road. This proposed development has a small flat roof that would be hidden behind the boundary road and a subtle pitched roof that will be visible.
- There are several properties with much more significant flat roofed extensions already on the street, for example No 6. No 10 has the end gable of a garage clearly visible over the road-side boundary wall. None of these developments detract from the character of Watts Road and they add to the eclectic mix of Victorian designs.
- These types of development help to keep the properties in line with modern family living which in turn contributes to sustaining our community. In my view this is to be encouraged as long as the developments do not detract from the street's unique character which I do not believe this does.
- We are writing in relation to the Planning Application referenced above proposing an extension to the existing property. As residents of the same road, we would like to express our support of the intended extension.
- Our understanding is the initial application comprised a flat roof, similar to those existing, and built in recent years on similar properties on the same road. It is possible to observe various different examples of property enhancement and development on Watts Road.
- In our opinion, the extension design does not impinge or diminish from the character of the property. The proposals are not excessive in height or size and are reserved in comparison with other extensions already granted approval. We are therefore supportive of this planning application.

Relevant Planning History

Planning Application Reference	Proposal	Site Address	Decision
9891/2007/TAV : TCA	Works to trees in a Conservation Area for the removal of lower branches from a Eucalyptus	12 Watts Road Tavistock Devon PL19 8LF	No Objection: 07 Mar 07
00394/2014: TCA	Works to trees in a Conservation Area for works to a Eucalyptus tree at 12 Watts Road:- i) the raising of the crown over the road to give a 5.2m clearance ii) a crown reduction up to 3m back to good growth points. All works to BS 3998.		Tree Works Allowed: 15 May 14
0167/18/TCA	T1: Eucalyptus - Removal of limb on North side at approx 5 metres from ground level extending towards power cables. Crown lift lower branches up to 6 metres from ground level.	12 Watts Road Tavistock Devon PL19 8LF	Tree Works Allowed: 18 Jun 18
2964/18/TCA	T1: Eucalyptus - Fell, due to nature of species of tree and potential for it to further outgrow its position which may cause problems to already compromised wall, post box, public footpath and services, previously been discussed with Alex Whish.	12 Watts Road Tavistock Devon PL19 8LF	Tree Works Allowed: 08 Oct 18
1120/19/HHO	Householder application for demolition of stone garden wall and creation of single storey kitchen extension; Widening of drive entrance.	12 Watts Road Tavistock Devon PL19 8LF	Withdrawn
2164/19/PRH	Pre-application enquiry for proposed removal of stone garden wall, widening of gate entrance, creation of single storey extension	12 Watts Road Tavistock Devon PL19 8LF	Pre application (Partial Support): 08 Aug 19

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development/Sustainability

The site is located within the built form of Tavistock and hosts an existing residential dwelling; the principle of development is therefore established. However, the site is located within the Tavistock Conservation Area and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, so any development must conserve and enhance the character and appearance of those heritage designations.

It is acknowledged that the applicant has engaged in dialogue with the LPA through the Pre-Application process. The applicant was advised that the current applicant could not be supported and were offered the chance to revise design of the extension and the replacement gate. The applicant declined to revise the scheme and confirmed that the application should be determined on the basis of the plans as submitted.

Heritage and Design

Watts Road is characterised as a “spacious residential suburb, with good examples of paired mid to late 19th Century Italianate villas set back from the street, with large gardens”, (p. 64 Tavistock Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2009). Number 12 Watts Road itself is considered to be a non-designated Heritage Asset, as referenced within the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and the Devon Historic Environment Record. The 19th Century villa is also recognised as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, along with the other dwellings in Watts Road (p. 52 TCACA, 2009). Positive buildings are defined as “good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and

variety” (p.52 TCACA, 2009). This area of housing is recognised as part of the 19th Century expansion of Tavistock, which at the time began to benefit from “profits derived principally from copper mining royalties” (pp. 65-69, World Heritage Site Management Plan).

It is acknowledged that the principal architectural elevation faces south and that the northern elevation facing Watts Road, is of a much simpler design. The applicant has referred to the northern elevation as a “service elevation” within their Heritage Statement and has noted the presence of other extensions on the northern elevation of dwellings along Watts Road. It is acknowledged that there are other extensions along Watts Road, however, these are of varying ages and not all of these represent high quality design that is required by the current policy framework. While the principle of development on the northern elevation of no. 12 Watts Road is accepted, it is not considered that the current proposal is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, as noted by the Council’s Heritage Officer.

The extension comprises a lean-to design with a monopitch roof that connects to the main dwelling and a small, flat-roofed section at its northernmost extent, which provides a lobby and storage cupboards. The scheme contains patent glazing within the monopitch roof section of the proposal surrounded by a slate roof; the flat roofed section is to be finished with either lead or a standing seam metal roof. The proposal includes PPC aluminium windows and doors and is finished in painted render. The main body of the extension (i.e. the lean-to section) is largely acceptable; it is subordinate to the host dwelling and of simple form and detailing. However, the flat roofed section, with its clerestory window bears little relation to the extension or to the host dwelling, resulting in a slightly awkward proposal that appears forced into the limited space available in the northern courtyard. It should also be noted that the loss of the kitchen wall is classed as demolition in a Conservation Area and as such, requires careful consideration and justification, although it is acknowledged that this element of the scheme will not be visible. During the Pre-Application process the applicant was advised that any opening within the wall should be restricted to a double door only, rather than the complete loss of the wall. In this context, it is noted that the wall between the existing kitchen and the extension has been completely removed, eroding the legibility of the original floorplan and its allocation and configuration of space in relation to the function of each room. In totality, the proposal fails to “have proper regard to the pattern of local development in terms of style, local distinctiveness, siting, layout, orientation, visual impact, views, scale, massing, height, density, materials, detailing, historic value, landscaping and character” as required by policy DEV20 (2, 3, 4) and to deliver “high quality architectural design appropriate to its landscape context” as required by DEV23 (1, 2, 3, 7) and paragraphs 13.6-8, 13.11-12 and 13.15 of the SPD.

It is noted that the Town Council support the scheme and that a letter of support has been received, which states that the flat roofed section of the proposal will be hidden from public view, that there are a variety of styles of extension already present within Watts Road and that the development helps to keep the property in line with modern family living. It is acknowledged that there are a variety of extensions and alterations present within Watts Road and that views of the flat roofed part of the extension will be limited from within the public realm. However, while the harm will be limited in that it is perhaps not widely visible within the street scene, it is important to recognise that the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site are designated Heritage Assets in their own right. This means that they benefit from a level of protection within planning policy that reflects the components of their significance, not simply their visual appearance. The comments regarding the needs of family living are noted, however, dwellings in Conservation Areas are subject to greater restrictions than those outside of it and not all dwellings can be altered to suit their respective occupants.

Officers are mindful of the duty noted at Section 72 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising planning functions. It is considered that the harm to the Conservation Area would be “less than substantial” (para 196, NPPF, 2019) and therefore must be balanced against any public benefit arising from the proposal. The construction of the extension could benefit the local economy through increased employment and spending, but this would be modest due to the very small scale of the development. However, this benefit does not outweigh the

resultant long term harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, which is considered contrary to DEV21 (1, 2, 3, 6) and DEV22 (1, 2, 5, 6), paragraphs 17.1-17.10, 17.27-17.28, 17.35-17.60 of the SPD, policies P3 and C2 of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and paragraphs 127, 130, 184 and 189-202 of the NPPF.

Highways/Access

The site benefits from an existing vehicular access point leading directly onto Watts Road and it is noted that the access is narrow when compared to the width of modern vehicles. It is considered that the widening of the access from 2.24m to 2.89m represents a modest change and the applicant has clearly indicated that the existing stone pier will be retained within the proposal and simply moved eastward. It is considered that this element is acceptable, subject to a “record and replicate” type condition to ensure that the stone piers are sensitively resited during the construction process. It is also noted that as the proposal seeks only to widen an existing access, the proposal is unlikely to result in an increased risk to highways safety.

However, the new gate as proposed by the applicant is not considered acceptable. The applicant was advised during the Pre-Application process that a solid gate would not be acceptable as it would appear hostile to the street scene and that a lightweight metal gate would be the preferred option. Such a gate would also be considered an improvement on the current agricultural-style five bar gate. Unfortunately, while the gate is indeed metal and of an open design, the horizontal emphasis and utilitarian design does not reflect the status of the host dwelling as a high status building of historic importance. This element faces directly onto Watts Road and would be visible within the street scene. As such, this element fails to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. Once again, it is considered that the harm to the Conservation Area would be “less than substantial” (para 196, NPPF, 2019) and therefore must be balanced against any public benefit arising from the proposal. The construction works and fabrication of the gate could benefit the local economy through increased employment and spending, but this would be modest due to the very small scale of the development. However, this benefit does not outweigh the resultant harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which is considered contrary to DEV21 (1, 2, 3, 6) and DEV22 (1, 2, 5, 6), paragraphs 17.30-17.31 of the SPD, policies P3 and C2 of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and paragraphs 127, 130, 184 and 189-202 of the NPPF.

Neighbour Amenity

Due to the siting, design and orientation of the new fenestration within the east elevation of the new extension, in combination with the presence of an existing boundary wall, it is unlikely that the proposal will have significant detrimental impacts on neighbour amenity for the occupants of no. 14 Watts Road through overlooking. It is also noted that while there is a small courtyard belonging to no. 14 Watts Road on the east side of the shared boundary wall, the principal private amenity space is provided to the south of the dwelling. No letters of representation have been received during the public consultation process. As such, the proposal is not considered to give rise to significant detrimental impacts on neighbour amenity and the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of DEV1 and DEV2.

Conclusion

The proposed extension and the new metal gate by reason of their scale, massing and design are considered harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, contrary to adopted policies; SPT1 (2iii, 3v) Delivering sustainable development, SPT2 (10) Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities, SPT11 Strategic approach to the historic environment, SPT12 (4, 5) Strategic approach to the natural environment, DEV20 (2, 3, 4) Place shaping and the quality of the built environment, DEV21 (1, 2, 3, 6) Development affecting the historic environment, DEV22 (1, 2, 5, 6) Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, DEV23 (1, 2, 3, 7) Landscape character, the guidance contained within the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2020, policies P3 and C2 of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework

(NPPF) including but not limited to paragraphs 127, 130, 184 and 189-202 and it is therefore recommended that the application be refused.

This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy

Section 70 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act requires that regard be had to the development plan, any local finance and any other material considerations. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act requires that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making, as of 26 March 2019, the development plan for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council (other than parts of South Hams and West Devon within Dartmoor National Park) comprises the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 - 2034.

The relevant development plan policies are set out below:

The Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan was adopted by South Hams District Council on 21 March 2019 and West Devon Borough Council on 26 March 2019.

SPT1 Delivering sustainable development
SPT2 Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities
SPT9 Strategic principles for transport planning and strategy
SPT10 Balanced transport strategy for growth and healthy and sustainable communities
SPT11 Strategic approach to the Historic environment
SPT12 Strategic approach to the natural environment
TTV1 Prioritising growth through a hierarchy of sustainable settlements
TTV2 Delivering sustainable development in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area
DEV1 Protecting health and amenity
DEV2 Air, water, soil, noise, land and light
DEV10 Delivering high quality housing
DEV20 Place shaping and the quality of the built environment
DEV21 Development affecting the historic environment
DEV22 Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site
DEV23 Landscape character
DEV26 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation
DEV28 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows
DEV29 Specific provisions relating to transport
DEV31 Waste management
DEV32 Delivering low carbon development
DEV35 Managing flood risk and Water Quality Impacts

Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is currently under preparation for the Parish of Tavistock but it has not yet reached a stage where it can be considered material to the decision making process.

Other material considerations include the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including but not limited to paragraphs 127, 130, 184 and 189-202 and guidance within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Additionally, the following planning documents are also material considerations in the determination of the application: Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2020, Devon County Council Highways Standing Advice, World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Document and Management Plan, Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009.

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.