



The Sycamores, Ringmore



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Charity number: 263985

Registered address: Olde Stones, West Alvington, Kingsbridge, South Devon TQ7 3PN



PLANNING REF: 0497/21/HHO

APPLICANT NAME: Mr Sam Worden

DESCRIPTION: Householder application for alterations to include raising roof to create a second floor with two bedrooms with en-suites, new extensions for a garage and entrance porch.

ADDRESS: The Sycamores Ringmore TQ7 4HJ.

5th May 2021

LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM THE SOUTH HAMS SOCIETY

The South Hams Society interest

For the last 60 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and oppose inappropriate development.

Introduction

This application site is on the edge of the Undeveloped Coast but is expanding into it, is fully within the heritage coast and in the highly protected landscape of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The South Hams Society is concerned that changes have been made recently to the Undeveloped Coast itself with both bank and tree removal, boundaries being repositioned and the domestication of agricultural land – **all without the required planning consents.**

This planning application does not deal with those breaches of planning regulations that must take precedent over this planning application.

It is also apparent that when the current dwelling gained planning permission just over 30 years ago, the roof design was kept very low to mitigate the visible impact of the development. **We therefore ask that the case officer should review the historical planning application documents in order to confirm if any planning conditions are in place.** The historical planning application content is not available on the district council's planning website, although the applications are listed.

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The landscape changes

We have recent images of the property from its sale to assist in our understanding of the changes that are occurring to this and neighbouring sites.

The hedgerow alongside the undeveloped coast has existed since at least 1841, with slight alignment changes occurring by 1885.

The Tithe Map, land recorded as Glebe Land.



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Devon CXXXI.15, Surveyed: 1885, Published: 1886



The old school built to the right of 'All Hallows' Church. The roof of The Sycamores is to the left & behind the Old School.



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The 2014 sale images. This image looks east towards the field in 2014



The agricultural field boundary 2014 - now removed.



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The South Hams Society visited the location back in February 2021, by which time the field boundary had been removed and the agricultural land in the undeveloped coast could be seen to be used for domestic recreational purposes. We also noted a development between the dwelling and the highway that had been constructed since September 2017, for which we have been unable to locate any planning application. It is our opinion that as the development is sited between the dwelling and the highway and is clearly visible from the grounds of the Grade II listed 'All Hallows Church', it should have required prior planning approval.

February 2021



This is another example of trees having been removed prior to the submission of a planning application and where the applicant has stated in the development application form that no trees would need to be removed. Trees would have required removal (were they still there) to carry out the proposal.

Extract question number 6 of the planning application form:

6. Trees and Hedges	
Are there any trees or hedges on your own property or on adjoining properties which are within falling distance of your proposed development?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
Will any trees or hedges need to be removed or pruned in order to carry out your proposal?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No

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April 2021 - The last remaining tree seen in this image was on the hedgerow of the old field boundary, now removed.



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The position of the old field bank & tree boundary and development without planning approval.



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Approximate line of the field side of the removed Devon bank.



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The South Hams Society are of the opinion that **the current planning breaches must be resolved prior to this planning application that carefully seeks to ignore the change of use of agricultural land is considered.** Clearly the building is encroaching the Undeveloped Coast and the applicant will wish to hard landscape around the larger building footprint which will ignore the settlement boundary and further harm the Heritage / Undeveloped Coast.



The planning proposal

The applicant seeks to add a garage which is shown to be falling outside the settlement boundary. No surrounding details are given, but we expect that surrounding building will be hard landscaped that will further encroach into the undeveloped coast and agricultural land which is not being resolved by this planning application, but is being ignored.

Additionally the dwelling's low roof line is being raised. The dwelling's planning approval should be reviewed by the case officer to confirm that no existing planning conditions are to be breached.

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The raised roof will introduce more roof windows overlooking the graveyard.



The view from the east at the prescriptive footpath entrance. The Sycamores has been built to keep the roofline to respect both the Old School and Tosca.



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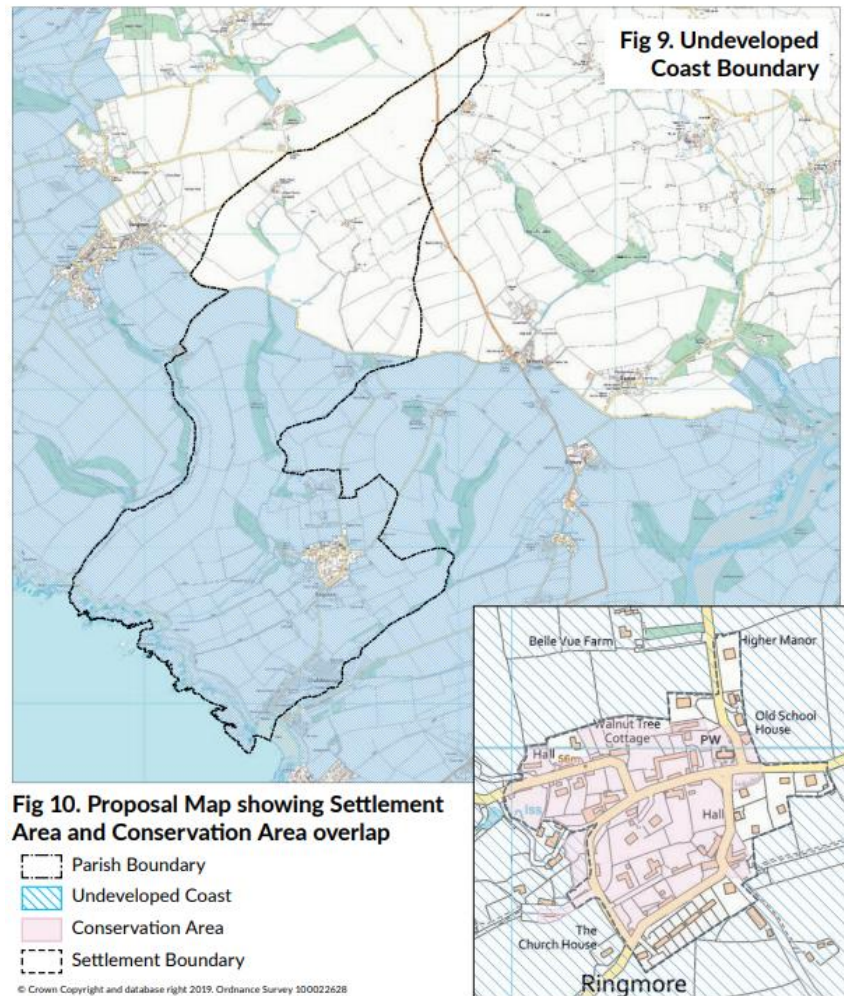


The South Hams Society notes the Design and Access Statement does not deal with planning policy or the issue of the changes that have occurred in the Undeveloped Coast.

Ringmore doesn't have a neighbourhood plan (NP) as yet but it has gone through a consultation process and this gives us some insight to the views of the residents. It is therefore worth noting the following.

The NP proposes to retain the Joint Local Plan intended settlement boundary. The unauthorised changes conflicts with this settlement boundary which seeks to protect the Heritage / Undeveloped Coast from further development.

Fig 10 below shows that the original JLP consultation Settlement Area and Conservation Area overlap within the village of Ringmore. It is proposed that new developments are confined to the "Settlement Area" with any development proposal complying with JLP Dev 25 for Nationally protected landscapes and NP requirements.





96% of respondents supported restrictions of roof heights for new builds and re-developments.

Policy RNP2 - General Design Principles for New Development

New housing development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

1. The design is traditional, of good quality and sympathetic with the character of the surrounding built and non-built environment.
2. The character of the parish is not negatively affected.
3. Listed buildings and heritage assets are not adversely affected.
4. Enough "Off Road" parking is provided in line with SPD 2020 requirements.
5. New roof heights are not to be higher than existing attached buildings and no higher than the general height of buildings in the local area. The development should not impinge upon neighbour's outlook or obstruct protected public views.
6. Any development satisfies the latest septic tank regulations (Jan 1st, 2020) and or ties into the existing South West Water Main Sewage without overwhelming capacity.
7. The development meets the requirements of all other relevant policies of the Plan.

Justification for Policy RNP2

The Parish residents have indicated through their engagement with the consultation process that they have important considerations where the determination of development decisions is concerned. There is a strong desire that any proposed development does not interfere with the unique quality of the area. Some of the strongest points for consideration are:

- 97% of respondents indicated that maintaining the current "Dark Skies" status of the area is important.
- 96% of respondents supported restrictions of roof heights for new builds and re-developments.
- 88% of respondents want any new build to be constructed sympathetically to the local environment and built to good quality traditional design.
- 78% said that any new housing development should have adequate parking i.e. two off road spaces per unit. It should be noted that there are no public parking areas within the parish and the road network does not afford safe roadside parking in many areas.

Where vehicles are parked on the road there is invariably a negative effect on vehicle access/egress from the Parish plus a safety issue due to limiting access for Emergency Vehicles.

The Parish is currently blessed with having little to no light pollution which is evident at night when the area is blessed with a very Dark Sky. The area is classified as an E1 environmental zone as an Intrinsically Dark landscape. *Source:- Institution of Lighting Engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01.*

This is one of the identified unique characters of this part of the AONB which parishioners are very keen to preserve through planning control and guidance. Light pollution at night is not only an annoyance to humans but is a significant threat to the life cycle and behaviour of our native nocturnal species such as bats, moths and other insects including glow worms.

98% of respondents to the NP Questionnaire indicated that maintaining the unique quality of the AONB was important to them.

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This application is not supported by the NP that is to be consulted upon.

Policy RNP5 - Other development, subdivision of existing plots for building or extension to existing buildings

Development such as extensions, replacement houses, building on subdivided plots will be supported if it is demonstrated that: -

1. There is no loss to the character or environmental quality of the surroundings.
2. The site is adequately serviced by suitable existing highways allowing safe access and egress to the property.
3. The development respects the amenity of adjoining properties.
4. The development is in keeping with other constraints set within the housing policy section and meets all other relevant policies of the Plan.
5. The roof height of any new development should not be higher than the existing roof height of development on the plot.

Justification for Policy RNP5

96% of respondents agreed that there should be active restriction upon roof heights for new developments and re-developments.

Whilst the South Hams Society recognises that the NP is not at the stage to be given material planning weight, it does conform to National Planning policy and the Joint Local Plan policy with regard to the protection afforded the Heritage / Undeveloped Coast and the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Similarly, the settlement boundary is consistent with settlement boundary the district council presented at the JLP examination process.

The South Hams Society is concerned to learn the Parish Council is willing to disregard those protections it is nurturing in the NP process and ignore the national and local plan protections that are in force.

With the unauthorised works that directly preceded this planning application, the South Hams Society will comment on this planning application with the evidence provided that this proposal is causing change and harm to the Heritage / Undeveloped Coast.

It is our opinion that the proposed development has required the previously unauthorised works to be carried out to enable this development to proceed with the garage proposal.

Therefore we consider the proposal includes the undeveloped coast designation within the application boundary as changes have been made to that boundary that have not been disclosed in this planning application.

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National Planning Policies:

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act;
Sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF in particular paragraphs; 127, and 170, 172 & 173;
The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) particularly Section 8-036 to 8-043 on
Landscape; and The South Devon AONB Management Plan and its Annexes.

Joint Local Plan Policies.

TTV26 - .

TTV29 - Residential extensions and replacement dwellings in the countryside

Proposals to extend or replace existing dwellings in the countryside will be permitted provided:

1. The existing dwelling has a lawful use for permanent residential use and has not been abandoned.
2. **The size of the new replacement dwelling will not be significantly larger than the original house volume.**
3. The number of new dwellings is no more than the number of dwellings to be demolished and replaced.
4. Any new replacement dwelling should be positioned on the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless on design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity, or other environmental grounds a more appropriate location can be agreed.
5. **The extension is appropriate in scale and design in the context of the setting of the host dwelling.**

DEV21 - Development affecting the historic environment.

DEV23 - Landscape character.

Development will conserve and enhance landscape, townscape and seascape character and scenic and visual quality, avoiding significant and adverse landscape or visual impacts.

Development proposals should:

1. Be located and designed to respect scenic quality and maintain an area's distinctive sense of place and reinforce local distinctiveness.
2. **Conserve and enhance the characteristics and views of the area along with valued attributes and existing site features such as trees, hedgerows and watercourses** that contribute to the character and quality of the area.
3. Be of high quality architectural and landscape design appropriate to its landscape context.
4. Be located and designed to prevent erosion of relative tranquility **and intrinsically dark landscapes**, and where possible use opportunities to enhance areas in which tranquility has been eroded.
5. Restore positive landscape characteristics and features that reinforce local landscape quality and distinctiveness.

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6. Where necessary, be supported by Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and landscaping schemes that enhance that proposed development.
7. Avoid, mitigate, and where appropriate compensate, for any residual adverse effects and take opportunities to secure landscape character and visual enhancements.

The site falls within the landscape character - LCT 1B: Open coastal plateaux

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage and protect the landscape's **network of Devon hedges** and characteristic dwarf hedgerow trees, replanting ageing or diseased specimens (with climate hardy species) to ensure the future survival of these characteristic features.
- Manage nationally important **coastal habitats**, including coastal heath and maritime grasslands, through supporting a continuation of extensive grazing at appropriate levels. Re-link sites where feasible and provide a buffer between cliffs and improved grassland.
- Plan for the impacts of a **changing climate on the coastline**, allowing natural processes to take place whilst considering how habitats and the South West Coast Path can be expanded or relocated taking account of coastal squeeze.
- Protect and appropriately manage the landscape's **archaeological heritage**, particularly features associated with defence and sea trade.
- Protect the **historic settlement pattern** by encouraging the sensitive location of new farm buildings away from open skylines, ensuring that any new development incorporates local vernacular building styles of whitewash, local stone and thatch wherever possible.
- Plan for the **growth of major settlements** adjacent to this landscape type (Plymouth and Dartmouth), aiming to accommodate new development sensitively within the landscape through appropriate siting, planting and green infrastructure provision.
- Manage the landscape's **popularity for recreation**, encouraging the use of existing facilities and South West Coast Path whilst providing sustainable transport options to reduce levels of traffic accessing this area.
- Protect the **landscape's open vistas and horizontal emphasis**, avoiding the location of new development and vertical structures on prominent skylines. Ensure that historical vertical structures such as medieval church towers, lighthouses and daymarks remain as prominent local landmarks including in views from the sea (e.g. by avoiding siting other vertical structures on the same skyline).
- Protect the character of the landscape's **expansive sea views**.
- Protect the landscape's **high levels of tranquillity** through the retention of dark night skies, control and management of development (including highways) and retention of green lanes and tracks ensuring significant parts of the coast remain relatively inaccessible by vehicle.

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DEV24 - Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast

Development which would have a detrimental effect on the undeveloped and unspoilt character, appearance or tranquility of the Undeveloped Coast, estuaries, and the Heritage Coast will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances.

Development will only be permitted in the Undeveloped Coast where the development:

1. Can demonstrate that it requires a coastal location.
2. It cannot reasonably be located outside the Undeveloped Coast.
3. **Protects, maintains and enhances the unique landscape and seascape character and special qualities of the area.**
4. is consistent with policy statements for the local policy unit in the current Shoreline Management Plan.
5. is consistent with the relevant Heritage Coast objectives, as contained within the relevant AONB Management Plan.

DEV25 - Nationally protected landscapes

The highest degree of protection will be given to the protected landscapes of the South Devon AONB, Tamar Valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park. The LPAs will protect the AONBs and National Park from potentially damaging or inappropriate development located either within the protected landscapes or their settings. In considering development proposals the LPAs will:

1. Refuse permission for major developments within a protected landscapes, except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
2. **Give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the protected landscapes.**
3. Give substantial weight to other natural beauty criteria, including the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage in the AONBs and great weight to the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage in Dartmoor National Park.
4. Assess their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on natural beauty.
5. Encourage small-scale proposals that are sustainably and appropriately located and designed to conserve, enhance and restore the protected landscapes.
6. Seek opportunities to enhance and restore protected landscapes by addressing areas of visually poor quality or inconsistent with character, securing through the development visual and other enhancements to restore local distinctiveness, guided by the protected landscape's special qualities and distinctive characteristics or valued attributes.
7. Support proposals which are appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area.
8. Require development proposals located within or within the setting of a protected landscape to:
 - i. **Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the protected landscape with particular reference to their special qualities and distinctive characteristics or valued attributes.**

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- ii. **Be designed to prevent the addition of incongruous features, and where appropriate take the opportunity to remove or ameliorate existing incongruous features.**
- iii. Be located and designed to respect scenic quality and maintain an area's distinctive sense of place, or reinforce local distinctiveness.
- iv. **Be designed to prevent impacts of light pollution from artificial light on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation interests.**
- v. Be located and designed to prevent the erosion of relative tranquillity and, where possible use opportunities to enhance areas in which tranquillity has been eroded.
- vi. Be located and designed to conserve and enhance flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features, in particular those which contribute to the distinctive sense of place, relative wildness or tranquillity, or to other aspects of landscape and scenic quality.
- vii. Retain links, where appropriate, with the distinctive historic and cultural heritage features of the protected landscape.
- viii. Further the delivery of the relevant protected landscape management plan, having regard to its supporting guidance documents.
- ix. Avoid, mitigate, and as a last resort compensate, for any residual adverse effects.

DEV28 - Trees, woodlands and hedgerows

Development that would result in the loss or deterioration of the quality of:

- Ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees or impact on their immediate surroundings;
- Other woodlands or high amenity trees including protected trees;
- **Important hedgerows including Devon hedgebanks;**

Will not be permitted unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss and this can be demonstrated.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING - DOCUMENT ADOPTED JULY 2020

TTV 29 - Residential extensions - Visual impact

13.6 Extensions and alterations should relate well to the main dwelling **and character of the area**. They should generally follow the same architectural style and use the same materials as the original dwelling. **Proposals should also respect the character of the area, including building form and layout, architectural style and materials.**

Roof extensions

13.46 Extending into roof space is a popular way of creating more residential accommodation and most roof extensions are permitted development **as long as the ridge height is not changing**. Where permission is needed, it is important to consider the height and ensure all roof alterations are of a high quality **and relate well to the original home and the street-scene**.

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13.52 Dormer windows are only acceptable on the front roof of a property if this is a feature of nearby properties and if they are sensitively designed and located.

The South Hams Society firmly believe that the local planning authority must protect the Heritage Coast / Undeveloped Coast from these domestic incursions in accordance with its JLP strategic policy:

Policy SPT12

Strategic approach to the natural environment. The distinctive characteristics, special qualities and important features of the natural environment of the Plan Area will be protected, conserved and enhanced.

This will be through a strategic approach which protects the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, commensurate with their status, and takes account of the natural infrastructure functions of different sites, habitats and features. Key principles include:

4. Conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the South Devon and the Tamar Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the adjacent Dartmoor National Park.

5. Protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscapes of the Undeveloped Coast, particularly within the South Devon Heritage Coast, with support for improvements to public access to and enjoyment of the coast.

The Case Officer must not approve this planning application when it involves the harm to that distinctive landscape that we demonstrate is occurring.

The LPA are currently seeking to enforce a change of use of land at Gerston Point, West Alvington TQ7 3BA. Agricultural land purchased and change to provide domestic uses. The district council need to demonstrate a consistent application of policy throughout its area.

Therefore we respectfully request that this application must be refused as it does not address the earlier harm to the Undeveloped Coast or unauthorised engineering works that have been carried out by Tosca, The Sycamores and The Old School.

For and on behalf of the South Hams Society.

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