

Rural house appeal win after it is described as 'beautiful'

Plans to convert an ex-serviceman's cottage into a new sustainable home have been backed on appeal after one councillor described the design as 'beautiful'.

East Lothian Council's planners had rejected the proposal to extend the country cottage, at Newmains Holdings, near Athelstaneford, creating a link from the main house to an outbuilding, saying it did not reflect the 'architectural heritage' of the cottages.

However a meeting of the council's Local Review Body this week heard praise for the design from councillors who rejected the decision by their officers.

Councillor Shona McIntosh said she welcomed the planned home.

She said: "I do not agree it will be harmful to the character of the area, I think if I was cycling past and looked towards this new home I would think "oh what a beautiful house'.

"I applaud the level of ambition, particularly around sustainability."

The award-winning architects behind the design Edinburgh-based WT Architecture had argued the changes they planned for the bungalow were "exactly the type of development that East Lothian Council should be encouraging".

They said their proposals would turn a group of unsustainable buildings, built to house servicemen post World War Two, into quality homes, reducing their environmental impact and extending their lifespan using sustainable techniques.

They said: "This proposed scheme represents the most high-quality, contextual and sensitive architectural intervention ever put forward for any of the properties along Newmains Holdings, and will significantly enhance the character of the existing buildings and area.

" We believe the merits of this application are clear and believe that the application is not merely acceptable, but should be actively supported and praised as an exemplary architectural addition to this part of East Lothian."

Planners had refused permission saying the new home was a "large, dominant dwellinghouse" which would not "be reflective of the architectural character or style of the dwellinghouses at Newmains Holdings"

The Local Review Body upheld the appeal by three votes to one with Councillors McIntosh, Neil Gilbert and Jeremy Findlay supporting it and Councillor Andy Forrest, rejecting it.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter