

Members bend new NPA rules for B&B bid

A SWAY couple persuaded national park authority members to go against new planning policies so their bungalow can be extended to offer bed and breakfast accommodation.

Less than a fortnight after NPA members adopted a new core strategy that will dictate planning policy for the next 15 years, they agreed to side-step rules to grant Martin Gretton permission to extend his Mount Pleasant Lane home.

The relevant policy states that dwellings should not be extended by more than 30% of their original floor space as recorded in 1982, and NPA members heard that the latest additions would amount to a 55% increase in floor space.

However, Mr Gretton told the meeting that he and his wife hoped to offer bed and breakfast accommodation at Oaklands to supplement their income in retirement.

Coun. Maureen Holding said: "This is something I would very much like to support — we need tourism accommodation in the Forest and not everyone can afford to stay in plush hotels."

Steve Avery, NPA head of planning and policy, warned members that

they should have very good reasons for abandoning their new policies. "We want to send a clear message that only in very exceptional circumstances will we depart from policy," he said.

However, members voted five to four to grant permission for the scheme.

Sway bungalow extension wins approval from NPA

NATIONAL park authority members ignored the advice of their officers and granted permission for extensions to a 1950s bungalow in Sway.

Speaking at a meeting of the NPA's planning committee, applicant Ian Gale said Strathbolden, in Jordans Lane, had not been modernised since it was built by his father and had no running water upstairs and a very large chimney breast which made one of the bedrooms virtually unusable.

He added the property was currently the smallest in the neighbourhood and the scheme

would allow it to be brought up to modern standards.

But NPA officers argued in a report: "The property is already clearly visible from Jordan's Lane and the proposed development would result in the property becoming an obtrusive feature in the street scene resulting in a cramped and awkward relation with the two adjoining properties."

The plans for one and two-storey side extensions, front dormers, roof alterations, a single-storey rear extension and a raised terrace were overwhelmingly backed by NPA members.