

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2016

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/D/16/3148652

Drywell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, Newton Abbot, TQ13 7PN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs S Froy against the decision of the Dartmoor National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 0663/15, dated 27 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey kitchen and bedroom extension and a first floor bedroom extension, with a replacement porch.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the local heritage asset that is Drywell Farm.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a farmhouse, with a number of associated farm buildings surrounding it to the north and east. It is situated in open countryside to the south-west of Widecombe-in-the-Moor. The property has been identified on the Devon and Dartmoor Heritage Environment Record as a historic farmstead and is a non-designated heritage asset.
 4. The original farmhouse was apparently a smaller “two-up, two-down” dwelling until it was extended in the first half of the twentieth century. These extensions appear to have involved the raising of the roof ridge, the addition of a full-width two-storey rear extension, and the construction of a small, two-storey rear outrigger with a pitched roof. A further, more recent, single-storey extension has been constructed in the north-east corner of the dwelling to create a utility room. The farmhouse has a random stone façade to the south and west elevations, including the rear outrigger, and rendered elevations to the north and east elevations, including the most recent extension, which has a shallow-pitched corrugated roof.
 5. The proposal would include the construction of a new two-storey extension in the north-west corner of the house, and the construction of a new first-floor above the existing utility room. The rear elevation of the house would have the
-

form of a double gable with ridge heights at the same level as the existing roof ridge. The walls of the existing small rear outrigger would apparently be retained, although it is unclear from the information before me as to how the materials used for the new extensions would relate to this, since the western elevations have stone facades, whilst the eastern elevations of the house have rendered facades.

6. The appellants contend that the proposed extensions, being at the rear of the house, would have no impact on the primary south-eastern elevation. I concur with this perspective, and the topography, tree cover and orientation of the house within the landscape would all help to shield the extensions from view. However, the house retains the essential character of a historic farmhouse. The rear outrigger is small, with a roof ridge well below that of the main building and, as such, it appears subservient to it. The proposed extensions, by virtue of their height, depth and width would dominate the existing house and detract from its character and simple vernacular appearance and proportions.
7. Policy COR 1 of the Authority's Core Strategy Document (CS) identifies the need to conserve or enhance important historical features. This is further developed in Policy COR 3, while Policy COR 4 indicates that development should demonstrate a scale and layout appropriate to the site. More specifically, Policy DMD 1b of the Authority's Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (DMD) indicates that within the National Park, the conservation of the cultural heritage will be given priority. Policy DMD 7 notes that development should have particular regard for the quality, integrity and character of heritage assets, while Policy DMD 8 indicates that, with regard to proposals affecting non-designated assets the Authority will have regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the building.
8. In this case, the proposals would not conserve or enhance the farmhouse, and they would be of a scale inappropriate to the host building, harmful to its integrity and character. The appellants point to benefits of improved energy conservation and a better internal layout. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that would be done to the essential character and appearance of the building, together with its surroundings, which is identified as a historic farmstead and a non-designated heritage asset in its current form.
9. In conclusion, therefore, I find that the proposed extensions, by virtue of their height and bulk, and resultant over-dominant appearance, would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the existing farmhouse. On this basis, they would conflict with Policies COR 1, COR 3 and COR 4 of the CS, and with Policies DMD 1b, DMD 7 and DMD 8 of the DMD.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR