
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2016

by H Baugh-Jones BA(Hons) DipLA MA CMLI

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

Decision date: 10th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/16/3157141

11 Rowden Farm Barns, Rowden Farm Lane, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire LU7 0QD

- 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 Robert Stratford against the decision of Aylesbury Vale District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01927/APP, dated 21 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension and new windows to replace existing windows in side elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear extension and new windows to replace existing windows in side elevation at 11 Rowden Farm Barns, Rowden Farm Lane, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire LU7 0QD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/01927/APP, dated 21 May 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan un-numbered Drawing at 1:1250 scale; Site Plan Drawing No. 2016/0504/03; Existing and Proposed Elevations Drawing No. 2016/0504/01; Existing and Proposed Plans Drawing No. 2016/0504/02.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of a number of buildings converted for residential use within the Rowden Farm Barns complex that lies within the open countryside. It forms part of a substantial two-storey building located, approximately, in the centre of the complex. The various surrounding buildings display significant variety in their appearance, which creates the sense of there
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being no one dominant style within the complex. In addition there are a number of detached garage blocks, the back walls of which form the rear boundaries of a number of the dwellings, including No. 11.

4. Saved Policy RA.11 of the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan Part 1 (2004) (LP) relates to the re-use of buildings and requires that conversion works should not involve significant extension and should respect the character of the building. Saved Policy GP.9 has a similar aim. Despite the LP's age, these policies are broadly in step with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in terms of requiring good design and are supported by the Councils' design guidance relating to traditional farm buildings¹. Whilst the age of the design guidance is noted, in terms of its requirements for good design it is nonetheless broadly in step with the Framework.
5. The Council argues that saved Policy RA.11 and the design guidance are aimed at controlling new buildings including extensions in the countryside and that this should also logically apply to extensions of already converted buildings. However, the policy specifically refers to conversion works, setting out that these should not involve major reconstruction or significant extensions. Whilst I understand the Council's argument, saved Policy RA.11 appears aimed at controlling the character and appearance of buildings yet to be converted. Consequently, I give it limited weight in relation to the scheme before me.
6. I note that there have been a number of extensions to other properties within the complex and, in particular, I observed a single-storey extension at the adjoining property that is of substantial proportions relative to the size of the host dwelling. The appellant has drawn my attention to this permission and another dating from 2015 at No. 12. Although I do not have the full details of what led to these schemes being considered acceptable, I do not find them to be dissimilar in proportion or general design to the scheme before me. Moreover, I do not consider that the permitted extensions have had a material effect on the original character of the buildings to which they relate.
7. Whilst I recognise that the appeal property has already been extended at the side, the proposed extension would be of modest proportions and would be positioned on the corner of the building. Therefore, the appearance of the building's main elevation would remain largely unaltered. Furthermore, from the surrounding areas within the complex, the building of which No. 11 forms part is well screened below first floor level by other surrounding buildings and boundary fences. Consequently, I do not consider that the proposal would result in any discernable visual harm to the character or appearance of the host building.
8. On that basis, and given that other dwellings in the complex have been extended previously, the proposal would have no harmful impact on the character or appearance of the existing complex, or the wider area. I therefore see no departure from saved LP Policy GP.9, or saved LP Policy GP.35 that seeks to ensure new development respects and complements its site and surroundings, or, for the same reasons, the Framework.

¹ Aylesbury Vale District Council Design Guide 2 – The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings (Adopted July 1990)

Conditions

9. In addition to the standard time limit, I have imposed a condition specifying the approved plans as this provides certainty. It is also necessary to require the materials used to match those of the existing building in order to ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal succeeds.

Hayden Baugh-Jones

Inspector