
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

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

Decision date: 24 November 2016

Appeal Reference: APP/C3105/D/16/3158805

4 The Stables, Staunton Road, Stratton Audley, Bicester OX27 9AX

- 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 Roberts against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
 - The application (reference 16/01128/F, dated 10 June 2016) was refused by notice dated 5 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "single storey rear extension".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a "single storey rear extension", at 4 The Stables, Staunton Road, Stratton Audley, Bicester OX27 9AX, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 16/01128/F, dated 10 June 2016), subject to the following conditions.
 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number 001 (Existing Ground Floor Plan, Rear and Side Elevations);
 - drawing number 200 (Proposed Ground Floor Plans and Elevations);
 - drawing number 210 (Proposed Block Plan & Site Location Plan).
 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 issues

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. Stratton Audley is an attractive village, focussed on its mediaeval church. The core of the village is designated as the Stratton Audley Conservation Area, characterised by attractive stone buildings in an irregular pattern of village

- lanes. A number of the buildings in the Conservation Area are listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
4. The appeal building is part of a group of former farm buildings that have been converted to form a small number of residential properties around a courtyard, known as 'The Stables'. The residential conversion has involved some modification to the building, notably by the creation of an archway into the courtyard, while some extensions have also been made to the original buildings. In consequence the original character of the buildings has been compromised, to an extent. Nevertheless, the buildings are traditional in form and constructed of stone, making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, even though they are not listed.
 5. Number 4 'The Stables' is sited at the western corner of the courtyard, with its principal entrance from the courtyard itself. The dwelling has a private garden on the north-west that adjoins Staunton Road and is bounded by a stone wall, with a parking area beyond.
 6. An extension to the dwelling is now proposed to be built into the garden, alongside Staunton Road. The extension would be constructed of stone, under a pitched, tiled roof, designed in a traditional style to harmonise with the existing building. It would provide a useful additional space, designated as a sitting and dining area attached to the kitchen, with direct access to the private garden.
 7. Provisions in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 impose obligations on those considering whether to grant planning permission for development that would affect a conservation area. In such cases, decision makers are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas affected by development proposals.
 8. That statutory framework is reinforced by the 'National Planning Policy Framework', especially at Section 12, which emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, though it also points out the desirability of putting a heritage asset to its "optimum viable use" as does the 'Planning Practice Guidance'. Moreover, the 'National Planning Policy Framework' also emphasises the aim of "requiring good design" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 7) and it points out the importance of creating an attractive streetscape and maintaining the overall quality of the area.
 9. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan. The Cherwell District Local Plan was adopted in 1996 and "saved" Policy C28 identifies the importance of good design, both generally and specifically in the context of conservation areas, pointing out that, here, "the use of traditional building materials will normally be required". The 'Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1', which was adopted in 2015, is general in its approach but Policy ESD15 is similarly concerned with "the character of the built and historic environment". In particular, it can be pointed out that new development should "enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets'".
 10. The proposed new extension would be apparent in the streetscene and thus would have an effect on the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, it would be in

harmony with the host building, extending it in a relatively unobtrusive way and maintaining the character and general appearance of the original building and its surroundings. Thus, it would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would maintain the quality and interest of the streetscene. The existing building has an interesting history and it makes a positive contribution to the surroundings, as a “non-designated heritage asset” but the proposed extension would be acceptable in design terms.

11. The appeal scheme would amount to a modest extension to the existing dwelling but it would provide useful additional space and would, thereby, add to the stock of residential accommodation in the locality, albeit in a very limited way. I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the national legislation or the Development Plan, in principle, and that it is acceptable in planning terms. In short, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
12. I have, however, also concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained. In imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal).

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR