

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2016

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/D/16/3159469

Reid Barn, Aston Holdings, Aston Cantlow, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire B95 6JS

- 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 & Mrs P Gregory against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02105/FUL, dated 23 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey oak framed extension to rear elevation.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The site lies in open countryside designated as Green Belt (GB). However, the proposed extension is modestly sized and I share the Council's view, having regard to the provisions of paragraph 89 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) in respect of additions to existing buildings that this would not prove to be a disproportionate addition to the original building. The proposal may therefore be aptly treated as not inappropriate development in the GB in terms of national policy.

Main issue

3. Having regard to the above, the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one of several former agricultural buildings in an enclave surrounding the original farmhouse that have been skilfully and attractively converted into residential accommodation.
 5. The appellants propose an extension to the rear of the property. Here, many of the original features of the former farm building can be clearly appreciated since they have been carefully conserved during the conversion. The features include its shape and form, the original red brickwork, parts of the timber frame, red-tiled roof and limestone buttresses supporting the outer wall.
 6. The proposed extension, of a timber frame with glazed walls would be fitted between two of the extant buttresses and would enclose a glazed opening. It
-

- would have a ridged roof with matching tiles, and brick plinths. Rooflights would also be provided.
7. When planning permission was granted for the original conversion, permitted development rights that normally accrue to dwellings were restricted by condition. It seems to me, given the high quality of the original conversion, that the imposition of this condition was entirely justified, since it enabled the Council to ensure that future development proposals affecting the building could be assessed having regard to their impact on the integrity of the converted building.
 8. In this regard, the Council has specific policies in its Core Strategy (CS) relating to design, and has also adopted design guidance on extensions to dwellings, including specific advice on the conversion of agricultural buildings, and on their future extension.
 9. That advice, contained in the publications '*Extending your Home*' and the '*District Design Guide*', were adopted prior to the adoption of the Council's CS. Nevertheless, I note that both documents were subject to public consultation and that much of their content contains relevant and helpful design advice. In this regard the sections referred to in the representations are attributed substantial weight as material considerations.
 10. I share the appellants' point that the thrust of the design advice does not entirely preclude extensions to converted barns. However, it appears to me that such extensions are generally discouraged in circumstances where the integrity of the barn conversion would be compromised, particularly when the quality of the original conversion, as in this case, was high.
 11. I have noted the content of the email sent by a Council officer to the appellants following the decision, upon which the appellant places considerable reliance. However, in my opinion, the proposal represents poor design, paying very little respect to or appreciation of the rustic design and appearance of the host property.
 12. If built, the development would appear as if a ridged glasshouse had been inappropriately affixed to the rear elevation. It would look entirely out of place, and would offend and unacceptably compromise the visual integrity of the converted barn. In my experience, glazed additions to extant buildings of valuable character are not uncommon, but to be visually successful they need to be designed with greater panache and appreciation than has been demonstrated in this instance so as not to harm the host property.
 13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the converted agricultural building. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of CS policy CS.9 directed to ensure high quality design, in particular that designs should prove attractive, sensitive, and reflect local distinctiveness.
 14. I also find the development represents a clear example of poor design of a type discouraged at paragraph 64 of the Framework. I shall follow the Framework's advice in this instance.

Other matters

15. Reference has been made to other development plan policy, but I consider that to which I have referred to be the most relevant to the case.
16. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, but none are of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR