
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2016

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 16 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/16/3159743

18 Rowsham Road, Bierton, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5DZ

- 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 Neil Conroy against the decision of Aylesbury Vale District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/04131/APP, dated 7 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is rear extension to existing property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. 18 Rowsham Road is a one and a half storey detached building, originally two dwellings but subsequently converted to one, with later single storey extensions to the rear. The external walls are mainly of brick with some render. It is located close to the road with a sizeable plot to the rear and side. It is in Bierton Conservation Area, in an eastern spur away from the main part of the conservation area which is along the main road through the village.
4. The conservation area boundary is drawn tightly along Rowsham Road around a small number of cottages mainly along the eastern side, and their curtilages, with Grove Farm as the largest building, together with its outbuildings and curtilage. The cottages are of red brick and a modest one and a half or two storey scale with small windows, typical of 18th and 19th century rural vernacular.
5. No. 18 is designated as a building of Local Note which makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area because of its attractive outline. It forms part of a group with No. 8, to the south. The modern houses along the road, including the two immediately to the south of the appeal site between the latter and No. 8 are excluded from the conservation area. Despite the modern houses, the street as a whole has a rural character.

6. At the time of my visit substantial building works were in progress. The upper floor of the northern, apparently older, part had been stripped. This has exposed the original timber framing where the plaster infill has been removed from the walls, some internal brickwork, the large brick chimney breast at the northern end and the rubble stone infill of the gable at the north end. Much of the roof in this part has also been removed.
7. Relevant policies in this case include GP.35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2004 (the local plan) which relates to design and requires development to, among other things, respect aspects of the site and surroundings, the building tradition and form of the locality and the historic scale and context of the setting. Policy GP.9 relates to residential extensions and requires them to respect the appearance of the dwelling and its setting and other buildings in the locality. Policy GP.53 seeks to preserve or enhance the special characteristics of conservation areas and requires development to respect the historic layout, scale and form of buildings in such areas.
8. The Council's Design Guide *Residential Extensions* (adopted 1991) (The Design Guide) advises that bulky extensions should be avoided and that tighter controls apply in conservation areas.
9. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty that special regard be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires proposals affecting heritage assets to be considered having regard to any harm caused to their significance.
11. I consider that the proposal, because of its depth, form, bulk and overall size and design, would be out of scale with the original building and would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building itself and of the conservation area. The form of the original building is long and relatively low along the side of the road, with a narrow span. Later modern single storey extensions at the rear have not contributed positively to its character and appearance and the removal of these, as part of the proposal, would improve its appearance.
12. However, in my opinion, the proposed one and a half storey three gabled extension would form an excessive projection from the rear of the building, more than doubling the depth of the overall span. I accept that the existing accommodation is small and that its layout is inconvenient, and that the appellant has tried to minimise the bulk of the extension by setting it in from the sides and using some flat roof elements. However, I am not persuaded that an extension of this depth and overall floor area is justified in this instance.
13. The proposal would be visible in some views from the street. Although these would be limited, this does not alter my finding that the proposal would fundamentally alter the small scale and historic form and proportions of a building which has been retained in the conservation area and designated as a building of Local Note for those very characteristics and which therefore has significance as a heritage asset.

14. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the original property and would fail to enhance its setting within the conservation area. I have taken account of the modern houses which have been built along the road and I note that they have been specifically excluded from the conservation area because of their limited interest. In my view, allowing this proposal would result in a further dilution of the character and appearance of the conservation area by altering the character and scale of the original cottage.
15. I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building itself and would fail to respect the designation of the property as a Local Note dwelling within the conservation area and the contribution it makes. It would fail to preserve or enhance the wider setting of the conservation area. It would be contrary to policies GP.9, GP.35 and GP.53 of the local plan; the Design Guide and the NPPF, and the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990.
16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR