
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2016

by H Porter BA(Hons) PGDip IHBC

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

Decision date: 20 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1225/D/16/3160471

Glebe House, East Lulworth, BH20 5QQ

- 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 Don Henshall against the decision of Purbeck District Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2016/0303, dated 13 May 2015, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey extension to single family home.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the East Lulworth Conservation Area and the host building.

Reasoning

Background

3. The appeal was made in the context of a previous Inspector's decision to dismiss a two-storey rear extension at the appeal site¹. In that decision, the Inspector established the significance of the East Lulworth Conservation Area, as well as the positive contribution Glebe House makes to it. As I concur with his assessment, there is no need to reiterate his findings or to re-state the historic evolution of the appeal site.
4. Notwithstanding the appellant's misgivings about the previous Inspector's qualifications and his findings, the previous appeal decision stands as a material consideration in the context of this appeal and I shall therefore have regard to it when reaching my own conclusions about the scheme in the current appeal. Also, notwithstanding the appellant's doubts over the policy status of non-designated heritage assets, the appeal site is in a Conservation Area where statutory obligations therefore apply. Moreover, it is common ground that, owing to its form and historic association with the evolution of the area, Glebe House is individually of merit and makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

¹ APP/B1225/D/15/3141271

Character and appearance

5. The latest design iteration has sought to address the concerns raised by the previous Inspector, notably through omitting a single-storey side extension; retention of the 1869 rear extension; modification of the glazing, and an overall reduction in scale and bulk of the proposed rear extension.
6. A key characteristic of Glebe House is its balanced and regular proportions. The variety of extensions to the south elevation has contributed to a less formal appearance in comparison with the rest of the building. In spite of these later accretions, the property still reflects what would have originally been a square, four-roof plan form. The previous Inspector noted that the earlier scheme would reorient the host building's longest elevation through 90 degrees. This would still be the case under the latest iteration, which, despite a reduction in overall storey height, has not reduced the length of southward projection from the rear elevation. In fact, the proposed single-storey dining area would represent an increase in the overall depth. The development would therefore elongate the building's footprint, materially and adversely interrupting the plan form and design integrity of the original building.
7. At first floor level, the reduction in height of the extension, combined with the band of glazing, would provide some delineation between the existing eaves line and the proposed flat roof projection. This is a notable improvement on the previous scheme, and provides a more satisfactory relationship with the double-pitched roof form. Even though half a metre lower, the proposed two-storey element would dominate, and the slight lowering from the eaves level would not sufficiently identify it as a subservient addition. Irrespective of the substantial size of the original building and the percentage-terms increase in floor space at the scale proposed the appeal scheme would still result in a disproportionate addition to the host building. While the impact would be slightly reduced in comparison to the previous scheme, the effect on the host building and wider area would still be harmful.
8. I agree with the appellant that expressing an extension as clearly contemporary can often be the most appropriate design response to modifying an historic building. However, this should not be at the expense of features that contribute positively to the original building's character and appearance. In my judgement, the overall form of the appeal proposal would be in part successful in rationalising what is currently an ad-hoc and informal elevation, whilst retaining the gable-end projection and stack that the previous Inspector identified as being a positive feature. It is not the contemporary design per se that is objectionable, but the scale of the proposed extension and its impact on the integrity of its original proportions that undermine the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the wider area.
9. The previous Inspector identified the proposed fenestration of the earlier scheme as a factor in altering the character of the original building. There is a significant reduction in the overall amount of glazing proposed compared to that earlier submission, not least owing to the omission of the single-storey side extension. Under the current proposal, while the overall amount of glazing has reduced, the pattern of fenestration, size of new openings and amount of fixed glazing has not changed markedly. Notwithstanding the limited merit of the ad-hoc additions on the rear elevations, the scale of the proposed fenestration would erode the balance between solid wall and window openings.

As such, the scheme would still introduce a pattern of fenestration that would be out of proportion with the openings in the original part of the building and fundamentally alter its character and appearance.

10. I acknowledge the revisions to the previous scheme have overcome some of the previous Inspector's concerns. However, as the current proposal still fails to defer to the proportions and detailing of the host dwelling, I find that not all of the issues have been satisfactorily addressed. Consequently, I am unable to establish sufficient difference between the cumulative impacts of the two appeal schemes and must likewise conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the East Lulworth Conservation Area and the host building.

Planning balance

11. Given the size and location of the proposed development, when considered in the context of the Conservation Area as a whole, the degree of harm would, again, be less than substantial. Having found some harm to the designated heritage asset would arise, I must give considerable importance and weight to that harm in balancing it against any public benefits. There would be an economic benefit through employment during construction, and supply of materials. There would be social benefits and a benefit in investing in the fabric of a historic building to secure its longer-term use, and use of local services and facilities, to which I attach modest weight. While use of locally-sourced materials, quality design, installation of energy efficient technologies, and improved living accommodation for the appellant's family are positive aspects, they are neutral in terms of any wider public benefit.
12. Owing to the detrimental impact on the host dwelling and Conservation Area, the proposal would not be outstanding would fail to satisfy the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Even if the proposal was sustainable development, specific policies in the Framework indicate that development in this context should be restricted². Therefore the modest degree of weight in favour of the scheme is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the overall harm.
13. The proposed development would therefore not be in accordance with the requirements of S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. As such, there would be conflict with Policy LHH of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1, 2012 (the Local Plan), which seeks to conserve the appearance, setting and character of heritage assets. The proposal would also fail to accord with Policies D and CO of the Local Plan insofar as they seek to ensure development positively integrates with its surroundings, is not disproportionate or does not detract from the character of the original building.
14. The development would also fail to satisfy the principles of the Framework, which seek to secure high quality design and development that takes account of the character of different areas. There would also be conflict with paragraphs 131, 132 and 134, which seek development that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; expect great weight to be

² Footnote 9, paragraph 14 National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

given to the conservation of a heritage asset; and require less than substantial harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.

Other matters

15. I note the other examples of contemporary extensions to historic buildings completed by the appellant's architect. Three of the examples given appear to be single-storey and of a significantly smaller scale than that proposed at the appeal site. The more substantial extension is of a different design to the appeal proposal, particularly in that the lower storey has been cut into the ground, in relation to the larger step down from the eaves to the flat roof. While not knowing the site planning background of the developments illustrated, it is clear that their scale and relationship to the host dwellings are markedly different from the proposal under this appeal.
16. The appellant also refers to other examples of extensions and alterations being allowed in East Lulworth, which the previous Inspector commented on. Similarly, I have not been provided with details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted and so cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, including in respect of scale, location, use and development plan and national policy. In any event, I have considered the scheme on its own merits.
17. While the re-development at Wintersweet Cottage and a contemporary extension at the appeal site may form a part of the architectural evolution of East Lulworth, such a contribution is not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified above. Neither is the lack of harm to the wider landscape character or scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR