
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2017

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3305/D/16/3162452

Home Farm House, Stocks Lane, North Wootton, BA4 4HB

- 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 Mark Christensen against the decision of Mendip District Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/1937/HSE, dated 22 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of single-storey side extension to west of main house and construction of new 2-storey side extension with room in roof; new roof to main house with gable ends and room in roof with dormer windows on front and rear elevations; new detached garage block to front boundary behind new stone wall with timber fence over; widened entrance but highway access unchanged.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to a new detached garage block to front boundary and new stone wall with timber fence over.
 2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to demolition of single-storey side extension to west of main house and construction of new 2-storey side extension with room in roof; new roof to main house with gable ends and room in roof with dormer windows on front and rear elevations and planning permission is granted for demolition of single-storey side extension to west of main house and construction of new 2-storey side extension with room in roof; new roof to main house with gable ends and room in roof with dormer windows on front and rear elevations at Home Farm House, Stocks Lane, North Wootton, BA4 4HB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2016/1937/HSE, dated 22 July 2016 and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans insofar as they show the construction of a 2-storey side extension; a new roof to the main house with gable ends and dormer windows on front and rear elevations: Sheet Nos LP1B, GL-B, EE1C, EG1, PE1-C, PE2-C, PE3-D, SLE-A, PG-B, PF-B, PA-B and PR-B.
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Main Issues

3. There are three different parts to the appeal proposal that are all clearly distinguishable from one another being: (i) extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling; (ii) the erection of a detached garage; and (iii) the erection of a new front boundary wall with fencing over. The main issues are the effects of each of these individual component parts upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Extensions

4. The appeal property is a detached, 2-storey house with a hipped roof and single-storey wing to one side set within the village of North Wootton. The immediate area is entirely residential in character comprising an eclectic mix of dwellings that show no particular pattern to their layout or form. The proposal includes a 2-storey extension to one side, in place of the existing single-storey wing, and hip to gable alterations to the dwelling's main roof with dormer windows to the front and rear.
5. Although the proposal would significantly remodel the existing symmetrical form of the dwelling there is nothing about its current appearance that is particularly remarkable or that is identified to be of any specific architectural merit that would preclude its alteration. The side extension would be recessed behind the dwelling's original main front wall and with a slightly lower ridge to give the impression of a subservient wing. The dormer windows would be of reasonably modest proportions and overall I find that the enlarged dwelling would sit comfortably on the plot with the gabled form of its roof merely reflecting the gabled features of most other properties in the vicinity.
6. I have noted some concern over the use of timber boarding to the apex of the new gables but I noted the use of timber cladding to some other nearby buildings indicating that this is not an alien feature within the locality. I am satisfied that this would not appear visually intrusive or out of character.
7. The Council has suggested that the side addition would be poorly detailed, giving the impression of a separate dwelling. However, I note that the door to the front would merely replicate an already existing similar arrangement for the property and overall I am satisfied that the works would appear as a well-considered and integrated addition.

The Garage

8. It is proposed to erect a detached garage in front of the property and aligned parallel with and close to the road. I saw a number of buildings in the locality set close to the road's edge. However, where these were ancillary outbuildings within a residential curtilage they were obviously single-storey in height and scale and subservient to the host dwelling.
9. In this case it is proposed to accommodate an office space at first floor level over a double-width garage and under a mansard style roof with a flat top. In my opinion this form of building would fail to mask its 2-storey nature, even if ultimately its maximum roof height would be equivalent to the ridge heights of other garage structures locally. The front and rear facing elevations would

have considerable bulk at first floor level which could not be readily softened by landscaping or climbing plants. Its large scale and bulk would be clearly seen from Stocks Lane and further exaggerated by the slightly elevated levels of the appeal site relative to the adjoining road.

10. Overall, I find that due to its size, scale and prominent position, the garage would unduly dominate the frontage to Home Farm House in a way that would be intrusive and unsympathetic to the residential character of the plot and the wider street scene.

Front Boundary Wall and Fence

11. There is no regular form of enclosure to the properties along each side of Stocks Lane at this point. Nevertheless, the predominance of either stone walls or natural vegetation, or a combination of both, imparts a pleasing rural character to the street scene.
12. I accept that the removal of the tall and dense conifer screen to the front of Home Farm House would relieve the area of a fairly dominant feature that is atypical of the otherwise mostly indigenous vegetation. However, whilst the construction of a natural stone wall to the front boundary would be consistent with others nearby, the installation of 1500mm high timber fence panels above would introduce an overtly urban feature that would be both uncharacteristic and intrusive.
13. I have noted that the proposal is to provide an extension of existing fencing that runs along the eastern side boundary of the appeal site. However, in this position the existing enclosure has little impact upon the wider street scene. The new enclosure to the front would be on open display across a significant length of the site's frontage and would be harmful to the street scene. Whilst I recognise it is the appellant's intention to provide screen planting in front of the fence panels I cannot be certain that this would obscure the panels entirely or else be sufficiently maintained in the longer term to adequately mitigate the harmful visual effects. I can understand the appellant's desire to provide security and safety for his family but I am not persuaded that the form of enclosure proposed represents the only means to achieve this.

Conclusions

14. Overall, I am satisfied that the works to alter and extend the existing dwelling would result in no harm to the character or appearance of the area. In this regard I find no conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy DP7 of the Mendip District Local Plan Part 1(LP), adopted in 2014, which deals with the design and amenity of new development, or with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), as it relates to similar matters. However, for the reasons given I find that the proposed garage and front boundary enclosure would both be detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene. As such both these elements of the proposal would conflict with LP Policy DP1, which seeks to ensure that all development proposals respect the local identity of the area. They would also conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy DP7 and the Framework.
15. As the three parts of the appeal proposal are clearly severable I shall issue a split decision. For the reasons given the appeal fails with regard to the new

detached garage block and the new stone wall with timber fence over. The appeal succeeds however in relation to the construction of a new 2-storey side extension with room in roof and a new roof to main house with gable ends and room in roof with dormer, subject to a condition that specifies the relevant drawings, which is required in order to provide certainty.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR