
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by R J Jackson BA MPhil DMS MRTPI MCMI

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

Decision date: 10 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/D/17/3168958

Ashford House, Ashford Road, Fordingbridge SP6 3BT

- 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 S Mitchell against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/11290, dated 15 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension, replacement single storey rear extension, and replacement single storey courtyard extension and replacement roof to existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. There is reference in the documents to amended plans being submitted as part of the proposal. However, I have only been supplied with a single set of drawings, the numbers of which are all set out on the Council's Decision Notice. For clarity, I have used these drawings in making my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located on higher ground in open countryside some short distance to the southwest of Fordingbridge. While a single dwellinghouse, the overall building is made up of a number of component parts. The main two storey house, a two storey building with lower roof, historically probably used as a coach house, and a single storey link between the two. The main house has a conservatory on the southern elevation and there are various other extensions, including a garage, currently with a lean-to roof.
 5. Although access to the house is from the south, it is the east elevation with its symmetrical frontage that gives the building its presence as it can be seen as being on higher ground as approached along Ashford Road from the northwest. Currently the northern part of this eastern elevation is obscured behind a large shrub.
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6. The proposal would involve the rationalisation of the existing building on site, demolishing a number of the extensions, principally the northern part of the overall structure, and the construction of a part two storey, part single storey extension to the northern side of the property, and the reconstruction of the existing garage, but with a hipped roof to the south, as habitable accommodation. The courtyard between the main house and the former coach house would be reconfigured so that a new main entrance would be created from the courtyard.
7. The two storey element would be to the north of the main house and would involve the loss of the large shrub thereby opening up this aspect from Ashford Road. The existing eastern elevation gives the dwelling its importance in the landscape and has a rhythm to the building created through the pattern of doors and windows and the sections of solid building between them.
8. The proposed two storey extension would be narrower than the main house and set slightly back from the eastern elevation and thus down from the ridge. However, it would be overly long when compared to the eastern elevation to be properly subservient. In addition the separation of the windows would be greater than on the main house, meaning that the rhythm created by the existing openings would be extended rather than reduced. Together this would result in the extension harmfully competing with the main eastern elevation for prominence, particularly when viewed from Ashford Road. It would therefore not represent good design.
9. The single storey kitchen/dining room extension would be stepped back from the two storey extension. This would create a large horizontal element, but by linking the two main structures, the main house and the coach house, this would tie the two elements together. However, as I have found the two storey element would extend unsatisfactorily to the north, the depth of the single storey extension, which forms part of an integrated design, would also extend unsatisfactorily to the north.
10. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CS2 of the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Core Strategy which requires that development should be well designed, being appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of scale, appearance and its relationship with adjoining buildings. It would also be contrary to Policy DM20 of the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management which states that residential development, including extensions, in the countryside should be of appropriate design, scale and appearance in keeping with the rural character of the area. It would also be contrary to paragraphs 50 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Other matters

11. The Council did not object to the replacement of the garage, but it is clear that this part of the proposal forms part of the overall, integrated design and consequently, it would not be appropriate to consider this as a separate element.

Conclusion

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

RJ Jackson

INSPECTOR