

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017.

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F1610/D/17/3168635

Beacon Cottage, Frampton Mansell, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 8HZ

- 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 David Cleverly against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/04454/FUL, dated 24 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is to demolish the existing single storey extension and replace with two storey gabled extension and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to demolish the existing single storey extension and replace with two storey gabled extension and internal alterations at Beacon Cottage, Frampton Mansell, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 8HZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/04454/FUL, dated 24 October 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the setting of Beacon Farmhouse, a listed building (LB) (*Grade II*).

Reasons

3. Beacon Cottage and the LB stand next to one another in isolation in the heart of the Cotswold countryside. Both properties front the A419, a busy highway linking Stroud and Cirencester. Traffic speeds are high. There are no footways, and the likelihood is that few pedestrians would wish to use the highway, although cyclists may well venture here.
 4. The appeal is an attractive two storey cottage built of Cotswold stone, with a tiled roof. Its main ridge runs at right angles to the highway. A single storey lean-to is attached to the northern elevation. This would be demolished in the proposed scheme, to be replaced with a two-storey structure, part of which would be under a gabled roof set at right angles to the extended main ridge. A gable would replace the extant hipped roof at the northern, extended end of the building.
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5. The Council's concerns are centred on the comments made by its Conservation Officer (CO) who said:

A strong component of the significance of the listed farmhouse is its symmetrical form and the way it which it is experienced in relative isolation particularly from the roadside. It is not clear when the cottage was constructed or even if it originated as an outbuilding however, the current visual relationship between the cottage and the farmhouse is relatively subtle with the cottage remaining subservient and recessive.

The current proposal would be detrimental to the setting of the farmhouse in that it would visually encroach on the principal elevation of the farmhouse and its Eastern elevation. The scale and mass of the cottage would be extended towards the street elevation of the farmhouse and would result in a linear elevation facing the road directly adjacent to the principal elevation of the listed farmhouse. There is an element of screening by trees and vegetation along the roadside however this is not considered to be relevant mitigation in this case. The proposal would encroach on the sense of prominence and isolation currently experienced as part of the setting of the listed building and there is no public benefit associated with this proposal that would outweigh the harm generated.

6. I share the CO view to a large extent as to the significance of the LB, and its current relationship with the cottage. However, missing from the assessment is the fact that the cottage is set well back within its plot. I also consider that the CO has underestimated the screening role of trees forming part of the LB's setting.
7. In this regard, a row of pollarded deciduous trees separates the appeal property from the highway. Even when the trees have not refoliated, as was the case when I visited, they form a well composed screen, effectively sheltering the cottage, which is barely noticeable to passing motorists, cyclists and pedestrians (if any), even in spring and winter.
8. Judging from the listing description the principal elevations of the LB are those identified by the CO. In my view, given the cottage's set back position, the LB's main front elevation would remain unaffected by the proposed development in the sense that passers-by's perception of its attractiveness would remain unimpeded.
9. The main element of the eastern elevation is that which is three storey. From most publically accessible vantage points from outside the site, this elevation is largely obscured from view for the reasons already provided. However, it would continue to be seen and appreciated in its entirety from within the cottage's front garden were the proposal built.
10. Even in the unlikely event that the trees at the front of the site were removed, such is the cottage's set-back that the development proposed would not impair or harm the LB's setting. The cottage's new northern elevation would remain subservient to the far greater bulk and scale of Beacon Farmhouse, whose attractive main elevations would continue to be fully exposed.
11. The Council does not object to the intrinsic design of the proposal and nor does it consider that neighbouring living conditions would be impaired. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment in this regard.
12. I conclude that the proposed development is well-designed and that it would not harm the setting of the adjacent LB. Accordingly, there is no conflict with

those provisions of saved policy 42 of the Cotswold District Local Plan which requires development to be carried out in a manner respecting the character, appearance and distinctiveness of Cotswold District.

Conditions

13. Most of the Council's suggested conditions relate to materials or issues of detailed design. I consider that all are necessary in the interests of visual amenity. They are therefore imposed, with minor modifications in wording.
14. It is necessary in the interests of certainty that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
15. The site plan submitted with the appeal suggests the possibility or potential for additional tree screening. I do not consider that to be necessary, but in the interests of visual amenity I shall attach a condition relating to the retention and future management of the existing trees.
16. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account but none raised is of such significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. Save as otherwise provided in the accompanying conditions, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: EX 100 & SD 102.
3. The materials to be used in the external walls and roof of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
4. The external stonework in the extension hereby permitted shall be of the same stone type, colour and sizes as the existing stonework, and coursing, bonding, treatment of corners, method of pointing and mix and colour of mortar shall match that used in the external walling of the existing building.
5. All new door and window frames shall be recessed to match the existing door and window frames in the existing building.
6. No bargeboards or eaves fascias shall be used in the proposed development.
7. No windows and external doors shall be installed until their design and details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
8. The trees on the northern frontage of the site shall not be lopped, topped or removed without the prior consent of the local planning authority, which shall be obtained in writing.