



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2017

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

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

Decision date: 05 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/17/3169195

Bee Farm, Raymouts Lane, Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire, SG8 8NB.

- 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 Andrew Grisbrooke against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02932/1HH, dated 17 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is the remodelling of bungalow into part two-storey house with new first floor.
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by Mr Andrew Grisbrooke against North Hertfordshire District Council. This application will be the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the remodelling of bungalow into part two-storey house with new first floor at Bee Farm, Raymouts Lane, Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire, SG8 8NB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/02932/1HH, dated 17 November 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building, including doors and windows, hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, drawings numbered: 829/P01, P02, P03, P04, P05, P06, P07, P08 and P09.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of the host dwelling and thereby the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The dwelling the subject of this appeal, Bee Farm, is a detached single storey property. The farm is located in a relatively remote countryside location and lies within an area designated as beyond the Green Belt.
5. The dwelling is timber clad with a part gable/part hipped pantile covered roof. As I observed there are a number of other single storey buildings within the yard surrounding the dwelling. In direct contrast to the adjacent Woodman Public House, an attractive two-storey building, the dwelling and associated outbuildings at Bee Farm appear somewhat utilitarian and unattractive.
6. The appellant proposes enlarging the footprint of the existing bungalow and constructing a new first floor area to create a part two-storey dwelling.
7. Saved Policy 30 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 (LP) (September 2007) states that, in respect of dwellings anywhere in the countryside outside excluded or selected villages, the Council will, amongst other things, normally refuse proposals for their replacement or extension if a materially greater impact would result. Also, extensions will normally be refused if they result in a size, scale and design out of keeping with the original building and give the effect of a new building.
8. Saved LP Policy 28 advises that the Council will normally only permit development proposals if, along with other things: the extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, window details and materials; and pitched roofs are used where appropriate, particularly if the extension is more than the height of a single storey. In rural areas beyond the Green Belt, saved Policy 6 seeks to maintain the existing countryside and villages and their character.
9. By reason of the introduction of a two-storey element into the design, the dwelling as extended would have a slightly greater impact in its setting than the existing single storey structure. However, I found the existing dwelling to be strikingly bland, unattractive and utilitarian in appearance. As a consequence this had resulted in it having an imposing and overall detrimental impact on the appearance of the area. I am therefore not persuaded that the introduction of a first floor here would, in the context of the existing property, itself result in the dwelling, as extended, having a materially greater impact on the character or appearance of this countryside location than the existing or one that in any material way would alter the character of the existing countryside.
10. The proposed two-storey element of the design would change the form and height of the existing structure. However, given the overall footprint of the existing dwelling and the design of the proposed extensions in terms of eaves height, fenestration pattern, overall proportions and roof form, I do not consider that in this case the additions would be so out of keeping with the original building as to either give the effect of a new building or cause harm to the architectural integrity of the host building or its setting. Furthermore, in my opinion it would, as extended, relate better to the Woodman Public House in terms of its built form.
11. On balance therefore, in my judgement, the proposed development would generally serve to enhance the visual appearance of Bee Farm itself while not

causing harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside. However, if the building as extended and altered is to appear appropriate to its context, have a subordinate rural character and thereby relate sympathetically to its countryside location, the selection of materials, from a palette of traditional natural materials, is crucial here. This is a matter that could, if I were minded to allow the appeal, be dealt with by a suitably worded condition.

12.I conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed development, subject to the careful selection of materials, would not cause harm to either the architectural integrity of the host building or the character or appearance of the countryside in which it is located. The proposal would, therefore, accord with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and LP Policies 6, 28 and 30 as they relate to the quality of design and the maintenance of the character and appearance the surrounding countryside.

Conditions

13.The conditions follow from those suggested by the Council. To ensure a high quality development, I shall include a condition about the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building.

14.In the interests of certainty, I shall also impose a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.

Conclusions

15.For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole, and that the appeal should be allowed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR