



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/J1915/D/17/3168777

Ye Olde Off Licence, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire, SG9 9PU.

- 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 and Mrs R and A Crofton against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/16/2285/HH, dated 6 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues to be the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of the host property and therefore whether it would serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cottered Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The property the subject of this appeal, Ye Olde Off Licence, is a two-storey dwelling. It is located in a built up residential part of Cottered, within the Cottered Conservation Area. It also falls to be considered as lying in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The area surrounding the appeal site is characterised by a rich mix of buildings the design of which has drawn on a variety of architectural styles, forms, materials and details.
4. Following the removal of an earlier single storey catslide to the rear, the original dwelling has been previously extended by the addition of a part single/part two-storey rear extension. This extension, to the rear of the dwelling, maintained the gable roof form of the original property.
5. The appellants propose a further extension comprising a small ground floor addition, the removal of a catslide roof over part of the existing kitchen and the construction of a new first floor addition along the north east elevation of the later rear addition.
6. Policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 (LP) indicates that limited extensions or alterations to existing dwellings in accordance with LP Policy ENV5 within Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt would

be acceptable. LP Policy ENV5 states that an extension to a dwelling or erection of outbuildings will additionally be expected to be of a scale and size that would either by itself, or cumulatively with other extensions, not disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling nor intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area.

7. LP Policy ENV1 requires extensions, along with other things, to be of a high standard of design and layout and to reflect local distinctiveness. LP Policy ENV6 goes on, amongst other things, to require that extensions should be to a design and choice of materials of construction, either matching or complementary to those of the original building and its setting. LP Policy BH5 considers the design of extensions and alterations to unlisted buildings in conservation areas. It has particular regard to the need for such extensions to be sympathetic in terms of scale, height, proportion, form, materials and siting in relation to the building itself, adjacent buildings and the general character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposed extension would be set in from the rear wall of the earlier addition and from the gable flank wall of the original dwelling. Due to the double pitch form of the roof, the ridgeline of the extension would sit below that of the main ridge of the original dwelling and the later rear extension. In terms of its three-dimensional form therefore, I consider the extension would be subservient to the current dwelling as previously extended.
9. Nevertheless, whether the increase in floor area is 81% as asserted by the Council or 76% as calculated by the appellants, it is clear that when considered cumulatively the previous and proposed additions, in terms of the building's overall massing, would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling. Consequently, although due to its location the proposal would not intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area, I consider that the development would not accord with LP Policy ENV5.
10. In terms of its form I have found that the proposed extension would be visually subservient. Further, in relation to its height, proportions, choice of materials and siting the extension would not be unacceptable. However, I consider that the introduction of new hipped roofs here would result in a jarring alien feature that would detract from the architectural integrity of the host building. This would be the case despite the other local examples of this roof form that have been drawn to my attention. In turn, and albeit that there would be limited views of the north east elevation of the property from the public domain, I consider that the extension as designed would thereby cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
11. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, which include conservation areas. It draws a distinction between substantial harm and less than substantial harm to such an asset. For the latter, which applies here, the test is that the harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.
12. The proposed development, in terms of its construction, would provide some limited economic benefit. However, given the harm that has been identified I conclude that the public benefits would not outweigh that harm, or the conflict

that the development would have with the objectives of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Framework and LP Policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and BH5 as they relate to the quality of development and the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas.

13. In reaching my conclusion I have been mindful of the proposed change in status of Cottered to a Group 2 village and the change in emphasis of emerging Policy GBR2 at criterion (d) away from the comparison of an extension to the size of the original dwelling towards its impact on the character and appearance of the area. However, the emerging local plan has yet to complete its examination process and I can therefore only give this limited weight in my deliberations. Nevertheless, in any case I have found that in this instance the extension would cause harm to the wider area.

Conclusions

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the support of three direct neighbours for the proposal and the lack of objection from consultees (including the Council's historic conservation advisor) or third parties, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR