The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11th May 2017.

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3305/D/17/3169841
Higher Eastwater Farm, East Water Lane, Priddy, Cheddar BA5 3AX

- 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 Russell Sage against the decision of Mendip District Council.
- The application Ref 2016/2989/HSE, dated 29 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2017.
- The development proposed is an extension to the main house.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area and the need to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB).

Reasons

3. East Water Lane is set within a gently undulating landscape with open views over fields either side; housing and agricultural buildings form a loose knit cluster approximately half way along the lane/drove. The appeal property is a two storey stone dwelling with a simple and symmetrical front elevation. It has been recently refurbished and extensively altered and extended to the rear, incorporating a double gable and conservatory.

4. The appeal scheme would extend the building considerably. The top of the roof would rise above the eaves of the dwelling and result in a significant extension of the footprint and frontage. The extension would have a lower stone and pitched roof link structure connecting to a larger curved roofed extension. Although the link would provide a limited visual break between the existing house and the main part of the extension and the roofs are lower than the main house, the variety of roof forms, along with the verandas, would result in a cluttered appearance at odds with the simple form of the front elevation. When taken together with the scale of the extension there would be a detrimental effect on the character of the existing house.

5. When approaching the front of the property and from longer views from Wells Road, the extension would be seen in the context of the existing outbuildings and planting. These, however, would only partially obscure the views and not mitigate the harm. From the other direction the extension would be seen in the context of the double gable and other rear extensions. These additions have added considerable bulk to the rear of the property, but the proposed extension would only serve to increase the dominance and extent of built form.

Overall the effect of the scheme would be to unacceptably diminish the integrity of the host building with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The curved roof form, with corrugated metal finish, has been inspired by the presence of Nissen huts in the local area; one of which is being retained and refurbished as part of a scheme to convert barns to houses on the opposite side of the lane. However the provision of a new structure in this form does not have the same intrinsic historic interest as the retention of existing Nissen huts and it would be significantly taller than the nearby existing hut. Therefore the design approach does not mitigate the harm I have identified to the character of the area, nor does the presence of corrugated metal as a building material in parts of the appeal house and other nearby buildings.

7. For these reasons, the extension would harm the character and appearance of the area. Moreover, because of this, it would also fail to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. It is contrary to Policies DP1, DP4, and DP7 of the Mendip District Local Plan 2006-2029, Part 1: Strategy and Policies which seek to ensure that development maintains and enhances local identity and distinctiveness, that it is appropriate to the local context, and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

Other matters

8. The extension would allow for additional space to be provided for the appellant's parents who have recently come to live with him. I acknowledge the social and economic benefits that will derive from this move and I give this factor moderate weight. It does not, however, outweigh the harm I have found.

Conclusion

9. The adverse effects of the development are sufficient to mean that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR