
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 May 2017

by Andrew McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/17/3170510
The Firs, Carter Lane, Chelford SK11 9BD

- 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 Stuart Rushton against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 16/5886M, dated 5 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single storey extension to the rear of an existing barn conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey extension to the rear of an existing barn conversion at The Firs, Carter Lane, Chelford SK11 9BD in accordance with the application Ref: 16/5886M, dated 5 December 2016, and subject to the planning conditions set out below:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No: 1000 – 'Existing Building'; Drawing No: 1001 – 'Proposed Plans'; and Drawing No: 1020 – 'Proposed Elevations'.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issues

2. As the proposal is located within the Green Belt, the main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policy; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the setting of a listed building.
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Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. Paragraph 89 of the Framework set out the categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to certain conditions. This includes the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy GC12 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004 (LP) allows extensions and alterations of up to 30% of the original floor space provided that the scale and appearance of the building would not be significantly altered and the proposal would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the countryside.
4. The proposed single storey extension, in combination with other existing extensions, such as the link walkway between the two large brick buildings, would result in adding less than the maximum permitted 30% increase in floorspace allowed for in Policy GC12 of the LP. Furthermore, due to its position in relation to the existing buildings and its single storey height and scale, I find that the proposal would not result in a disproportionate addition to the original building. Having regard to the above and the Framework, I find the proposal to fall within the category of development considered as not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
5. Whilst the proposed extension would inevitably have some effect on the openness of the Green Belt, I have concluded that it would not be a disproportionate addition to the original building. Accordingly, I find that its effect on openness would be limited and would not cause material harm to the Green Belt.
6. In the above circumstances, I conclude that the proposal would be not inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would not be a disproportionate addition to the original property. As a result, in these respects, the proposed development would comply with Policy GC12 of the LP and Paragraph 89 of the Framework.

Character and appearance

7. The Firs is a substantial barn conversion and is part of a number of buildings which form the farmstead group that includes a listed building. I note that these buildings have previously been considered as curtilage listed. They are predominantly of brick construction with pitched roofs and have an agricultural character and appearance. There is a modern single storey link building which connects two of the larger brick buildings. However, this is mostly unseen from the wider area due to its secluded position. Nonetheless, this element of the building provides a more domestic scale, character and appearance to the existing buildings.
8. The proposed extension would be situated on the west and north elevation of one of the original brick buildings. Although it would be adjacent to the open countryside to the west, the proposal would not be particularly visible from the nearby public right of way or the surrounding area. The original two storey property is approximately 2 metres below the ground level of the adjacent open countryside. As such, the proposed extension would also be situated

- below the adjacent ground level. Therefore, given its single storey scale, its visibility would be limited from the surrounding area.
9. As the proposal would be situated towards the rear of the property when approached from Carter Lane and the private access lane, I find that the lower nature of the appeal site to its surroundings, the proposed flat roof and its extensive glazed element would present a lighter form of development which would not result in a significantly adverse impact on the existing property. Furthermore, I find that the scale, design and appearance of the extension would minimise its impact and would be subservient to the existing building.
 10. I appreciate that the design elements of the proposal would contrast with the pitched roof, linear form and prevailing materials of the existing building. However, I find that the existing link element of the building would appear as a similar element to the proposed extension. The wrap-around form of the proposal and the existing link extension would assist in bringing together the contrasting styles of the original building and the proposed elements of the property. In my view, through its subservient scale and the use of appropriate materials, the proposed extension would complement the original building and its existing additions and would be sympathetic to its overall character and appearance.
 11. Whilst I note that materials have not been confirmed by the appellant, similar materials to those of the existing building could be secured by condition to ensure that there is a consistent appearance to the overall property, for reasons of character and appearance.
 12. I note that the proposal would not be directly visible from the listed building. Whilst it would inevitably alter the appearance of a building near to the listed building, I find that due to its position, scale and design it would be sufficiently distant and visually separated from the listed building so as to have no material impact on it or its setting with the group of buildings.
 13. The proposal would remove some of the external brick walls of the existing building at ground level to accommodate the extension. I appreciate that this would have an impact on the existing property. The Council points to the angled wall as being a characterful feature of the existing building which would be lost. Furthermore, the Council points to the features of the gable end of the original property and its decorative brickwork. However, due to the design and nature of the extension, I find that the brickwork would be retained at the first floor level. The loss of the walls at ground floor level would not be apparent on the exterior of the extended building as the space would be concealed by the extent of the proposal. Therefore, I find that there would be no material adverse impact on the external character or appearance of the existing building.
 14. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have no material harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the setting of the listed building. It would therefore comply with Policies GC12, BE1, BE16 and DC2 of the LP and the relevant guidance within the Framework. Amongst other matters, these policies and guidance seek to ensure that development has regard to the character and appearance of its host property and its surrounding context, including the setting of listed buildings and the Green Belt.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard implementation condition relating to time, I have imposed conditions relating to the approved plans and the details of external surface materials, which are necessary and reasonable in the interests of providing certainty and for reasons of character and appearance.

Conclusion

16. Having assessed the evidence before me, I find that the proposal would have the benefit of providing additional accommodation for the appellant. Although public benefits would be limited, the scheme would result in no material harm to the Green Belt in terms of inappropriate development or its openness. Whilst the existing property has an agricultural appearance to it, the proposed extension would reflect the scale, design and appearance of the existing link extension which provides a more domestic element to the overall building. Furthermore, the proposal would be subservient to the existing brick buildings. As a result, I find that it would have no material harmful effect on the character or appearance of the host property or the setting of the listed building. Therefore, on balance, I find that the benefits of the scheme would outweigh the lack of any material harm I have found.
17. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposal should be allowed.

Andrew McCormack

INSPECTOR