

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2017

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 20th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/D/17/3173538

Pilgrims House, Pilgrims Way, Chew Stoke, Bristol, BS40 8TZ

- 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 Stephenson against the decision of Bath and Northeast Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 16/03247/FUL, dated 24 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing outbuilding with the construction of an outbuilding providing a home office, garden store and wood store ancillary to the existing house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a large residential plot with a new detached house of two storeys with dormer windows. It lies within the Green Belt and the Chew Stoke Conservation Area. Chew Stoke village has a rural setting, characterised by a wide variety of historic and modern buildings and a mix of a regular building pattern along some streets and looser groupings in other parts. Pilgrims Way is narrow and the buildings along it in the immediate surroundings of the site have no clearly identifiable style, form or size, though they are generally well spaced with clear gaps between them. Many are of two storeys, but are typically of a modest domestic scale set in large garden plots.
4. The proposed outbuilding would provide storage and accommodation which amount to a normal domestic adjunct to the dwelling and as such would be an extension to the main dwelling although it is separated from it. The dwelling is of recent construction and the Council is satisfied that it would not be a disproportionate addition to the dwelling in the context of its policies and supplementary guidance and that it would not, therefore, be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. I see no reason in this instance to disagree with this and have determined the appeal accordingly.
5. Since the proposal is not inappropriate and it does not fall into either of the two categories in paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the

Framework) where openness is specifically referred to, the matter of its impact on the openness of the Green Belt does not arise. The lack of impact on openness is implicit in the finding that the development would not be inappropriate.

6. I consider that the proposal is unacceptable in respect of its impact on the character and appearance of the area, and of the conservation area in particular, because of its size, design and location. The existing outbuilding to be replaced has a low profile appearance against the boundary with the neighbouring property, Nutgrove. At the time of my visit there was a larger outbuilding immediately adjacent to the common boundary in the curtilage of Nutgrove. I understand that this building is to be demolished and I saw that works have started in connection with the construction of a recently permitted new dwelling on that site which will be adjacent to the boundary.
7. I consider that the following policies are relevant in this case. Policy CP8 of the Bath and Northeast Somerset Core Strategy 2014 (the Core Strategy) and GB2 of the Bath and Northeast Somerset Local Plan 2007 (the local plan) seek to protect the openness of the Green Belt and to protect it from development which would be visually detrimental to it.
8. Core Strategy policy CP6 requires development to be of a high quality design and seeks to protect and enhance the historic environment. Local plan policies D.2 and D.4 also promote high quality design and BH.6 states that development in a conservation area will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
9. There is a statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The Framework states that in the consideration of development proposals weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets in accordance with the significance of the asset.
10. The appeal site is on the edge of both the settlement and the conservation area with open fields to the north. The setting and the informal pattern of development in the immediate vicinity give a rural feel to the area, enhanced by the spaces between buildings and the vegetation.
11. I consider that the overall size, height, design and location of the proposed outbuilding would result in an unacceptable urbanisation of the character and appearance of the area. I note that there would be a reduction in its height compared to a previous scheme, but although it would be smaller in scale than the main house, it would still amount to a substantial building, not only in terms of its height and depth but also the width of its elevation to the road. It would be larger and appear more prominent in the street scene than the modest, low profile building on the site at present.
12. I have taken account of the variety of garages and outbuildings elsewhere in the vicinity. They are located in varying relationship to both the main dwellings and the boundaries. In my view, the majority of them do not present the concentration of built form or impact on the rural setting which would result from the appeal proposal. I also note the references to the recent planning permissions for new dwellings, including Pilgrims House. I have little

information regarding the circumstances under which the permissions were granted, but the dwellings appear to be of a somewhat larger scale than that of the older dwellings. I consider that the proposal would introduce a further large element into the area which would detract from the visual quality of the area.

13. In my view, the significance of the conservation area stems from the well spaced dwellings in their rural village setting. In echoing the design and gabled roof form of the permitted new dwelling at Nutgrove and locating the building in very close proximity to the latter, the proposal would appear as a continuation of that building and consequently a concentration of built form wholly out of character with the setting. The impact would be exacerbated by its juxtaposition with the large expanse of hard landscaping associated with Pilgrims House, particularly the access drive.

14. I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the conservation area and would not preserve or enhance its character or appearance. It would also harm the visual amenities and rural character of the Green Belt. It would be contrary to policies D.2, D.4 and BH.6 of the local plan and CP6 of the Core Strategy.

15. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR