
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2017

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/17/3178218
Coombe House, Taynton, Burford, OX18 4UH

- 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 & Mrs James Marks against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/03529/HHD, dated 19 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is extensions and alterations to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for extensions and alterations at Coombe House, Taynton, Burford, OX18 4UH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/03529/HHD, dated 19 October 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Block Plan 100715/1, Elevations 13/0117 Revised 20th January 17, Plans 291115/1/A, Existing Elevations, Existing Floor Plans, Site Plan.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building, specifically; the external walls shall be constructed of natural stone of the same type and laid in the same manner as that used in the existing building.
 - 4) No development shall commence until detailed specifications and drawings of all new windows, doors, screens, dormers, roof lights and chimneys at a scale of not less than 1:20, including external finishes, colour and section details at 1:5, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have removed the words "...to dwelling" from my formal decision as this is not a description of development.
3. The proposal was amended following submission to the Council but prior to its determination. These changes, shown on revised plans, resulted in a reduction

in the height of the replacement side extension and alterations to the design of the proposed front and rear projecting gables. I am satisfied that all relevant parties have been made aware of these amendments and would not be prejudiced. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed extensions and alterations on the character and appearance of Coombe House, the setting of the Grade II* listed St Johns Church, and whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Taynton Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The village of Taynton is characterised by houses and cottages, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, which are built from local limestone. Many of these are listed. Also of note is the Grade II* listed St Johns Church. Although located on the southern edge of the village the church tower can be seen from the village centre in-between the buildings here. Taynton has retained its very traditional, rural, village character and it is this which led to the designation of Taynton Conservation Area in 1970.
6. Coombe House is a detached dwelling located in the centre of Taynton within the conservation area. It was formerly an agricultural barn but was converted in 1980. It is not listed and has been altered and extended over the years. Nevertheless it is still a building of some age and historic interest.
7. There is currently a relatively modest side extension to the property which was approved in 1983. It is proposed to replace this with a slightly larger and taller side extension which has been designed to resemble a cart shed. As such it would incorporate glazed openings between timber posts¹ on all three sides of the ground floor. Although this design approach contrasts with the design of the original building it would not appear overtly uncharacteristic given the agricultural origins of the building. Furthermore, the glazed openings would give the extension a light appearance which would add to its subservience. It would therefore not compete with or detract from the main, original, building.
8. I acknowledge that the Taynton Preservation and Enhancement Document states that large sheets of fixed glazing are rarely appropriate. However in this case I find no harm in this approach given my findings above. I therefore find no harm to the character and appearance of Coombe House in respect of this element of the proposal.
9. Whilst not an identified 'significant view' in the Taynton Conservation Area Character Appraisal my attention is drawn to views of St Johns' church tower from the approach to Taynton from Great Barrington to the north of the appeal site. Here the church tower can be seen above the existing single storey side extension at Coombe House. The replacement side extension would be approximately 1m taller than the existing. This would result in a small part of the church tower, currently visible above the existing extension along a short section of the highway here, being obscured. However, a good proportion of the church tower would still remain visible.

¹ Paragraph 5.16 of the appellant's Grounds of Appeal

10. During my site visit I walked around the area immediately surrounding Coombe House. There were no completely unimpeded views of the church tower that I observed. Rather, the character of this area is of traditional houses and cottages, above and between which, at various points, the church tower in the distance can be observed. I therefore conclude that the character and appearance of the Taynton Conservation Area and how the church is experienced from here would not be materially altered by the replacement side extension.
11. Taking the above points together I find no harm to the character or appearance of Coombe House or the setting of the Grade II* listed St Johns Church. Furthermore I consider that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Taynton Conservation Area. It follows that I find no conflict with Policies BE2, BE5, BE8 and H2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 or the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seek to protect against such harm.
12. The Council have referred to various policies in the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. However, this has not yet been adopted and, in any event, these policies do not significantly change the approach from those referred to above.

Other matters

13. I have seen comments from interested parties regarding light pollution as a result of the proposed works and note that Taynton has no street lights. However, given the relatively modest scale of the works proposed and that they are to an existing dwelling which is surrounded by neighbouring properties I do not consider that any light pollution associated with the proposal would result in material harm.
14. The Council has not objected to the elements of the proposal not discussed above, or in terms of any impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties and I find no reason to disagree. I have also considered the effect of the development on the settings of adjacent listed buildings and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which the appeal site is located but, given my findings above, I find no harm.
15. Finally, each application and appeal must be considered on its individual planning merits. A generalised concern in respect of my decision in this case setting a precedent does not therefore justify withholding planning permission.

Conditions and conclusion

16. In addition to the standard time limit condition I have specified the approved plans as this provides certainty. To ensure a satisfactory appearance I have also included conditions relating to the materials and detailing of the extensions.
17. Subject to these conditions, and having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR