
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2017

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

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

Decision date: 09 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/17/3181448

Church Farm Cottage, 49 Sawston Road, Babraham CB22 3AP

- 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 Mrs Lyn Turner against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/1112/17/FL, dated 23 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is a partial first floor extension over an existing single-storey extension and a new front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. There are two issues in this case. Firstly is whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, secondly, the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached, two-storey cottage situated in a rural location in the Cambridge Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that a local planning authority should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. This is subject to exceptions listed in the Framework which include extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
4. In this case the cottage has been extended in the past and the proposed development would result in a cumulative increase in the internal floor area of the original cottage of about 53%. Policy HG/6 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (DCP) indicates that extensions to dwellings in the countryside should not lead more than a 50% increase in the gross internal floor area of the original dwelling. However, the Council concludes that exceeding this limit by about 3% would be insignificant in this case and, in terms of its size alone, the extension would be acceptable with regard to its effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. I concur with this view and consider this to be an indication

that the proposed extension would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. The appeal property has the character of a modest sized cottage and I consider that a cumulative increase in its size of about 50% would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Accordingly, the proposed extension would not be inappropriate development as defined by the Framework and in this respect the development would accord with DCP Policy GB/1.

Character and Appearance

6. The cottage is of traditional appearance, being largely clad in brick with a slate roof. It has first floor accommodation built into the roof space which includes two small gables dormers situated in the front elevation of the roof. When viewed from the front, the pair of cottages has a strongly symmetrical and balanced appearance which contributes to their charm in the local landscape. The proposal includes construction of an extension above an existing single-storey extension which wraps around the gable end of the cottage.
7. Part of the extension would have a pitched roof which would run at right angles to the main house roof and would result in new, prominent, two-storey gables at the back and front of the cottage. The front gable would be much larger than the two small gabled dormers and would be a dominate feature of the front of the cottage. Further, the front gable would appear large and bulky in relation to the pair of cottages as a whole, unbalancing the appearance of the cottages to a considerable extent.
8. At first floor level at the back, the new gable would have a pair of glass doors which would open out onto a small roof terrace enclosed by a glazed balustrade. As a consequence of its design and elevated position, the roof terrace would be a prominent feature of the rear elevation of the property which would not reflect the traditional appearance of the pair of cottages. Further, most of the rear elevation of the pitched roof of the main building would be replaced by a flat roofed extension with vertical wall cladding. The combination of the box-like, flat roofed extension and the rear gable of the pitched roof extension with the roof terrace, would give the rear elevation of the cottage a prominent and incongruous appearance which would detract from the character and appearance of the pair of cottages.
9. When viewed from outside the appeal site from the south-west, the existing south-westerly facing first floor gable end of the cottage is a distinctive feature which reflects the scale and character of the pair of cottages. The this gable end would be hidden from view by the pitched roof with two dormer windows of the proposed extension. In combination with the roof terrace and flat roofed extension, this expanse of roof would add considerably to the visual bulk of the proposed extension in the local landscape.
10. The appeal property is situated within a cluster of dwellings situated in a rural location. There are fields to the front and rear of the property and nearby to the west is a former farmyard of substantial single-storey and two-storey barn conversions. These barn conversions appear to have largely retained their original external appearance and during my inspection I did not see any first floor roof terraces or prominent flat roof structures nearby.

Conclusion

11. Notwithstanding that in quantitative terms the cumulative size of the extended dwelling would not be disproportionate, the design of the proposed extension would result in it appearing as a large, bulky and incongruous feature which would detract from the character and appearance of the host building and the pair of cottages as a whole. In turn this would detract from the prevailing character and appearance of the cluster of dwellings in the rural landscape. In this respect the development would not meet the requirements of DCP Policies HG/6 and DP/2. Therefore, on balance and for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR