



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2019

by Helen O'Connor LLB MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/D/19/3222441

Oldhams Barn, Throckmorton Road, Lower Moor WR10 2PP

- 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 R Righton against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02460/HP, dated 20 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey link extension.
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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 building, with particular regard to its historic character.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a converted former field barn and associated garage set in open countryside. Notwithstanding the various alterations to the original building, the existing extension and the addition of a detached double garage, the original form and function of the main building is still discernible. The relatively modest scale, materials, linear footprint, roof pitch and positioning of some of the openings combine to reflect the simple form of the original rural building and this contributes positively to the appearance of the building within the landscape.
4. The proposal would introduce a single storey extension at the northern end of the barn conversion such that it would connect with the existing detached double garage located to the north west. The design of the new extension takes cues from the double garage building in terms of the ridge height, eaves height and roof pitch and as a result would have a somewhat squat form with proportions at odds with those on the original building. In addition, the resulting footprint would be a more complex L shaped arrangement inconsistent with the simple form and modest character of the original rural building.
5. Although the proximity and scale of the detached garage to a certain degree has a negative impact on the character of the main building, joining the built form together would exacerbate the harm as the clear physical separation assists in defining the garage structure to be of lesser status in form and

- function relative to the main building. The appeal proposal would diminish this clear distinction.
6. In addition, although the use of significant glazing in the appeal proposal is intended to convey a lightweight structure, the glazing used on the east elevation in particular, is more extensive and of different proportions to that used in the original part of the building. As such, rather than appearing lightweight and subordinate, it would compete with the original elevation as the dominant feature. Furthermore, due to its domestic character and proportions it would cause harm to the character of the original building.
 7. There is no dispute between the parties that the building is not listed, nor in a conservation area, nor identified on a local list, and the appellant points out that the Council have not expressly referred to the appeal building as a non-designated heritage asset. Even so, the officer report refers to Paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which relates to proposals affecting heritage assets and asserts that the appeal building is of local interest and typical of a former field barn.
 8. The Framework defines a heritage asset to include a building that has a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It goes on to state that this would include assets identified by the local planning authority and notes local listing as one way to do this, however it is not stated this is the only way. As such, I am not persuaded that the lack of inclusion on a local list would of itself preclude the building from being considered a non-designated heritage asset.
 9. The appellant points to the erosion of the historic character of the building due to the conversion to residential use, a more recent two storey extension, and in particular the harmful impact of the location of the detached double garage. Even so, the Council indicate that the building appears on the first edition ordnance survey map and as identified above, sufficient original characteristics have been retained that convey the historic form and function of the former field barn as part of Worcestershire's agricultural heritage. It follows that these factors point to a level of heritage interest that would merit consideration in my decision.
 10. The appellant highlights the isolated location of the appeal site, such that the proposal would not, given the intervening distance, be easily seen from either Throckmorton Road or Evesham Road. However, adjacent to the east of the appeal site there is a public bridleway. Notwithstanding the partial screening that the boundary hedgerow provides, glimpses of the eastern and northern elevations would be possible from the bridleway, and particularly so from the route located on more open land to the north. Therefore, I am not persuaded that views of the proposal would be largely confined to views from the private access to the west as suggested by the appellant. In any event, whilst the location of the appeal site would to a certain degree reduce the impact of the harm, this would not of itself justify a development that is harmful to the historic character of the building.
 11. The appellant asserts that the appeal proposal would extend the linear form in a similar way to the two-storey extension permitted in 2004. However, unlike the appeal proposal, the 2004 extension did not seek to join the original building to the double garage, and furthermore utilised a roof pitch and simple form with limited openings that was more sympathetic to the historic

characteristics of the original building. As such, it was materially different to the appeal proposal.

12. The Framework advises at paragraph 197 that the effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when making a decision, and that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset. Moreover, Policies SWDP6, SWDP21 and SWDP24 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, 2016 include requirements that are relevant to the consideration of heritage assets. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
13. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the historic character and appearance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset and therefore, would conflict with policies SWDP6, SWDP21 and SWDP24 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, 2016. Policy SWDP6, amongst other matters requires development to conserve and enhance heritage assets. Policy SWDP21 sets criteria in order for development to achieve high quality of design, one of which refers to the need to enhance heritage assets and reinforce local distinctiveness. Finally, Policy SWDP24 relates to the management of the historic environment and, amongst other matters, encourages the sympathetic adaptation and reuse of heritage assets.

Other matters

14. I have had regard to the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposal as outlined by the appellant, and particularly in relation to providing improved, flexible family accommodation to meet the needs of the appellant's family and future occupants. However, these benefits do not attract sufficient weight to override the harm I have identified in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Helen O'Connor

Inspector