



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2019

by Thomas Bristow BA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/D/19/3226411

Cotswold House, Crofts Lea Park, Ilfracombe EX34 9PN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Reynolds against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 65999, dated 13 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'to replace existing open porch with extension and conversion of integral garage'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the replacement of existing open porch with extension and conversion of integral garage at Cotswold House, Crofts Lea Park, Ilfracombe EX34 9PN in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 65999, dated 13 December 2018, subject to the conditions below.

Preliminary matters

2. Notwithstanding unsuccessful application Ref 64099, each proposal must be determined on its merits unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan includes policies of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (adopted 29 October 2018, the 'LP'). Ilfracombe Town Council's administrative area was designated as an area for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan on 9 May 2019. However there is no indication that neighbourhood planning work has yet progressed to a stage such that it may be accorded significant weight. The Council have no objection to the conversion of the integral garage.¹

Reasons

3. Cotswold House is an understated detached dwelling off Crofts Lea Park close to its junction with New Barnstaple Road (B3230). I understand that it was constructed at some point during the 1970s; its design reflects the aesthetic of that time. Many properties along Crofts Lea Park are, by contrast, grand Victorian and Edwardian houses arranged so as to make best advantage of expansive coastal views. Historic properties feature intricate and lively

¹ There is no indication that doing so would conflict with conditions attached to any previous permission, noting Section 55(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

architectural detailing consistent with the tastes and practical means by which development was orchestrated during that era. Their principal elevations variously include single and double height bay windows, balconies, and porches of differing designs.² Some have been altered over time: a modern and extensively-glazed porch, for example, spans between two original projecting gable elements of neighbouring Nos 19 and 20.

4. There are some common characteristics to the built environment nearby: development follows a broadly regular pattern and low front boundary walls are a consistent feature. However, originally more generously spaced, the architectural variety of the street has been added to over time via the establishment of detached properties between older houses. That is the case of Cotswold House, Hollybrow next to it, Driftwood close by and both 16a and 15a. There is limited consistency to such infill in terms of design. The set-back of properties from Crofts Lea Park also varies somewhat. Nos 19 and 20 and 15 and 16 are close to the pavement. That contrasts with Hollybrow and Nos 17 and 18 which are generously recessed and also sunken in the landform as the topography declines seawards. On occasion there are garages projecting beyond the line of principal elevations, such as at Nos 4 and Driftwood.
5. The proposal is to add a symmetrical ground floor extension spanning the width of the principal elevation of Cotswold House, extensively glazed above a low brick wall. That would be in place of an existing full-width flat roof porch supported by four plastic columns referencing Doric detailing. The existing porch does not contribute positively to the street scene. In my view it appears as a half-hearted and flimsy attempt to enliven the simpler design of Cotswold House relative to the architectural detailing of nearby properties.
6. By consequence, although the extension proposed would be of more substantial construction and appear bulkier than the existing porch, those characteristics would better tie extension and original building together. In my view it would, in that context and on account of the design proposed, appear more consistent with traditional approaches to construction and architectural detailing. By consequence, and given the use of glazing and a pyramidal roof light limiting the visual bulk of the scheme, neither the design nor visual prominence of the proposal would be unacceptable with reference to the scale, proportions and appearance of Cotswold House nor that of properties close by.
7. I understand that the extension would project 1.4 metres further towards the property's plot frontage to Crofts Lea Park than the veranda enclosed by the existing porch. However that would be only slightly forward of the foremost elevations of neighbouring Nos 19 and 20. As set out above there is some variety in the building line along the street such that the projection proposed would not appear incongruous. I acknowledge there may be some additional light spill resulting from the proposal. However there is a extensively glazed porch spanning between Nos 19 and 20. Some degree of illumination is

² Different designs of bay windows are present at Nos 1, 18 and 19, and 2 and 3. Nos 8 and 9 have inset balconies. Nos 4 and 5 have small projecting porches whereas those at Nos 6 and 7 wrap around the elevations of those houses.

moreover, likely to be present at most times given the established residential nature of the area and proximity to B3230 (the principal eastwards route to and from the town).

8. Moreover at present the front garden of Cotswold House is relatively open; the boundary features shown in illustrative drawing 018-068-5 Rev: A were not in place at the time of my site visit. Nevertheless, as set out above, such front boundary features are a consistent feature of the area and would provide some degree of privacy to occupants. Irrespective of a dedicated condition they are therefore highly likely to be installed and maintained for aesthetic and practical reasons. Once established they would both partially obscure the proposed extension from view and baffle light emitted from, assisting the proposal in assimilating appropriately within the street scene.
9. For the above reasons, given the specific nature of the development proposed and its surrounding context, I conclude that the proposal would integrate acceptably with the character and appearance of its surroundings. No conflict consequently arises with the relevant provisions of LP policies ST04 or DM04 or with bullet point c) of NPPF paragraph 127. In summary, and amongst other things, those policies seek to ensure that all development responds appropriately and sympathetically to nearby design characteristics.
10. That finding is reached subject to the imposition of conditions necessary to secure compliance with the details shown on the plans and the use of acceptable materials and finishes such that the scheme, as implemented, is consistent with my assessment above. In imposing conditions I have had regard to the relevant provisions of statute, the NPPF and of the Planning Practice Guidance.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, having taken account of the development plan as a whole, the approach in the NPPF, and all other relevant considerations including the representations of those nearby, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the schedule of conditions below.

Thomas Bristow

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 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 approved plans 018-068-1, 018-068-4 Rev: A and 018-068-5 Rev: A, including in respect of any external materials, finishes and boundary features shown on those plans (other than in so far as perspective illustrations are annotated as illustrative).

- 3) Other than as specified in condition 2) above, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.