



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2019 by S Watson BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/19/3233395

Foalsdon Barn, Whitford Bridge Road, Stoke Prior B60 4HD

- 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 S Powell against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00059/FUL, dated 18 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2019.
 - The development is proposed extension to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The appeal property lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Council acknowledge that the proposal would not result in harm to the Green Belt. On the basis of the evidence before me, I find that the extension to the dwelling would not result in an extension which exceeds the percentage increase or floor area figure set out within Policy BDP4.4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP). Accordingly, it would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and would therefore not result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
4. I therefore consider the main issues in this case to be the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the host building, and
 - whether it would preserve the setting of Steppingley, a Grade II Listed Building.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

5. Foalsdon Barn is a small converted linear barn within a rural landscape. Although converted into residential use, the building retains features which

show its original function and form, including its openings and scarring in the brickwork on the western elevation.

6. The Council consider that the building is a non-designated heritage asset however I have not been directed to a local list of heritage assets, or draft local heritage list to which Policy BDP20 of the BDP eludes to. Accordingly, I have considered the proposal on the basis that it is not a non-designated heritage asset.
7. The new extension would be erected on the western elevation of the building. It would be of a lean-to design, with a shallow roof pitch which would sit below the eaves of the property. The footprint of the proposed extension would be comparable in scale to the existing barn, and significantly larger than the removed extension shown on the historic map submitted by the appellant. It would appear as a prominent addition which would, as a result of its depth, and design be incongruous with the form and small scale of this rural building. The proposal would also erode the legibility of the original form of the building by covering scarring above the living room window which appears to show the gable of a pitched roof.
8. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building in conflict with Policy BDP19 of the BDP which amongst other things requires development to achieve good design, which enhances the character and distinctiveness of the local area. There would also be conflict with the adopted High Quality Design SPD particularly with regard to the guidance relating to rural buildings which establishes that extensions will not normally be permitted where they would detract from the plain, simple and utilitarian appearance of the rural building.
9. Given my findings above in respect of the building not being a non-designated heritage asset, no conflict would arise with Policy BDP20 of the BDP. The Council has confirmed that its Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Conversion of Rural Buildings has been superseded by its High Quality Design SPD referred to above. I have based my assessment of the proposal accordingly.

Setting of Listed Building

10. Steppingley is a large detached dwelling from the early 17th Century with 19th and 20th Century additions. The importance of the listed building stems from its age and appearance as a substantial farmhouse still set within a rural context. Although the appellant's statement of case refers to there being no historic association between Foalsdon Barn and this listed building, it is accepted that the appeal property is located within the setting of Steppingley. I concur; the two buildings, given the proximity to each other are read together.
11. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building. In this respect national policy on heritage assets, which includes listed buildings, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. At paragraph 192, it sets out matters which should be taken into account including sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

12. Given my findings above that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property, it follows that the contribution that the extended dwelling would make to the significance of the setting of the listed building would be diminished. The extended dwelling would harm the simple rural character of the setting of the Listed Building.
13. The appellant has suggested that the historic significance of the Listed Building can only be viewed from the south and west, and that the appeal site would not be visible from these angles. However, the whole building is listed and is of historic importance, and I have considered the proposal accordingly.
14. Whilst the harm that would be caused to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial, the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) makes it clear that great weight should be attached to this harm, and that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. It is submitted that the proposal would improve the living conditions of the property's occupiers. Whilst I have no doubt that the provision of a larger property and separate living room may be of benefit to the appellant, it would not amount to a public benefit in favour of the proposal.
16. I consider therefore that there are no public benefits which outweigh the identified harm to the significance of the setting of the heritage asset, Steppingley. Therefore, for the reasons above I conclude that the extension fails to preserve the setting of the Grade II Listed Building, which conflicts with Policy BDP20 of the BDP, and the Framework, which jointly require development to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their setting.

Other Matters

17. The appellant has drawn my attention to guidance produced by Historic England. However, I have not been provided with a copy of these documents, so I have therefore been unable to take them into consideration as part of this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR