



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2019

by S. Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/19/3234459

Station House, Station Road, Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5EQ

- 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 Matt Dill against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.19/0234/HHOLD, dated 26 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of flat roof, single-storey extension and reinstatement of original pitched-roof porch. Replacement of rear door and windows x2 with x1 patio doors. Demolition of store/privy. Construction of single-storey extension to rear/side of existing building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (1) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, particularly the designated Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA), and to Station House itself; and (2) the effect of the development on drainage and flood risk.

Reasons

Character and Appearance/Conservation Area impact

3. As stated above, the site is within a Conservation Area, which has its historical significance linked to the industrial heritage of the Stroud Area. The building, being linked to the railway, is regarded as an important historical asset within the Conservation Area. It is considered a non-designated heritage asset in its own right by the Council.
4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, (the Act) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas in the exercise of planning functions.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 193 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the

significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

6. Furthermore, paragraph 197 of the Framework states that non-designated heritage assets (such as locally listed buildings) should be taken into account with proposals, and that a balanced judgement is required with regard to any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
7. The existing house is relatively small in a large plot. The proposal would include what would be a large single storey flat roof extension to the house. Whilst the proposed extended house would not fill the plot, the extension itself would appear particularly large when viewed against the existing house, especially that which is original. As a result, the extension would visually overwhelm the existing house to the extent that it would be a dominant feature. The extension would have a larger footprint than the original dwelling, and whilst it is single storey with a low profile, it would not be a subservient addition to this historical house. The scale of the extension is not in keeping with that of the original dwelling.
8. I recognise that the extension has been designed to be clearly distinguished from the traditional architecture of the original house, with the appellant seeking to use good quality materials and a modern approach. However, the design and materials appear to have little regard to the appearance or character of the original house. It is a combination of the unsympathetic design and the disproportionate scale and massing of the proposed extension which would detract from the qualities of the original house.
9. Whilst there is an existing high fence to much of the boundary and some screening from vegetation, there would still be views (or partial views) from public vantage points of the proposed extension. Such a disproportionately large extension of incongruous design to this existing house in this prominent corner plot location would have an adverse impact to the character of the IHCA.
10. There are industrial/commercial buildings in the area which the appellant highlights as being poor quality within the IHCA. However, Station House is a traditional building with historical links to this area. It is currently a positive asset within the IHCA. Therefore, even if there are other buildings within the IHCA that do not positively contribute to this heritage designation, this is not a reason to accept proposals that would adversely affect a building which does positively contribute to the character of the area.
11. There is a variety of building types, ages and styles in the area of the site, but as explained above, I would regard the original Station House as a positive element within the IHCA, which itself would be adversely affected by the proposal.
12. Overall, the proposal does not preserve nor enhance the character of either the IHCA or the Station House, which is itself important as a non-designated heritage asset. I would regard the proposed extensions as harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, the harm would be less than substantial and in accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), that harm should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. Whilst I recognise that the house is currently small for a family to occupy and some aspects of the

proposal would reinstate features of the original house, there are no substantive public benefits arising from the proposal to offset the identified harm, to which I must attach considerable importance and weight.

13. There may be some alternative proposals that could be considered under permitted development rights, but I have no details of alternatives or how likely it is that such extensions would be developed if this proposal were to be dismissed. As such I give this matter limited weight in my considerations. The appellant has also indicated he would be willing to amend the proposal to some degree, but at this stage the decision is to be made based on the plans before me now.
14. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policies ES10 and HC8 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, 2015. These policies seek to preserve, protect or enhance the historic environment, including Conservation Areas; and require that the height, scale, form and design of the extension proposed is in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling, amongst other things.

Drainage

15. The Council has also refused the proposal on a lack of detail with regards flood risk and surface water drainage. However, the Council has provided little information as to their concerns, other than comments from the Water Resource Engineer as part of the planning application consultations.
16. The appellant has produced a drainage plan and provided some more information on these matters. I have no response regarding these issues from the Council as this evidence was provided with the appeal.
17. Had I been minded to allow the appeal it would have been necessary for me to go back to the Council for comment on this evidence submitted by the appellant. However, even if there were no likely adverse effects to flood risk, thereby being in accordance with Policies ES3 and ES4 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan and the Framework on this issue, that would be neutral in the planning balance rather than representing a positive factor weighing in favour of allowing the appeal. As such, in these circumstances, I have not pursued this issue further.

Other Matters

18. I note the comments from the appellant with regard the lack of communication from the Council through the planning application process, but my assessment of the proposal is based on the evidence before me now. Issues of communication between the appellant and the Council has had no bearing on the decision I have made.
19. The fact that there has been no objection from neighbours as regards the impact of the proposal to their living conditions is recognised but is a neutral factor as this just demonstrates there is no harm raised in this respect. It does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the IHCA I have found as explained above.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

S. Rennie

INSPECTOR