



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2019 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/19/3235734

Beretun, Lilley Green Farm, Lilley Green Road, Alvechurch B48 7HA

- 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 N Irons against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/00799/FUL, dated 17 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
-

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.

Procedural Matters

3. The site is located in the Green Belt but both parties agree that the proposals would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt on the basis that the extension would not amount to a disproportionate addition to the existing dwelling. Having regard to paragraph 145(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the content of policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) (the District Plan) I agree with that conclusion.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The building was an agricultural barn that has been converted into residential use. The barn is L shaped and the proposal would extend the dwelling to create a T shaped property. The dwelling is a non-designated heritage asset and is part of a wider Victorian farmstead that included a courtyard of agricultural buildings set to the north-west of a detached farmhouse. The buildings that formed the courtyard have now been split into two dwellings. A wall separates these two dwellings and there is a noticeable ground level difference between the two properties. Nevertheless, the central area is enclosed on three sides which creates the central courtyard.

6. The level of the land falls gradually away from the front to the rear of the property and the rear wing of the building steps down in height in corresponding fashion. The side elevation of the rear wing runs flush with the north-west facing gable end of the converted barn and that side elevation is also directly aligned with the north-western facing side wall of the converted property immediately to the west. In other words, the side elevation upon which the extension would be constructed was the original inward facing wall of the historic farmyard complex. The strong sense of alignment in the north-west elevation of the complex would be substantially diluted by the erection of the proposed two storey extension which project into space that was originally free from built development and would not reflect the historic pattern of the farm complex.
7. The Ordnance Survey based map provided by the appellant, dating from the early 20th century, provides some evidence that the courtyard was at that stage enclosed on all four sides. However, the entrance into the courtyard was shown to be directly adjacent to the north-west gable elevation of the appeal building which was free from any buildings or extensions. The historic alignment of the north-west facing walls of buildings looking into the courtyard is clearly visible, as is the original L-shaped plan of the appeal building. Whilst the photograph provided by the appellant indicates that a modern pre-fabricated building was attached to the gable at some stage, and that the central area of the courtyard was also infilled with a modern agricultural structure, those alterations would appear to have been extremely unsympathetic to the original plan form of the 19th century farm buildings.
8. Those unsympathetic buildings have been removed and the conversion of the property and the neighbouring dwelling have reinstated the original plan form on three sides of the courtyard which is reflective of the functionality of the farmyard with buildings facing inwards onto it. The style and age of the buildings is reflective of a 19th century model farm complex and the layout and arrangement of buildings around the farmyard would appear to have been carefully planned. Thus, the layout and form of the buildings are integral to the character of the site. The two-storey extension would not reflect the historic pattern of development and the location of the structure would impair the ability to appreciate the original form and function of the farmyard; an arrangement that is clearly evident in the sensitively converted properties. As such, the proposal would represent an incongruous incursion into the space historically occupied by the farmyard complex.
9. Whilst I recognise that the scale of the extension would be subservient to the original property, and that matching materials would be utilised, that does not over-ride my concerns regarding the harmful effect of the proposed extension which would be at odds with the carefully planned layout and form of the historic farm buildings. Thus, the proposal would be cause harm to the character of the host building and the historic setting of the converted properties.
10. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the proposed development would be contrary to policy BDP19 and BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 – 2030 (2017) (BDP) and the advice set out in the High Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Other Matters

11. The appellant notes that the Conservation Officer provided contrasting advice following an earlier planning application. It is noted that the application referred to by the appellant (Council Ref: 14/0142) was likely determined between 2014 and 2015 and since that application was determined the Council have adopted the BDP and the SDP. Consequently, there has been a material change in planning policy since that application was determined which would justify the changed advice from the Conservation Officer. In any event, the Council is not bound by advice given by a Conservation Officer and I note that pre-application advice given by the Council indicated that planning permission was likely to be refused. Moreover, I am required to determine the appeal on its merits and any inconsistency of advice given has not altered my conclusion on the merits of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR