



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020 by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA

Decision by Chris Hoult BA(Hons) BPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B3030/D/19/3241588

Lowbank Farm, Radley Road, Halam NG22 8AN

- 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 Duncan Hoggard against the decision of Newark and Sherwood District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01334/FUL, dated 16 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is an annexe extension.
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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 Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal relates to a two-storey farmhouse whose architecture is typical of traditional local rural vernacular, located within the countryside. The original dwelling has a simple narrow-gabled form, steep roof pitch, traditional sash windows and chimneys and is of traditional brick and tile construction. It is set back from the road and is positioned to an angle with it, with its gable facing the road. A two-storey extension projects beyond its side elevation away from the road. It is visible from the road along with other farm buildings.
 5. Much of the Council's case is premised on the farmhouse having been identified as a local interest building (non-designated heritage asset). This is contested by the appellant. The building is listed on the Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). However, the expectation of the Planning Practice Guidance (at paragraph 18a-040-20190723)(PPG) is that such assets undergo a process of identification by plan-making bodies. The Council says it is in the process of compiling a local list but it has not yet been published. It relies on another provision of PPG paragraph 040, that identification may be through the decision-making process on planning applications. However, my reading of this
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paragraph is that this applies to assets (such as items of archaeological interest, the example given in the guidance) which undergo discovery through the application process. That is not the case with this building.

6. Notwithstanding the comments of the Conservation Officer, therefore, I consider that the available evidence does not demonstrate the status of the building as a non-designated heritage asset, having regard to the guidance outlined within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the PPG. Therefore, I can only consider the development against Core Policy 9 of the Amended Core Strategy (ACS), Policies DM5 and DM6 of the Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (A&DMP DPD). Core Policy 14 of the ACS and Policy DM9 of the A&DMP DPD are not directly relevant to this development, as they refer to historic environment.
7. The development would project from the elevation facing the road with an L-shaped configuration. Although a single storey extension, its ridge height would match that of the existing extension to the SE. The extension would increase the width of the dwelling by utilising the space at the side of the property. It would have a steep pitched roof with two gabled elements, one to the rear and one to the side, facing the road. It is intended that the annex extension is occupied by the current occupier of the farmhouse.
8. The farmhouse is a building of architectural interest notwithstanding my findings on whether it can properly be described as a non-designated heritage asset. Owing to its width, depth and overall mass, the extension would result in a bulky addition to the side of it which would appear out of proportion with the host dwelling. Moreover, its L-shaped configuration would jar visually when set against the existing narrow-gabled form of the farmhouse. Its simple form would be masked in key public views from the road, compromising the integrity of the building (notwithstanding poor-quality extensions past and present) as a good example of rural vernacular architecture. Its elevated ridge height would exacerbate its predominance in these views. It would be slightly set in from the principal elevation, but neither this nor its matching steep pitched roof would be sufficient to make the extension appear proportionate or subservient to the host dwelling. The use of matching materials would not mitigate this harm.
9. I concur with the appellant that, given its open countryside location and the siting of the farmhouse in relation to neighbouring properties, any claimed harm to the "street scene" is immaterial. The existing hedgerow and trees around the building would screen the extension to some degree. In spite of this, the key public views of the building are from the road and it is here that the visual impact of the proposal and the ensuing detriment to the character and appearance of the host property would be most readily appreciated.
10. Accordingly, I conclude that through a combination of large size, siting and configuration, the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Therefore, the development would be contrary to Core Policy 9 of the ACS and Policies DM5 and DM6 of the A&DMP DPD, which collectively require, amongst other things, for development to be of an appropriate form and scale to its context, complementing the existing built and landscape environments.

Other matters

11. The development would provide an annex for an elderly person for which the single storey accommodation proposed would be more suitable. This would allow other members of the family to live and work on the farm. I note the appellant's concerns regarding the future of the farm business. However, I have no evidence regarding the current viability of the farm enterprise or whether there is an essential functional need for additional family members to work on the farm. Moreover, I have no evidence whether, if there is an overall need, functional or financial, for them to do so, they could fulfil that need while still living in the wider area. Such evidence would typically accompany appeals relating to rural workers' dwellings and, although the proposal is for an extension, the justification for it raises very similar considerations.
12. I acknowledge the benefits of the scheme for the current occupier of the farmhouse and family members, and I note that this is supported in representations made by neighbouring farm businesses and the Parish Council. Nevertheless, in the absence of evidence along the lines I have described, I can only give this matter limited weight.
13. Paragraph 10 of the Framework states that at its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The appellant argues that the proposal represents sustainable development in so far as it responds to local character, history and surroundings. Good design is a key element of sustainability as set out in paragraph 127. In this case, given that I have found that it would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, it would not constitute the sustainable development the Framework seeks to achieve.

Recommendation

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

Andreea Spataru

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

C M Hoult

INSPECTOR