



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2020 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: 21 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/19/3237119

The Stables, College Farm, Barton Road, Pulloxhill MK45 5HP

- 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 Dr Kruszewska against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/19/01628/FULL, dated 16 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey rear extension to existing dwelling/bungalow. Extension to garage to form additional bay and new gate with railings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the 2 storey rear extension to existing dwelling/bungalow, and the new gate with railings. The appeal is allowed in so far as it relates to the extension to the garage, and planning permission is granted for extension to garage to form additional bay at The Stables, College Farm, Barton Road, Pulloxhill MK45 5HP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CB/19/01628/FULL dated 16 May 2019 and the plans submitted with it so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following 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 the approved plan, in so far as it relates to the extension to the garage: *JJ16-00TS 001 Rev H*.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension to the garage hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Appeal Procedure

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

Procedural Matter

3. The Council has indicated that that the extension to the garage is acceptable. On the basis of the evidence before me I have no reason to find differently in this regard. It appears to me from the plans that the extension to the garage

would be capable of being constructed independently of the proposed rear extension, and gate and railing. Given these matters it would be appropriate for a split decision to be issued in this case, granting planning permission for the extension to the garage subject to the standard planning conditions with regard to timing, approved plans and materials, which I consider to be necessary and which meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the 2 storey extension and the new gate and railings on the character and appearance of the host property, the Pulloxhill Conservation Area (PCA), and the setting of the listed College Farm.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is at the north-east end of the PCA which primarily follows the properties along the High Street down towards the south-west. The site is accessed via a track situated at the junction between High Street, Flitton Road and Barton Road. It contains an L-shaped single storey building, with rooms in the roof space, that fronts onto a yard, which contains a garage. The host dwelling, and a building to the east of the site appear to have once been agricultural buildings connected to College Farm, a Grade II Listed Building on the south side of the track.
6. Although converted and somewhat altered from its original agricultural purpose, the host dwelling is of a simple design and limited scale which, in connection with its surroundings is legible as having been connected to the use at College Farm.
7. The proposed extension would introduce a bulky, prominent, incongruous addition on the rear of this dwelling. Its 2 storey, flat roof design would jar with the simplicity of the existing building and would cause harm to its character and appearance.
8. The boundary of the PCA runs close to the rear elevation of the host building. Although most of the garden to the rear of the property falls outside of the conservation area, that closest to the dwelling is located within it. The new extension would be located on part of the garden closest to the dwelling and would fall within the PCA. The significance of the PCA generally derives from its mixture of the small scale and simple appearance of the historic buildings forming the High Street. The area's connection to its rural past is still legible through a number of farmhouses and their historically associated farm buildings, such as College Farm and the buildings to the north of it, including the appeal property, which are read in connection to each other. While I understand them to be no longer connected by use or ownership, the historic connection of the former farm buildings and College Farm remains.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Given the harm that I have identified above, it follows that the contribution that the host property as extended, would make to the appearance of the PCA would be diminished. The proposal would not preserve or enhance the

character or appearance of the PCA. The hedgerow along Flitton Road cannot be relied upon to mitigate the visual impact of the development.

10. Moreover, the new gate and fence would be of a modern and relatively grand design which would jar with the modest, traditional appearance of the appeal site. Although set back from the public road, this aspect of the proposal would be prominent and visible from the junction and would significantly reduce the value the appeal site makes to the significance of the conservation area.
11. Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act requires me to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building. As set out above the host property and its farmyard has historical connections to College Farm. The front of the host property would not be affected by the proposal, and the extended rear elevation would not be viewed in the context of this listed building. Accordingly, in this regard I find that this aspect of the proposal would preserve the setting of College Farm as a listed building.
12. However, the proposed railings and gate would introduce an incongruous feature into the setting of this listed building which would harm the historic legibility of the host property and its association with College Farm. The proposal would not preserve the setting of College Farm as a heritage asset and harm to its significance would result.
13. It has been brought to my attention that the gate and fence could be erected under permitted development and is therefore a fallback position. However, it is not within the purview of this appeal to assess whether a proposal is permitted development and I have not been provided with either sufficient evidence or a certificate of lawfulness to confirm that it would be. As such I cannot be certain that there is a greater than theoretical possibility of the gate and fence being erected. I can only therefore give this matter limited weight.
14. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the PCA and it would not preserve the setting of College Farm. Whilst the harm that would be caused to the significance of these heritage assets would be less than substantial, the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation. In this case the harm that I have identified needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. It has been submitted by the appellant that the proposed development would improve the quality of the host dwelling's accommodation while also ensuring the optimal use. Whilst I have no doubt that the provision of improved living accommodation would be of benefit to the appellant, it would not amount to a public benefit. Moreover, I find that the proposal would not help secure the optimum viable use of the host dwelling, which is already residential. I therefore can only give these matters very little weight. I consider the benefits of the proposal advanced by the appellant do not amount to public benefits which outweigh the harm that would be caused to the heritage assets.
16. In light of the above I conclude that the proposed 2 storey extension, railings and gate would harm the significance of the PCA and the setting of College Farm as heritage assets, and that the proposed extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property. The proposal results in conflict with Policies CS14, CS15, DM3 and DM13 of the *Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies* which together

seek to achieve high quality design, and conserve or enhance conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings. It is also contrary to the design, and conservation and enhancement of the historic environment aims of the Framework.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be allowed in so far as it relates to the extension to garage to form additional bay and dismissed insofar as it relates to the 2 storey rear extension to existing dwelling/bungalow and the new gate with railings.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officers report and concur that the appeal should be allowed in part and dismissed in part.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR