
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2020

by David Wildsmith BSc(Hons) MSc CEng MICE FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/20/3245970

Furzelease Farm, Tisbury Row, Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6RZ

- 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 John Edgley against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/09159/FUL, dated 11 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is an extension to Furzelease Farmhouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies on the western side of Tisbury Row, outside the settlement boundary of Tisbury and therefore in the countryside for policy purposes, as well as being within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It contains the appeal property, a detached 2-storey dwelling set within an extensive curtilage which also contains a number of agricultural buildings, sited mainly to the west and south-west of this farmhouse. The appeal site only comprises part of this overall curtilage. The appeal property sits at a higher level than Tisbury Row, approached by a driveway some 70 metres (m) or so in length.
4. The original part of the appeal property is arranged over 2 floors and consists of natural stone walls underneath a pitched, clay tiled roof. There are 4 modestly-sized windows on the front (east) elevation of this part of the dwelling, along with a front door set under a small porch. In addition, a 2-storey blockwork extension with rendered walls and a flat roof has been added to the rear (west) elevation and there are single-storey brick and stone additions on the north elevation.
5. Under the appeal proposal the existing single-storey structures on the north elevation would be removed, and replaced by a 2-storey extension set at an angle to the main part of the existing dwelling. This extension would have a maximum projection beyond the existing side elevation of some 11.1m, and would project beyond the front elevation of the dwelling by about 8.7m. The submitted plans indicate that the ridge height of this proposed extension would be some 50 centimetres (cm) lower than the ridge of the existing dwelling. The roof of the

extension would be faced with zinc sheeting, with zinc cladding, stonework and brickwork used variously for the elevations.

6. Windows of various sizes – some significantly larger than those in the existing dwelling – are proposed in varying positions on each of the elevations of this 2-storey extension. In addition, a single-storey lean-to extension, in brickwork with a tiled roof, is proposed on the southern side elevation of the existing dwelling.
7. Saved Policies C24 and H31 from the Salisbury District Local Plan 2011 (SDLP), adopted in 2003, are referred to in the Council's reason for refusal. Although Policy C24 is not referenced in the appellant's Grounds of Appeal Statement it is clearly relevant to this proposal as it relates to extensions and additions to buildings in the countryside, which it states will only be permitted if they are sympathetic in scale and character with the existing building and surroundings, and fall within the existing curtilage.
8. Policy H31 also deals with extensions to dwellings in the countryside and explains that these will be permitted provided that the extension is subservient in size to the existing dwelling and house plot and does not substantially alter the character of the dwelling; that the design of the extension is in keeping with that of the existing dwelling and uses complementary materials; and that the extension would not create, or be capable of creating, a separate dwelling. The supporting text to this policy makes it plain that similar controls to those relating to replacement dwellings in the countryside also apply with regard to the size of extensions to existing houses. These controls are intended to prevent the creation of, in effect, large new houses in the countryside.
9. In addition, Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Local Plan 2015 (WLP) states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. It explains that development proposals have to demonstrate that certain aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.
10. These include 'Important views and visual amenity', 'Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion', and 'Special qualities of AONBs, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty'. Moreover, the policy makes it clear that proposals for development within AONBs need to demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas.
11. Finally, Core Policy 57 states that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. It goes on to explain that development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality; and that applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire. Amongst other things, development should make efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context, to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area.

12. In support of the appeal proposal the appellant draws attention to pre-application advice which it had received from the Council. This Officer advice concluded that the scale and general outline design of the extension appeared to be acceptable, although the roof ridge would need to be reduced slightly and the window sizes would need to be reduced significantly, to ensure a subordinate association to the main dwelling. In addition, Officers advised that materials should be sympathetic to the existing cottage and surrounding area, so as to reduce the prominence of the development in the landscape of the AONB.
13. The appellant comments that in response to this pre-application advice the ridge height of the proposed extension has been reduced, to be lower than the ridge line of the existing property, and that the extensive glazing on the front projecting gable has been replaced with 3 window openings. But the appellant acknowledges that the position, size and style of the windows proposed have not addressed the pre-application advice, arguing that this is because they form an important design principle. The appellant goes on to assert that with the exception of these windows, the Council's pre-application advice has been followed in all other respects and that the Council confirmed no objection to a contemporary side and forward projecting extension as a matter of principle.
14. However, although the plans upon which this advice was based have not been placed before me, the details set out in the pre-application advice indicate that the proposed extension, at that time, was intended to project some 5m in front of the principal elevation of the main dwelling, and have a maximum width of about 6m/ 7.2m. It was on this basis that Council Officers made their 'acceptable in principle' comment, but these measurements are appreciably smaller than those relating to the appeal proposal, and it is clear that despite the pre-application comments the Council did not find the appeal proposal acceptable, for reasons set out in the reason for refusal.
15. In my assessment the proposed extension would be a very large and bulky addition, virtually doubling the width of the original dwelling and, as stated by the appellant, would increase the existing floorspace by some 70%. I acknowledge that the ridge height of the extension would be some 50cm lower than that of the existing dwelling, but this would only be a very modest reduction in the context of such a large extension, and would fail to give the extension a subordinate or subservient appearance. My view in this regard is reinforced by the size and height of the proposed east-facing gable, topped with a chimney stack, which would be a prominent feature of very similar height to the main dwelling. In addition, the fact that higher eaves are proposed on part of the east-facing elevation would work against the extension being seen as in any way subservient to the main dwelling.
16. Furthermore, the large and somewhat randomly placed windows on the eastern elevation would add to the prominent nature and appearance of the proposed extension and would be at odds with the size and appearance of the more regularly positioned and modestly-sized windows on the eastern elevation of the existing dwelling. The appellant explains that the pre-application advice concerning the position, size and style of windows has not been followed because of his wish to provide natural light for the rooms and to exploit views from within these rooms. However, such an explanation does not reflect any of the aforementioned policy requirements, but simply appears to be the appellant's personal preference.
17. To my mind, the prominence of the proposed extension would be further emphasised by the extensive use of zinc sheeting for the roof and on the front

elevation. Whilst I accept that the use of zinc may well provide a reference to the steel sheeting used on the agricultural buildings elsewhere within the dwelling's curtilage, I do not consider that this justifies the significant amount of zinc cladding proposed here. Nor am I persuaded that the use of zinc sheeting and cladding can reasonably be seen as representing the use of 'complementary materials', referred to in saved SLP Policy H31. Indeed the appellant appears to recognise this in his Grounds of Appeal Statement, where the extension is described as one which 'contrasts with the existing property'.

18. The appellant maintains that this contrast would be achieved in an attractive way, with the contemporary style and the proposed materials providing a finish in-keeping with the existing dwelling. However, I do not share this view. Rather, like the Council, I consider that this large and bulky extension with its extensive areas of zinc sheeting and roofing would contrast jarringly and unsympathetically with the original dwelling. As such it would not be in scale and character with the existing building, as is required by saved SLP Policy C24, and would not represent a subservient addition as required by saved SLP Policy H31.
19. There is no dispute that the proposed extension would be visible in the local landscape as it would project significantly to the side and front of the existing dwelling which, as already noted, sits on elevated ground compared to Tisbury Row. This is the case despite the presence of a reasonable amount shielding of views by roadside vegetation at this time of year, as I saw at my site visit. As a result it would appear as a dominant feature within the landscape, thereby failing to conserve or enhance the landscape setting.
20. With regard to the Council's point set out in its pre-application advice, that light pollution might arise as a result of the proposed extension's large windows, I consider this to be a valid concern which would not necessarily be adequately addressed by the appellant's comment that much of this light would be filtered by the use of curtains and blinds. In view of this, and the other points set out above, it seems to me that there is the strong possibility that the proposed extension would cause harm to the character of the AONB landscape.
21. Finally, I share the Council's view that although the relatively small single-storey extension proposed for the dwelling's southern elevation would appear as a subservient addition, the proposed use of brick would sit uncomfortably alongside the stone dwelling, and appear incongruous.
22. Drawing all the above points together, I conclude that the proposed extensions would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and of the surrounding area. Accordingly I find that there would be conflict with WLP Core Policies 51 and 57, along with saved SLP Policies C24 and H31, as detailed above. There would also be conflict with paragraphs 127, 130 and 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, in summary, require new developments to add to and improve the character and quality of an area, and conserve and enhance the scenic beauty in AONBs.
23. For the reasons set out above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

David Wildsmith

INSPECTOR