
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 June 2020 by A J Sutton BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

by R C Kirby BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F1610/D/20/3248652

Cranleigh, Church Lane, Down Ampney, GL7 5QW

- 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 and Mrs Leon Malherbe against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03280/FUL, dated 4 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is alteration and extension to dwelling.
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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.

Procedural Matters

3. It is understood that the area south of the appeal site forms the Down Ampney Conservation Area. It is concluded in the officer's report that the appeal property is some 150m from the boundary of the designated heritage asset and the proposal would not affect the Conservation Area. I have observed nothing which would lead me to dispute this conclusion.
4. The application form states the appeal address as Church Road. However, the submitted plans, appeal form and decision notice state Church Lane. I was unable to confirm the name of the road when conducting the site visit and therefore, the address for the purposes of this recommendation is consistent with the appeal form and plans.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the property and the wider area.

Reasons for Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a detached one and a half storey dormer style dwelling with modest extensions to the side and rear, set in a large plot. It is of a simple mid to late 20th Century design, clad in reconstituted Cotswold stone material. The surrounding built area comprises a mix of dwellings both in size and age.

Dwellings are generally constructed in Cotswold stone with new additions illustrating traditional design details which blend with the character of this part of Down Ampney. Most notably, dwellings comprise simplicity of form, characterised by gables, chimneys and fenestrations of modest proportions. The overall effect results in an attractive Cotswold settlement.

7. The property is located at the edge of the village on Church Lane which connects the settlement to the historic church and manor house situated at the end of the lane. The topography of the area is flat with adjacent open fields and the remnants of Down Ampney airfield beyond. There is a path which edges the southern and rear boundary of the property, a public right of way crossing the nearby field and public access near the former airfield which all provide glimpsed views of the edge of the settlement near the appeal property.
8. The proposal would comprise an extensive remodelling of the property to the front, side and rear with the addition of an integrated garage to the side with accommodation above.
9. Whilst the architectural style of the existing dwelling is not particularly noteworthy, its simple form and limited use of materials blend well in the lane and as part of the pleasant edge of village setting. It occupies a prominent position at the village boundary with the south east and north east elevations visible from footpaths.
10. The proposed alterations to the principal elevation would incorporate gable features and utilise Cotswold stone. These alterations would as a result of their scale and design significantly alter the visual appearance of the host property, such that its evolution would not be apparent. However, in terms of the effect this aspect of the scheme would have on the wider area, I consider that this would be neutral.
11. The design of the proposed south east elevation would introduce forms, details and materials which are not characteristic of the host property or the locality. The proposed expanse of timber cladding and zinc window surrounds would negate the proposed positive features such as the stone and chimney. Although the timber cladding is intended as a design device to show transition from traditional to contemporary, the proposed mix of external finishes would prevent such legibility. More significantly, the proposed window proportions at first floor level and box style dormer would be incongruous additions which would dominate the appearance of the dwelling.
12. Furthermore, the design of the proposed rear (north east elevation¹) extension, with a confusion of shapes and forms, would engulf the existing dwelling. The proposed fenestration would lack a sense of rhythm with proportions uncharacteristic of the area. The resulting visual effect would not be read easily as an evolution of a building or as a coherent remodelling of a property. The proposed use of contrasting materials and alien features such as the balcony and dormer details, would exacerbate the harmful effect to the appearance of the dwelling.
13. When viewed from the side and rear the proposed extensions would be of a design which would not illustrate the best of the past nor would it be distinctly modern. As such the development would appear as a stark, unsympathetic

¹ As referenced on the submitted plans.

addition when viewed from the boundary of the village, particularly with regards the south east elevation and therefore would be harmful to the character of the area.

14. The Design and Access Statement sets out the design principles for the proposal which are cognisant of local design codes. However, there is nothing before me which demonstrates innovation in design. The resulting design concept, as outlined above, lacks simplicity and would fail to achieve a development which would either improve the appearance of the host property or harmonise with its surrounding area. For these reasons the proposal would fail to achieve the balanced and well-proportioned design of the semi-detached dwellings on Church Lane which the appellant has drawn to my attention.
15. The benefits of resolving the cramped dimensions of the appeal property to provide improved living space and measures for better energy efficiency would not outweigh the demonstrable harm to the property and surrounding area outlined above. Furthermore, whilst the appeal property may be in need of modernisation this could be accomplished without resulting in the harm identified.
16. In light of the foregoing, and notwithstanding my findings in respect of the front elevation I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the property and wider area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy EN2 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2018 which states that proposals should be of a design quality that respects the character and distinct appearance of the locality. The proposal would also be contrary to the Cotswold Design Code (Appendix D of the Local Plan 2018) which advises amongst other matters that extensions to existing building should be in scale and character with the original building, and in-keeping with its setting whether traditional or contemporary in design. There would also be conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

17. I have had regard to the examples of extensions drawn to my attention by the appellant. The extensions to dwellings in Down Ampney include design features and are constructed in materials characteristic of the area. In these respects, they are materially different to the proposal before me. With regards the examples located in other parts of the Cotswolds, whilst noting some of the similarities with the proposal before me, the dwellings are distinctly different from the appeal property. Furthermore, both developments are located in towns some distance from the appeal site, where the character of the area is likely to differ somewhat.
18. As such I attach limited weight to these developments in making my recommendation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

A J Sutton

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR