



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2020 by A J Sutton BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/20/3249495

Springside, Marle Hill, Chalford, Stroud, Glos, GL6 8EX

- 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 SP and LJ Bailey against the decision of Stroud District Council.
- The application Ref S.19/0908/HHOLD, dated 24 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2020.
- The proposed development is described as 'Proposed alterations, forming new windows, door areas, side walls to balcony, basement, four new roof lights in kitchen area. Form two external flues on gable walls.'

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. Planning permission was granted for extensions and alterations to the appeal property in 2017 (2017 consent).¹ The original dwelling was a relatively modern detached property (circa 1960). The 2017 consent allowed extensive alterations to the property.
4. I observed on the site visit the development had been completed and the Council contend it does not accord with approved plans of the 2017 consent. A subsequent planning application was submitted with revised plans. I observed some discrepancies between the submitted scheme and that which was built. Therefore, to avoid doubt, the submitted plans have formed the basis for this recommendation.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area, with particular regard to the Chalford Hill Conservation Area (CHCA).

Reasons for Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a detached dwelling set in a large plot towards the top of Marle Hill. The access to the dwelling is in part screened by other properties. The rear elevation has a more open aspect with commanding views over the valley.

¹Ref S.17/0677/HHOLD

7. There is a mix of dwellings set into the steeply graded hill sides. The overall appearance is of a pretty Stroud valley settlement which has been designated as the CHCA.
8. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. In this respect national policy on heritage assets, which includes conservation areas, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). At paragraph 192, it sets out matters which should be taken into account including sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
9. CHCA comprises a steep scarp edge which dictates the un-uniformed development pattern, with scattered and groups of dwellings aligning the hillside. Properties are generally of a traditional architectural style constructed in local stone and of the Cotswold vernacular. Although often altered, on the whole dwellings are modest in size with steep pitched roofs, small windows, narrow gable ends and stone chimneys characterising the historic area. There are a number of listed buildings in the CHCA.
10. The original dwelling was of a plain, modern design with uPVC windows and clad in reconstituted stone material. As such it was not architecturally noteworthy and did not contribute positively to the historic character of the area.
11. The scheme before me would extend the footprint of the original property to form a large dwelling.
12. Whilst not of a traditional design, the ground floor of the east elevation would be partially concealed by the gradient of the hill, allowing focus on the natural stone at first floor level and the roof form. The proposed garage, an addition to the original footprint, would appear subservient to the main part of the dwelling. Although not wholly characteristic of the area the overall effect would be a substantial improvement on the original dwelling, with simple lines and use of traditional materials.
13. I note the Council's comment regarding the proposed catslide roof. However, the profile of the south elevation towards the east would be sleek and uncluttered, which would reflect characteristics of the Cotswolds vernacular. Although it would extend considerably beyond the original built footprint, the effect would only be apparent at the base of the property. The roofscape would be broken with pitched forms demarcated in stone and timber cladding, reminiscent of traditional architectural proportions whilst clearly expressing the evolution of the building. These features would make a positive contribution to the appearance of the dwelling.
14. The north elevation has a similar pattern of wider pitched forms and use of materials. The profile of the proposed basement would appear as more of a distinct protrusion from this angle, and, the side balcony wall would be an awkward and inelegant addition. The bulk of the basement would be somewhat diminished by the gradient of the hill. However, the jutting form of the balcony wall would adversely affect the appearance of the property.

15. To the west, the three-storey narrow form close to the north elevation would be subservient to the original dwelling and would not be uncharacteristic of similar properties in the area. I note the dispute regarding the height of this aspect of the development. I am unable to reach a conclusion on this matter based on the information submitted. However, the proposed fenestration would lack a graded rhythm. Furthermore, the position of the first-floor windows would create an imbalance in the solid to void ratio which would neither be traditional in style nor form a well-designed modern configuration and as such would appear as a noticeable oddity.
16. The balcony and canopy would not be unpleasing additions to the dwelling. Whilst the proposed canopy would have a more solid appearance to that approved under the 2017 consent, its recessed position would ensure it has a neutral affect on the appearance of this part of the dwelling.
17. The basement form, viewed towards the west, would appear as a solid incongruous form, despite the use of stone and its recessed position. However, the harmful affect could be neutralised with a soft landscaping scheme which could be secured by condition.
18. In summary, the clear improvements to the east and south elevations of the dwelling would be counteracted by the identified adverse design elements to the north and west. In particular, the proposed balcony wall and the unusual fenestration pattern at the first floor of the three-storey extension. For these reasons, it would not be a wholly well-designed dwelling. Although the original dwelling was of little architectural value and in need of modernisation, this should not justify a scheme which fails to fully demonstrate principles of good design.
19. The west elevations of the dwelling would be imposing when viewed from the rear garden of the property. However, only the roof and first floor sections of the three-storey extension would be visible, as glimpsed views, from the footpath to the west of the property and from wider public vantage points. From such vantage points the unsympathetically designed features identified above would be evident. It is therefore concluded that the scheme would not preserve the character or appearance of the CHCA.
20. The original dwelling did not make a positive contribution to the character of the CHCA and aspects of the proposal before me would provide a marked improvement. However, elements of the proposed extended form have been identified as harmful and would be more visible in the wider CCAC than the unaltered west elevation of the original dwelling. Therefore, the proposal would be materially more harmful to the character of the heritage asset than the original dwelling.
21. Whilst the harm to the significance of the CHCA would be limited and localised and therefore would be less than substantial, paragraph 196 of the Framework clarifies that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Although I acknowledge the appellants' desire to improve the property and quality of accommodation, this does not amount to a public benefit which outweighs the harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
22. In light of the foregoing, it is concluded that the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area. As such it would not preserve the character of the CHCA. It would

therefore be contrary to Policy HC8(2) of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 (Local Plan 2015) which states permission will be granted for the extension of residential properties provided the height, scale, form and design of the extension is in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling (taking into account any cumulative additions) and the wider site's setting and location.

23. The development would also be inconsistent with Policy ES10 of the Local Plan 2015 which states proposals will be supported which conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of the District's heritage assets.

Other Matters

24. The 2017 consent permits an equally large dwelling with substantially the same built footprint and similar design features to the scheme before me. As such I have attached great weight to this consent, as a strong fallback position, in reaching this recommendation.
25. There are a number of distinguishing features in the submitted scheme, which differ from the approved plans, and which cumulatively would be harmful to the appearance of the dwelling. In particular, the balcony wall and basement and more notably the first-floor window detail in the three-storey element which would adversely affect the overall appearance of the west elevation.
26. Therefore, whilst there are clearly many similarities with approved plans, the scheme before me is sufficiently different so as to lead me to conclude that it would result in a materially more harmful form of development, in terms of the effect on the heritage asset, than that already approved.
27. A Grade II listed dwelling (Duke of York) is situated on the opposite side of the road from the appeal property. The setting of the late 18th Century stone dwelling is formed by a strong hedge boundary which conceals the dwelling from public vantage points. The entrance of the appeal property is partially obscured, and the dwelling set lower on the side of the hill and is distinctly separated from the setting of the listed building. As such the development would have a neutral effect on its setting.

Conclusion and Recommendation

28. 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

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

K Taylor

INSPECTOR