



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2020

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/D/20/3251068

Oldfield Farm, Old Warwick Road, Rowington CV35 7AA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Waters against the decision of Warwick District Council.
 - The application Ref: W/19/1769 dated 15 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2020.
 - The works proposed are proposed two storey front extension incorporating vaulted glazed projection to replace existing single storey lean-to extension. Proposed single storey lean-to side extension, works to and glazed enclosure of existing front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description in the banner heading above is taken from the appeal form and decision notice as it is more succinct than that shown on the application form.
3. The proposal would be within the setting of the scheduled monument 'Moated site north east of Oldfield Farm' (Ref: 1013157). Protection of associated archaeological deposits could be secured by planning condition. Furthermore, outbuildings, mature vegetation and mounded topography together would conceal much of the former medieval moat from the proposed extensions. This would result in visual and physical separation of the proposal from the former moat. The main parties have not expressed concern about the effect of the proposal on the significance of the scheduled monument. In the light of the factors described above, I find that the proposal would preserve the scheduled monument.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies
 - b) the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt
 - c) whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building, 'Old Farmhouse, Old Warwick Road' (Ref: 1184580), including its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses (its significance), and

- d) if the proposal would be inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

5. The appeal site comprises a listed farmhouse building, detached outbuildings and grounds. The listed building is a two-storey timber framed and red brick farmhouse, which dates from the mid-seventeenth century, with an eighteenth century brick front. It has an old plain-tile, cross-gabled roof and brick ridge chimney stack with four diagonally set flues. Later extensions have been added to the building. The site lies within the Green Belt.
6. Policy DS18 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 (2017) (LP) sets out that national planning policy will apply to proposals within the Green Belt. Paragraph 145 of the Framework sets out a small number of exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. One such exception is the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. This is echoed in Policy H14 of the LP, which, amongst other things, requires extensions in the Green Belt to not be disproportionate additions to the original dwelling.
7. Supporting text paragraph 4.95 for Policy H14 states that, as a guide, taking into account any previous extensions, additions in the Green Belt that represent an increase of more than 30% to the gross floor space of the original dwelling are likely to be disproportionate.
8. Post-1948 development has joined the outbuilding to the north-east to the original building¹, and converted it to residential use. This has noticeably increased the total bulk and mass of the building. Together with previous extensions - including the post-1948 conversion of the outbuilding, and extensions joining the latter to the original farmhouse building - the proposal would amount to an approximately 40% increase in gross floorspace over and above that of the original building².
9. Even if the outbuilding were to be excluded from the calculations, judging by the Design and Access Statement calculations before me, the proposal would still result in the 30% guideline maximum for increase in gross floorspace being exceeded.
10. In the light of the above, I am not persuaded that the proposal would amount to a total increase in extensions' gross floorspace as low as 22%, as suggested by the appellants. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would result in an increase to the gross floor space of the original dwelling of more than the 30% guideline maximum.
11. Policy H14 of the LP adds that extensions should a) retain the visual dominance of the original dwelling, b) not significantly extend the visual impression of built

¹ Planning Application Ref: W75/552.

² As set out in the appellants' statement of case Appendix 2, Revised Design and Access Statement page Ref: 04.18 2796D&A 10 A.

development or c) not substantially alter the scale, design and character of the original dwelling. Supporting text paragraph 4.94 for Policy H14 sets out the following factors as relevant to assessing whether an addition would be disproportionate: scale, design and character of the dwelling and any extensions; location of the property and its visual impact on the wider area; and the design and character of the proposed extension.

12. The appellants consider that the proposal would satisfy criteria a) to c) of Policy H14 of the LP, and the factors in supporting paragraph 4.94. However, the proposed lean-to extension would extend the building to the north-east, at the entrance to the farmhouse yard. The timber-framed and glazed extension would extend the building to the north-west, into the farmhouse yard in front of the historic timber-framed north-eastern gable of the original building. The cumulative increase in floorspace, footprint, bulk and mass of extensions, over and above the original dwelling, which would result from the proposal, would further draw the eye from the historic farmhouse core. Furthermore, the modern design of the glazed wall and roof of the north-eastern extension would distract from the traditional rustic character of the original dwelling.
13. While the proposed development would not be visible from the public domain, the above impacts would be noticeable on entering and exiting the farmhouse yard, and within the yard and building. As such, the identified impacts have some prominence within the site.
14. Consequently, the proposed development would significantly undermine the visual dominance of the original dwelling and extend the visual impression of built development. As such the proposal would conflict with Policy H14 of the LP.
15. The above factors, together, lead me to conclude that the proposal would entail a disproportionate addition within the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal would not fall within the exceptions listed in paragraph 145c) of the Framework. Accordingly, in this respect, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would conflict with the Framework and Policies DS18 and H14 of the LP. Together the policies require strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
16. The effect of the proposal on the character of the original dwelling is considered further in the assessment in relation to significance of the listed building, below.

Openness of the Green Belt

17. The Framework states that an essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness and that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land within them permanently open.
18. Openness has a spatial dimension and can also have a visual dimension. The proposed lean-to and glazed, timber-framed extensions would, together, expand the building's bulk near the entrance to the farmhouse yard. This would further increase the mass and sprawl of extensions to the building. It would also further reduce the spaciousness of the yard and draw the eye away from the historic farmhouse core and the rural treescape beyond. The above effects would variously be noticeable on the approach to the yard from the driveway and within the yard.

19. Given the property's relative visual containment by vegetation and topography, the above effects would not be significantly visible from the public domain. As such, the adverse impact on openness would be localised. Nevertheless, the combination of proposed extensions north-east of the original dwelling would be of sufficient scale and visibility to attract attention, and would result in harm to openness of the Green Belt. This must be regarded as some additional harm to add to the harm by reason of inappropriateness.

Effect on the significance of the listed building

20. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission, the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
21. The listed building has evidential and historical value as an example of seventeenth and eighteenth century Warwickshire farmhouse architecture. The pattern of small to medium size timber frame panels with red brick infill on some of the building's elevations makes the original core of the farmhouse a distinctive focal point within the historic farm site. This also contributes to the aesthetic value of the building. Given the above, I consider the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with its historic legibility and the distinctive aesthetic of the farmhouse.
22. The large paved yard to the north of the farmhouse forms part of the setting of the listed building. It contains several other substantial detached outbuildings and is used for vehicular access, parking and outdoor leisure by the occupiers. The yard is therefore a focus of some activity within the property. The proposed north-east and north-west extensions would be located near the entrance gateway to the yard. Within this context, there are various viewpoints for the architecture of the distinctive historic elevations of the listed building to be revealed within the yard, and travelling in and out of the property.
23. The proposed works to the porch, with replacement timbers and glazing, are considered acceptable by the main parties. Given their modest scale, I see no reason to find otherwise, in respect of the proposed porch works.
24. The combination of later additions has resulted in a variety of extension profiles and rooflines which visually compete with the north-western and north-eastern elevations of the listed building. The replacement of the existing rear extension with a brick gabled extension would go some way to simplify the appearance of the additional roofscape, viewed from the north-east. This would reduce competition with the north-easternmost gable of the listed building. The glazing of the proposed north-west extension would allow for some visibility to and from the listed building. I also appreciate the appellants' intention, in the design of the proposed vaulted extension, to make a contemporary reference to the historic timber-framed facade of the listed building.
25. However, the proposed timber-framed extension would project across around half the width of the north-easternmost gable of the listed building, up to the eaves of the latter. The new timber frame and potentially reflective expanse of glass within the extension would distract from a large proportion of this important historic timber-framed gable. The modern character of the glazed

- wall and roof would further distract from the distinctive traditional timber frame panels and red brick infill of the gable, viewed from the north-west.
26. Moreover, the accumulation of various new extension profiles and rooflines, together with the proposed extension of the built footprint in a north-easterly direction by the new lean-to, would add bulk. The resultant cumulative mass of later extensions would compete with the north-eastern elevation and historic core of the listed building.
 27. The above effects would be noticeable from the farmhouse yard. The appellants suggest that the proposal would not harm the listed building because it would not be more widely visible. However, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest, irrespective of whether or not public views of the building are available.
 28. Taking the above together, the combination of incongruent bulk and modern design would intrude into the setting of the listed building and distract from the latter's historic form and character. Consequently, the over-dominant additional mass that is proposed would further erode the historic legibility and aesthetic value of the listed building. Therefore, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. I give this harm considerable importance and weight.
 29. Paragraph 193 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the localised effect of the proposal, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
 30. Under such circumstances, paragraph 196 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against public benefits of the proposal, including any contribution to securing optimal viable use of listed buildings.
 31. The replacement of the rear extension with a brick gabled extension would go some way to simplify the roofscape, viewed from the north-east. It would also provide an opportunity to redesign the kitchen with more historically sympathetic materials.
 32. The proposal would provide a new 'snug' room and additional living space. However, this is a private benefit with no wider significance other than suiting the lifestyle of the present occupiers.
 33. The continued viable use of the property as a dwelling is not demonstrably dependent on the proposed works. Accordingly, I find that insufficient public benefits have been identified to outweigh the harm I have identified to the heritage assets.
 34. To conclude, the proposal would fail to preserve the significance of the Grade II listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 196 of the Framework. It would also conflict with Policy HE1 of the LP, in terms of harm weighed against public benefit. Moreover, it would not accord with Policy BE1 of the LP, which, amongst other things, requires development to reinforce local historical distinctiveness.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

35. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful. There would also be loss of openness of the Green Belt. The Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
36. In conclusion, and on balance, the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm arising from the development, along with the less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building, would not be clearly outweighed by other considerations sufficiently to demonstrate very special circumstances. The proposal would therefore conflict with the Green Belt Policy DS18 of the LP and the Framework.
37. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR