The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2020

by D. Szymanski, BSc (Hons) MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/D/20/3254538
The Threshing Barn, Finwood Road, Rowington, CV35 7DL

- 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 Ben Stott against the decision of Warwick District Council.
- The application Ref: W/20/0329 dated 26 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2020.
- The development proposed is single storey rear extension on house, single storey garage extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. The Council has concluded that the proposals would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This matter is not in dispute between the parties. Accordingly, I have had regard to this in setting out the main issue below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the appeal site and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises roughly half of a historic barn conversion, set within a well vegetated plot which provides a pleasant rural setting to the historic agricultural building. The existing cat slope roof projection to the barn has a shallower sloping roof than the original dwelling. Its proportion of large glass panes and stained wooden frames result in it being identifiable as a modern addition that is not entirely in keeping with the original red brick building. However, due to its depth and size it appears as a subservient addition to the historic building.

5. By extending the depth of the extension from approximately 4.3m to 6.3m, the shallower roof pitch would be significantly deeper than the steeper historic pitch on that side of the building. It would result the modern addition no longer being subservient or sympathetic to the scale and appearance of the original building within the appeal site. Instead it would appear to be a

dominant element of the dwelling that significantly and detrimentally alters the balance and appearance due to its combination of depth, design and materials.

6. It is suggested the previously approved extensions created a catslide roof that might have been historically added to this style of barn. Even if this was the case, the additional depth and halving the eaves height to approximately only 0.7m high, would appear incongruous in relation to the eaves height, form and overall appearance of the main barn. The proximity to the site boundary would exacerbate the dominating effect of the extension and it would result in the dwelling feeling cramped within its currently rural and relatively spacious plot.

7. Presently the detached car port has the appearance of a modest and subservient cart shed in keeping with the rural agricultural character of the appeal site. This is because of its simple frame, open frontage, gable roof and its limited width and depth. The proposed cross gable roof extension significantly increases its size. The increase in size and further enclosing some of the internal space, would significantly alter the scale, appearance and character of the building.

8. The building would no longer appear as a simple and traditional re-purposed agricultural building. The combination of the position of the cross gable roof, increased scale, proximity to the barn, and enclosure of some sides, would result in it appearing more modern, complex and contrived. This would not be in keeping with the character or appearance of the historic barn. By adding to the enclosure of the space around the dwelling, in combination with the other proposed extension, the developments would feel cramped and they would significantly urbanise the site and detrimentally erode the rural character of the site.

9. The perimeter vegetation limits visibility of appeal site from the wider area. However, I have no guarantees this would remain and there is not a means before me of securing the long term retention of the vegetation.

10. Due to its brick pillars and gable roof the car port at Rookery Barn next door appears as a re-used traditional agricultural building. It is also viewed in a different context and is discernibly further from the main dwelling, increasing its sense of separation and subservience. Therefore, it is significantly different to the appeal proposal to and does not justify allowing this appeal.

11. The height and scale of the low eaves roofs on the other barns are not quantifiable from the photographs provided. Neither is the location or the circumstances that lead to their existence or approval, including development plan policies and other material considerations. However, the materials and vernacular of the buildings are not similar to the appeal site. The cat slope roofs also appear to be further from the edge of their plot. Therefore, they are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal. In Ref: W/19/0548 the eaves appear considerably higher than the appeal proposal, so it does not represent a direct comparison.

12. The appellant has provided several examples of conversions and/or additions to rural buildings spanning around 39 years. Due to the nature of the different locations, contexts, sites and proposals none appear to represent a direct comparison to the appeal site and proposal. Due to their age and lack of information, many are of limited relevance. Of the examples that post-date

the current development plan, the attached extensions at Kestrel Barn were to a significantly different barn on a larger site.

13. The proposals at Holly Barn are for the insertion of various openings and external alterations to the existing building and a heating tank. At Red Brick Farm they relate to the conversion of existing buildings with associated windows and doorways. At Falcon Barn the increased floorspace was gained by a link extension between two buildings. These are all considerably different to the proposals before me. I must consider this appeal on its own merits and impacts, including site and building specific considerations.

14. The benefits of the new space to the occupiers in terms of health and lifestyle are small benefits and attract little weight. The screening of alleged unauthorised development attracts little weight, as if it is unauthorised, I cannot be certain it will remain. Furthermore, the evidence does not demonstrate that activities taking place at the equestrian centre result in harmful living conditions, or that screening could not be achieved by other less obtrusive means. These factors do not outweigh the harm I have found.

15. For the reasons set out above, the development would not be in keeping with, and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal site and the area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policy BE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan (2017) (the Local Plan). This requires development positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment and surrounding buildings, and respects and reinforces local architectural and historical distinctiveness, including through appropriate form and materials,. The development would also conflict with paragraph 127 of the Framework, which requires development adds to the overall quality of the area and is sympathetic to local character and history.

16. There would be some conflict with the design advice in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for Agricultural Buildings and Conversion (the SPD), which seeks to retain the integrity of the original building, the roof profile and form, and the rural setting. Whilst the advice and principles have contributed to the current form and character of the appeal site, as the conversion has already taken place, the advice is of limited relevance. The wording of Policy H14 of the Local Plan suggests criteria a) – c) and the related explanatory text is only applicable in relation to disproportionate extensions. As I have not found the extensions to be disproportionate Policy H14 is of limited relevance.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole, and there are no considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

Dan Szymanski

INSPECTOR