



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2020

by David Carter BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/19/3242799

Warren Farm, Woburn Road, Millbrook MK45 2HY

- 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 Miss Zoe Sheaf against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/19/02670/FULL, dated 15 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey side and single storey rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for 2 storey side and single storey rear extensions at Warren Farm, Woburn Road, Millbrook MK45 2HY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CB/19/02670/FULL, dated 15 August 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - (i) Location Plan (showing red line boundary) and Block Plan: Ref 1832.01
 - (ii) Existing and Proposed Floor Plan: Ref 1832.01
 - (iii) Existing and Proposed Elevations: Ref 1832.02.
 - 3) No development shall commence until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council has prepared a new Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire which is currently the subject of examination. Notwithstanding this, the reason for refusal refers only to extant development plan policies. There is no dispute between the main parties in this respect nor that the extant policies remain consistent with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character, appearance and significance of both Warren Farm, a non-designated heritage asset and on Millbrook Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Warren Farm is located within the Millbrook Conservation Area which is a designated heritage asset. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in the exercise of planning powers in conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
5. The Framework (paragraph 193) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
6. Warren Farm itself is a non-designated heritage asset and is included in the local Historic Environment Record (HER). Paragraph 197 of the Framework indicates that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
7. Millbrook Conservation Area covers the village of Millbrook and its immediate surrounds. The village is essentially a linear development running along Sandhill Close, a rural lane strung along the eastern valley side of Mill Brook. According to the HER, Warren Farm and the associated complex of buildings date back to the mid C19 as a planned estate farmstead. They are physically separated from the rest of the village. The buildings are located in a prominent position on high ground close to the southern part of the Conservation Area at the junction of Sandhill Close and Woburn Road (A507). The complex of buildings is not listed, but in the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Millbrook (December 2009) they are identified as providing a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
8. Warren Farm is located in a large garden set back behind mature hedgerows and trees along both Sandhill Close and Woburn Road. Apart from sharing access, the house is functionally separate from the buildings to the east/ north-east, which now accommodate a wide variety of businesses. The house is constructed in similar materials to the estate cottages to the north with two storey gables and tall chimneys. The wooded nature of the Conservation Area is one of its most important characteristics. Warren Farm is visible from the south but, the extent of vegetation substantially restricts clear views. Views from Sandhill Close are obscured by vegetation and the topography.
9. The proposed L-shaped extension would be substantial in size. It would extend the main part of the house northwards at 2 storeys but only across half of the depth of the existing dwelling. This means that the new extension, when viewed from the frontage, would be set back and replace an existing single storey extension including unsightly extraction equipment. Fenestration on the set back front elevation would match the existing. While the 2 storey extension

would be built to the same height as the existing rear ridge line, I do not consider this would detract from the design in this particular circumstance and, I note that the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2014) does not require subservience as an absolute requirement in all circumstances. In addition, the existing complex of buildings includes several former barns of considerably greater bulk than the appeal property so, the extended dwelling would not look out of place.

10. The rear single storey extension includes a glazed gable end the ridge height of which would be subservient to the extended ridge line of the main house. The coupling of the rear and side extensions together would enable the provision of substantial additional living space but with limited effect on the existing dwelling. The appellant has proposed contrasting materials (black weatherboarding to the 2 storey element and smooth render to the rear extension) and, I consider that these would not only appear to be attractive but also be sympathetic in retaining the quality of the existing building. This reflects the advice in the Design Guide that extensions should be designed as additions rather than a duplicate of the existing house.
11. Accordingly, I find that the proposed extension by virtue of its siting, form, scale, massing and height would not have a harmful effect on the significance of Warren Farm as a non-designated heritage asset. In view of this, I also find in relation to the statutory test, given the location of the appeal property as part of a complex of buildings and, the extent of grounds in which it lies that, the appeal proposal would not have a harmful effect either on Millbrook Conservation Area or on its significance as a designated heritage asset.
12. As such, the appeal proposal would not conflict with the requirements of Policies DM3, DM13 and CS15 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Planning Document (2009), the Millbrook Conservation Area Appraisal (2009), the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2014) and, the Framework. Policy DM3 requires high quality design in all new developments including extensions that respect and complement the context and setting of all historically sensitive sites. Policy DM13 ensures that inappropriate development will not be permitted in Conservation Areas and Policy CS15 that seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the district's heritage including its Conservation Areas. The Conservation Area Appraisal establishes the significance of the appeal property within the Millbrook Conservation Area. While these policies and documents were produced some years ago, they remain consistent with the approach in the Framework. The Design Guide also encourages high quality design and I have made reference to it in the context of the appeal proposal above.

Other Matters and Conditions

13. The Council have concluded there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of any neighbours and adequate access and parking facilities already exist. I have no reason to demur on those matters.
14. In the event I were to allow this appeal both main parties have referred to possible conditions. I have made some additions and changes in order to ensure that the development is carried out satisfactorily, meeting the six tests set out in paragraph 55 of the Framework. I have attached 3 conditions. Conditions 1 and 2 deal with time limits and approved plans in order to provide

certainty. Condition 3 relates to the materials on external surfaces. This is required to ensure that the development responds to the character and appearance of the area and is important given the nature of the surfaces proposed.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons stated above, I allow this appeal and grant planning permission subject to conditions.

David Carter

INSPECTOR