



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2020

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/20/3257374

3 Church Farm Barns, Church Farm Lane, Marsworth, HP23 4ND

- 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 Graham Hill against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00381/APP, dated 3 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension to existing buildings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. On the 1 April 2020, Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) merged, along with other Councils, into a new single Unitary Authority called Buckinghamshire Council. Whilst the original planning application was submitted to AVDC, the decision was issued under the authority's new name which has been referred to in the banner heading above.
3. In its evidence the Council has referred to policies within the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, 2013-2033 (VALP). This plan has completed Examination in Public and Main Modifications have been subject to consultation. Having regard to the advanced stage of preparation of the emerging plan and in light of paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I attach moderate weight to these policies.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The site comprises a traditionally constructed barn converted to residential use. There are two-storey and single storey elements to the dwelling which occupies part of a wider converted barn complex. The converted barns are arranged in a coherent well-balanced manner and along with a detached outbuilding and screen wall, enclose a central courtyard area.
6. The layout and design of the site and adjacent properties is reflective of their previous functional and utilitarian use and the conversion has retained the characteristic features of the original barns, such as the simple footprint and arrangement of buildings.

7. The proposal includes the addition of a single storey extension to the side of the existing dwelling on land currently utilised as garden. The extension would be a substantial addition, with eaves and ridge height in line with the existing single storey wing.
8. When viewed from the frontage it would result in the single storey wing having a width almost comparable to that of the two-storey element of the existing dwelling, and although only single storey, it would visually be a dominant addition. It would unbalance and detract from the simple linear character of the existing single storey wing of which it would form part, and which is an important element of the wider courtyard development.
9. The extension would be a prominent feature on the entrance into the courtyard, and due to its size and siting, would significantly extend the line of development beyond the enclosed courtyard. There would also be open views of the extension from the rear, and it would appear as an additional wing that would detract from the simplistic footprint and arrangement of the existing buildings.
10. Furthermore, a number of openings are proposed, and these would have a particularly domestic character and appearance that would further detract from the agricultural character and simplicity of the existing buildings.
11. Whilst there is a single storey wing to the other side of the barn complex this forms a coherent part of its design and layout, sitting opposite the farmhouse and framing the entrance into the farm complex. This would not be the case with the appeal proposal. Although the extension would utilise appropriate materials it would not relate well to the existing property and would result in unacceptable harm to its existing character and appearance and that of the wider barn complex.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposals would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Policies GP9, GP35 and RA11 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, 2004 (LP) and VALP Policies BE2 and C1 which amongst other things seek to ensure that development respects, enhances and is in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, its setting and other buildings in the vicinity.
13. For the same reasons the proposals would fail to achieve the high-quality design requirements of the Framework and the Council's Design Guides: The Conversion of Traditional Farm buildings, 1990 and Residential Extensions, 2013.
14. The Council's decision notice refers to LP Policy RA8 which deals with proposals in defined areas of attractive landscape. However, there is no further detail on this matter within the Officer Report. As I am dismissing the appeal on other matters, I have not pursued this further with the parties, though even if there was found to be an absence of harm to any defined landscape character this would have a neutral effect and would not, therefore, weigh in favour of the appeal.
15. The site is also not subject to any other special designations and no ecological concerns have been raised. Nonetheless, these factors would also have a neutral effect, and do not, therefore, weigh in favour of the appeal.

16. The proposal would provide for improved living accommodation for the appellant, though I am mindful that this benefit would be personal to the appellant and would not outweigh the harm identified above.
17. The appellant has drawn my attention to previous appeal decisions relating to single storey porch additions at No 1 Church Farm Barns¹. I have not been provided with the full details of those cases though from the information submitted, it is clear that the Inspector found the porch to be a modest structure which did not significantly affect the appearance or the character of the barn complex or surrounding area. As detailed above this is not the case with the appeal scheme. The schemes are not directly comparable and do not, therefore, lead me to a different conclusion.
18. I note the appellant's comments in relation to the approval date of the original barn conversion and reference to a dismissed appeal for a detached timber outbuilding, though these matters do not address the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/J0405/A/00/1041658 & APP/J0405/A/00/1041673