



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2020

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 04 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/D/20/3259782

Marsh Cottage, Pockthorpe Loke, Hickling, Norfolk, NR12 0BX

- 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 S Lambard against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/20/0760, dated 8 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is single and two-storey side and rear extensions including first floor balcony with external staircase and construction of new permeable drive.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site, which comprises for the most part a large meadow with some wooded elements, shares its southeastern boundary with Pockthorpe Loke. The site is situated in the countryside, with the nearest settlement, Hickling, located further to the southwest along Pockthorpe Loke. The appeal dwelling is positioned in the eastern corner of the site, close to the northeastern end of the adjacent highway. The appellant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) describes the appeal property as comprising '*an original pre-1900s two-storey brick and flint cottage with a thatched roof, and a two-storey red brick side extension with a thatched roof and a flat roofed element, constructed in 1980..., that is overbearing in terms of size and height when compared to the original cottage*'. In addition to the existing two-storey extension, which adjoins the northwestern gable of the original cottage, a single storey extension projects from its southeastern gable to within a short distance of Pockthorpe Loke. In 2018, planning permission Ref. PF/18/2292 was granted for the replacement of the thatch roof covering with pantiles, which has yet to be implemented.
4. I acknowledge that the taller existing extension is not a subordinate addition to the cottage. However, its red brick frontage reflects the brickwork detailing around the openings in the front elevation of the otherwise flint fronted cottage. Furthermore, whilst the front roof slopes of those two elements are similar in design, the marked step down in ridge level between the two helps to

distinguish between the original cottage and the two-storey extension. When seen from the proposed entrance to the site, to the southwest along Pockthorpe Loke, the architectural character of the original cottage is still discernible, the extension has a complementary appearance and the front elevation of the building retains a relatively simple character, which contributes positive to the character and appearance of the countryside hereabouts. Whilst the flat roofed section of the existing two-storey extension has a discordant appearance, it forms part of the rear elevation of the dwelling, the visibility of which is limited to vantage points at the northern end of the highway. Otherwise, in the vicinity of the appeal site Pockthorpe Loke is characterised by a scattered pattern of development, including: Plummers Farm Barn, a large barn that has been converted and extended for residential use with a detached new cart lodge; and, 2 small cottages of traditional appearance, Plummers Cottage and The Cottage.

5. The proposed development involves extensive modification and extension of the appeal property and the provision of a new driveway leading from Pockthorpe Loke at an entrance point part way along the southeastern boundary of the site.
6. Policy SS 2 of the *North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2008* (CS) permits extensions and replacement of dwellings in the countryside. However, Policy HO 8 indicates that proposals to extend existing dwellings within the area designated as countryside will be permitted provided that the proposal: would not result in a disproportionately large increase in the height or scale of the original dwelling; and, would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding countryside. In determining what constitutes a 'disproportionately large increase' the Policy identifies that account will be taken of the size of the existing dwelling, the extent to which it has previously been extended or could be extended under permitted development rights, and the prevailing character of the area. Policy EN 4 indicates that design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable. Furthermore, extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be expected to have regard to the *North Norfolk Design Guide*, which indicates amongst other things, that the scale of an extension should ensure that the architectural character of the original building is not harmed and remains dominant.
7. In broad terms, the proposal would: increase the height of the original cottage; the existing single-storey southeastern extension would be replaced by a two-storey extension; a single-storey extension topped by a balcony would project from the side elevation of the existing two-storey extension and it would incorporate a chimney stack to the rear, which would extend well above the level of the flat roof; and, the part pitched/part flat roof of the existing two-storey extension would be replaced by a pitched roof form, which would partially overhang the proposed single-storey extension. The appellant's *Design and Access Statement* (DAS) indicates that the original pre-1948 dwelling had a built footprint of around 51 m², whereas its current footprint is around 112 m² and the appeal scheme would increase it by a further 142 m² to around 254 m². The DAS also confirms that whilst the highest part of the existing roof structure is around 7.2 metres above ground finished floor level, the highest part of the proposed roof structure would be some 8.0 metres above ground finished floor level. To my mind, this represents not only a marked increase in

height relative to the highest part of the roof of the existing two-storey extension, but a far more substantial increase relative to the existing lower ridge level of the original dwelling. In my judgement, the proposal would undoubtedly result in a disproportionately large increase in both the height and scale of the original dwelling, contrary to Policy HO 8.

8. The appellant has suggested that under the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015* the shape and orientation of the original house would allow an extension of 69 m² to the rear. Even if that is the case, the footprint would be far smaller than that which is now proposed and so I give this little weight.
9. The materials used in the external surfaces of the walls of the proposed development would be in keeping with those used in the existing building and the use of pantiles across the pitch roofed elements would be consistent with the previous approval. Nonetheless, as a result of the proposal, the form and character of the original cottage, which would be significantly increased in height and would have two-storey extensions on both sides, would be overwhelmed and lost, contrary to the aims of the *North Norfolk Design Guide*. Furthermore, whilst the two-storey, plain pitch roofed southeastern section of the extended building would have a relatively traditional and simple appearance, in stark contrast, the flat roofed single-storey extension, backed by a taller chimney and with a partially over hanging section of the pitched main roof would have an awkward, complex and incongruous appearance. This would be apparent both when viewing the rear elevation of the property from the highway to the east as well as the front elevation from the proposed entrance to the site, further to the southwest along Pockthorpe Loke. I consider overall that the scheme would have a significant detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property, diminishing the contribution it makes the character and appearance of the surroundings.
10. The proposed new driveway would run passed a number of existing trees within the site (T1-T4) and there are a number of trees to the rear of the dwelling (T5-T7). The appellant's *Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement* indicates that whilst the alignment of the proposed driveway would coincide with the root protection areas of a number of the trees at the entrance to the site, it would be possible to ensure that the health of those trees would not be harmed through the use of a no dig method of construction and the installation of protective fencing. Furthermore, the proposed extensions to the dwelling would not encroach on the root protection zones associated with T5-T7, the health of which could be safeguarded through the erection of protective fencing for the construction period. I agree and consider that the necessary mitigation measures could be secured through the imposition of a suitable condition. Therefore, the appeal scheme would not conflict with CS Policies EN 2 and EN 4 insofar as they seek to protect trees.
11. Nonetheless, I conclude overall, that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and its surroundings and so would conflict with CS Policies HO 8 and EN 4. Insofar as these Policies seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and discourage poor design, they are consistent with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework), with which the proposal would also conflict in relation to this issue.

Other matters

12. In my judgement, the separation distances would be sufficient to ensure that the potential for overlooking of neighbouring properties from the proposed large balcony would be negligible. The scheme would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents and in this respect, it would accord with CS Policy EN 4. Whilst some services and facilities are within reasonable walking distances of the site, limiting the need for future residents to travel by car to some extent, in keeping with the aims of CS Policy CT 5, the same could be said of the existing dwelling.
13. The appellant has drawn attention to a number of other developments in the area for which planning permissions have been granted, including properties in the area with a balcony. However, based on the evidence provided, the associated balcony areas appear to be much smaller than that proposed in the case before me. Furthermore, it appears that the balcony approved at Plummers Farm Barn was to be added to the east elevation, which faces away from Pockthorpe Loke. Whilst I do not know the full circumstances of the developments referred to, none appear to be directly comparable to the proposal before me, which would involve disproportionately large increases in both the height and scale of the original dwelling located in the countryside. In any event, each case must be considered primarily on its own merits. I give little weight to the examples of approved development elsewhere.
14. I understand that the proposed development would improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling. Furthermore, new employment would be associated with the construction of the development. Whilst in these respects, the development would gain some support Framework, it would not outweigh the conflict identified above. The DAS indicates that the general condition of the external envelope of the existing building, and the thatched roof in particular, is in poor condition. Whilst the proposed scheme may well improve the condition of the building, I give this little weight as granting permission on this basis could encourage landowners seeking a beneficial permission not to manage their property in a diligent fashion. I understand that the appellant intends that the property extended as proposed would be a new home for him and his family and the proposed balcony area would provide an elevated vantage point from which users could overlook the meadow. Furthermore, the scheme is supported by a former owner of the property. Nonetheless, in my view, neither these nor any other matters raised are sufficient to outweigh the considerations which have led to my conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusions

15. Whilst the proposed development would be consistent with some elements of Development Plan policy, I conclude on balance that the appeal scheme would conflict with the Development Plan taken as a whole, with particular reference to my conclusion on the main issue. Furthermore, in my judgement, the material considerations in this case would not justify a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan. For the reasons given above, I conclude on balance that the appeal should be dismissed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR