



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 1 March 2021

by Alexander O'Doherty LLB (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/20/3263808

Walgaston Cottage, Mobley, Berkeley GL13 9EN

- 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 Sarah Rushton against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.20/2039/HHOLD, dated 29 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension & two storey side extension on gable end.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above is the relevant part of the text as given in the planning application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a small two-storey detached dwelling, its modestly-sized garden, a small paved courtyard, and a parking area. Whilst not a listed building, the property has a simple and legible design, with an attractive appearance.
5. The proposal would incorporate matching materials and much of the original fabric and features of the property as it stands would remain. The two-storey element of the proposal would also follow the current roof design, height and trajectory. Nevertheless, the two-storey element would extend the gable-end of the property by a considerable margin, resulting in a large mass of brickwork that would overwhelm the host property, and detract from its simple character. The single-storey element would be a further sizeable addition, and would appear as a rather disjointed add-on to the two-storey element when viewed from the left elevation¹. Overall, the scale of the works proposed would be excessive for this fairly diminutive property, and would result in a jumbled appearance. Accordingly, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property.

¹ Reference is made to the names of the elevations as shown on the submitted plans.

6. I observed the development at The Old Piggery, and recognise that the glazing proposed for Walgaston Cottage would visually blend somewhat with the large glass features there. However, that building has a distinct and uniform design, which would not be the result with respect to the proposal for Walgaston Cottage, for the reasons already given. Thus, its presence does not change my findings.
7. The site is located some way from the main road. Nearby buildings are generally much larger than Walgaston Cottage, as are their plots. However the site falls within the countryside where there are only occasional properties and farmsteads scattered amongst the landscape. As such, the site and its surroundings sit visually alone as a cluster of development in an otherwise rural landscape. Whilst not particularly prominent in the landscape on account of the topography and intervening features (including hedgerows and trees), the Framework² guides as to how planning should recognise the intrinsic character of the countryside, and neither its provisions regarding local character nor that of the development plan are limited to development that would be highly prominent.
8. In terms of scale and plot size, Walgaston Cottage offers a pleasing counterpoint to the more substantial buildings and plots beyond. With that in mind, although broadly the proposal would follow the existing layout of Walgaston Cottage as it sits within its plot, the two-storey element would take up a substantial portion of the already modestly-sized garden, and the single-storey element would leave little space in the small paved courtyard area and would fit awkwardly within it. Considering this, and following my reasoning in respect of the effect of the proposal on the host property, some harm to the character of the area would also arise by reason of the creation of an excessively cramped development for this countryside location.
9. Reference has been made to the lack of a garden or a courtyard at The Potting Shed, and that outside space for many barn conversions can be relatively small. Be that as it may, I have based my findings on the specific circumstances of the site and the surrounding area, and for the reasons given above I have identified that harm would result. I have also carefully considered the images and the information submitted by the appellant, but each of the properties shown are quite different in terms of their overall design, and it is likely that the sizes of the plots and the character of the surrounding areas are materially different, also. As such, they are not directly comparable with the proposal. Hence, all those considerations do not change my findings.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies HC8 and CP14 of the Stroud District Local Plan (adopted 2015) which collectively seek to ensure that proposed extensions are in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling (taking into account any cumulative additions), and the site's wider setting and location.

Other Matters

11. Given the nature of the proposal and its surroundings, the proposal would not entail an unacceptable effect in terms of traffic generation or the living

² National Planning Policy Framework 2019

conditions of those nearby. This is neutral finding, rather than one that weighs positively in favour of allowing the appeal.

12. I have taken account of the letter of representation in support of the scheme, that the proposal would result in improved living conditions for the occupants of the property, and of the appellant's argument that some alterations may be made to the property under permitted development rights regardless of the outcome of this appeal.
13. However I have reasoned above that clear harm would result notwithstanding the views of interested parties. Improvements to the property would principally be a personal benefit rather than a matter of public interest. There is no substantive detail before me as to what development, if any, may be undertaken under permitted development rights, to enable a comparison with the scheme before me. As such, collectively, I accord those other matters only limited weight in favour of the appeal. By consequence they do not overcome the clear harm that I have identified would result.

Conclusion

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

Alexander O'Doherty

INSPECTOR