
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2021

by Adrian Hunter BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/D/21/3267338

Deerfold House, Mill Lane, Wadborough WR8 9HB

- 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 Abercrombie against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02516/HP, dated 13 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is extend above existing garage to create home office and family accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether the development would comprise a new self-contained dwelling in the countryside.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a large detached property, set within a reasonably sized plot, with a single storey detached double garage. The appeal site is located on the corner of a crossroads and as such, occupies a relatively prominent position. The existing single storey garage is predominantly flat roofed and, due to its limited height, surrounding boundary treatment and landscaping, it is well contained when viewed from nearby public viewpoints. The site is bounded by open fields and, whilst there are a number of nearby properties, the character of the surrounding area is principally rural.
4. The proposal would involve the erection of a first-floor extension above the existing double garage, to provide additional accommodation.
5. Whilst the extended garage would be lower in height than the host dwelling, the appeal proposal would result in a building of considerably greater height, bulk and mass than the existing garage. The extended building would be wholly different in scale, character and appearance and would extend above surrounding boundary treatment. As a result, and given the prominence of the

appeal site, it would be a significant feature within the countryside, clearly visible within local views. As a consequence, it would represent an incongruous form of development that would fail to positively respond to its site and surroundings and would therefore harm the rural character and appearance of the area.

6. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and, in this respect, would be contrary to Policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new development integrates effectively with its surroundings.

Provision of a new dwelling

7. From the information before me, the proposed development would retain the existing garage use on the ground floor, with the upper floor to be used as an occasional family annex room, a home office, along with a shower room.
8. Whilst the proposed addition would be of a considerable size and is detached from the main dwelling house, I note from the evidence that the additional accommodation would provide only limited facilities and would not include elements that are an essential part of a separate residential use, for example cooking facilities. Furthermore, I note that the proposal would not be provided with a separate vehicular access. Overall, I find that the level of accommodation proposed would be ancillary in use to the main dwelling.
9. I note the Council's concern that it would be possible to provide additional facilities within the building with little or no change to its external appearance and, as such, the building could potentially become an independent dwelling. To my mind however, such a change would require the granting of a new planning permission, at which time the Council would be able to fully assess the merits of such a proposal against the appropriate development plan policies. However, to provide further control over this, an appropriately worded planning condition to restrict the occupancy of the building could be attached to any planning permission.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not result in the creation of a new dwelling in the open countryside and, in this respect, would not be contrary to Policy SWDP2 of the SWDP and the Framework. These policies, amongst other things seek to strictly control new development in the open countryside.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has referred me to examples of other similar developments within the area. I am however not familiar with the full details of these cases and, in any event, I am required to determine the appeal on its merits.

Conclusion

12. Although I have found that the proposal would not amount to a new residential dwelling within the countryside, this would be outweighed by the harm from the other main issue.

13. Therefore, for the above reasons I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Adrian Hunter

INSPECTOR