
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 April 2021

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/20/3260518

2 Bucklands Croft, Wilstone, Herts, England HP23 4NW

- 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 & Mrs Tuszynski against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01166/FHA, dated 11 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single-storey rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wilstone Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Wilstone Conservation Area (the CA). The CA derives its significance in part from the character and appearance of the buildings within it. Bucklands Croft is a group of buildings appearing as barn conversions adjacent to the listed Manor Farm. The Bucklands Croft buildings are generally simple and linear in form with their front elevations facing into a communal courtyard. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
4. The proposed extension would project to the rear of the building. It would be the first significant rearward projection to this part of Bucklands Croft and would break from the established linear form of development. As such, it would be harmful to the character of the group of buildings, and to that of the wider CA.
5. The extension would be finished in materials matching that of the existing building, and in scale and general appearance would be sympathetic to the existing building. Its appearance would not therefore be harmful to that of the CA.

6. The harm to the significance of the CA would therefore be limited to the effect on the character of the buildings. This harm would be experienced primarily in the immediate vicinity of the buildings, as in longer views from the public footpath to the rear of the house and further beyond the extension would be viewed as a subordinate addition of limited scale and prominence. It would therefore amount to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale. Nonetheless, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) 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 irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm to its significance.
7. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset the Framework states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance, the appellants contend that the development would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the CA and have not advanced any public benefits. The proposal would aid in providing an improved and more accessible layout, as one of the appellants is registered disabled, but this is a principally private benefit and therefore only attracts limited weight. It does not, in this instance, outweigh the great weight to be accorded to the conservation of the significance of the CA.
8. The appeal proposal would preserve the appearance but harm the character of the CA, and therefore conflicts with the Act and with Policy CS27 of Dacorum's Core Strategy 2013. This policy requires that development positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas.

Other Matters

9. My attention has been drawn to other extensions approved to buildings within the Bucklands Croft group. However, these extensions mainly continued the linear form of the group or, where sited to the rear of their host property, were in less prominently visible locations. These other approvals therefore attract limited weight in the determination of this appeal.

Conclusion

10. There are no material considerations to indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
11. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR