



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2021

By Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/21/3266605

Mai Barn, Romden Road, Romden, Smarden TN27 8QZ

- 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 Mrs J Taylor against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01225/AS, dated 15 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of an oak framed garden room in position of previously approved garden room under planning reference 15/00743/AS.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and that of the local area.

Procedural Matters

3. Since Ashford Borough Council's (the Council) refusal of the application Ref 20/01225/AS the Government has published a revised National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, in line with Planning Practice Guidance, my consideration of the issues of this appeal has been on the basis of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) and the Ashford Local Plan (2019) (the Local Plan). Neither the appellant nor the Council have indicated that this is prejudicial to their cases.
4. The development has been carried out and I am considering the appeal retrospectively. However, I have removed the reference to 'retrospective' in the heading above as this is not an act of development.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is located in the Haffenden Quarter Farmlands Landscape Character Area, an area of countryside with flat to gently undulating landform, a strong framework of hedgerows, plantations and small woodland blocks, where much of the built development respects the local vernacular.
6. The development takes the form of an extension with the appearance of a timber conservatory, which sits between a traditional agricultural barn converted to residential use and a smaller annexe building.

7. The barn and annex buildings retain much of their original form and strong architectural character as vernacular Kentish timber weatherboarded agricultural buildings, which lend significant character to this area of countryside, adding to its beauty.
8. Although the Council have not expressly indicated that they consider the converted barn building and its annexe buildings as undesignated heritage assets, their decision notice does refer to the impact on their historic form. From my site visit it was clear from their age, form and character as Kentish vernacular agricultural buildings, that they represent and should be considered as undesignated heritage assets.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out how planning authorities should seek the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and establishes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning. It also sets out that the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application.
10. The extension and roof lantern are timber framed, with a honey toned oak finish that, whilst matching the windows and doors of the converted barn structure, contrasts significantly with the dark, almost black, timber weatherboarding of the barn and annexe. The extensive use of this honey toned oak finish results in the contrasting finish of the extension being unduly prominent and visually out of keeping with the proposal.
11. The junction of the roof of the link extension with that of the barn results in a misalignment between the two, which has a haphazard effect. Combined with the extension's roof lantern, this results in an uncomfortable connection and unbalanced relationship between these two parts of the appeal property as well as with the annexe.
12. The development, therefore, results in an incongruous addition to the barn and its annexe, which is visually intrusive and causes significant harm to their character and appearance as historic rural Kentish vernacular buildings, thereby also diminishing their significance as undesignated heritage assets.
13. Further, the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the barn and annexe buildings, and particularly the extension's visually intrusive presence, which is apparent from surrounding wider view-points, both public and private, results in significant harm the character and appearance of the immediate local area and slight harm to the character and beauty of the Haffenden Quarter Farmlands Landscape Character Area.
14. For these reasons, the development conflicts with policies, SP1, SP6, HOU8, ENV3a and ENV13 of the Local Plan, as well as paragraphs 130, 174 and 203 of the Framework, which collectively seek to ensure that developments, including extensions, are of high-quality design and do not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area, and conserve or enhance designated landscapes and have regard to the significance of non-designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has made particular reference, including in their description of the development, to the previous approval of a link extension between the

converted barn and its annexe building. I acknowledge that the appellant has proceeded with the development for which they have sought retrospective approval under the misapprehension that it enjoyed permitted development rights under the GPDO. This was in error, which is acknowledged in the appellants appeal statement. Notwithstanding this situation, I have considered the development on its own individual merits.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should not succeed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR