



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 21 September 2021

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/21/3279218

Springhill, Frogmarsh Lane, South Woodchester, STROUD, GL5 5ES

- 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 Hearn against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.21/0091/HHOLD, dated 15 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for single storey extension, at Springhill, Frogmarsh Lane, South Woodchester, Stroud, GL5 5ES, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: S.21/0091/HHOLD, dated 15 January 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: P242-0.1, P242-1.1 Rev D and P242-1.2 Rev D.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 20 July 2021, following the Council's decision, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Both parties have had an opportunity to comment on the revisions where they may be relevant to the case, and any comments received have been taken into account in determining the appeal.
3. I have used the Council's description of development by removing the word 'rear', as the extension would be to the side and forward of the existing building rather than to the rear.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the existing building and area, including the South Woodchester Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property occupies a prominent hillside position at the edge of the built up area of the village. It has a vernacular appearance, typical of cottages in the area, built in creamy Cotswold stone with stone roof tiles. It addresses the road with a gable and is attached to another dwelling that sits behind it. The two dwellings do not form a conventional semi detached pair. I note that the appellant suggests they may have originally formed a single L-shaped dwelling, which is the impression I got when I visited the site.
6. The existing outbuilding occupies a prominent elevated position alongside the road, forward of the dwelling's front gable. It faces the road with a blank side elevation. As a result, although set forward and elevated, it does not assert itself and has a scale that is clearly subservient to the main dwelling. The proposal would see this building extended at either end. Even when extended its northwest gable would still be well clear of the front gable of the host building. It would retain a simple appearance facing out over the road and a modest width, thereby maintaining its scale as an ancillary outbuilding. Its connection with the existing dwelling would be in the form of a modest flat roofed link that would be set back and thus not at all prominent to view.
7. As a result, although the proposal would achieve a substantial increase to the dwelling's ground floor living accommodation, the two single storey ranges would still appear as ancillary additions alongside the scale of the host dwelling, especially when it is viewed in combination with its attached neighbour. The extensions to the main single storey ranges would adopt a material palette to match the existing building, incorporating Cotswold stone with ashlar quoins and oak framed glazing for the gable ends that would face out over the valley to the southeast. I am thus satisfied that the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the existing building or its immediate environs.
8. The appeal property is within the South Woodchester Conservation Area (SWCA). Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 LBCA requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. I note that the Council's conservation team is satisfied that the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the SWCA. At my visit I saw that the proposal would accord with the consistent use of Cotswold stone and the vernacular scale, appearance and siting of buildings within the SWCA. I am therefore satisfied that it would preserve the character and appearance of the SWCA.
9. The appeal site is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The statutory purpose of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Paragraph 176 of the Framework establishes that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty in AONBs. The proposal is within the residential context of the village. It would not result in an encroachment of built form into the open countryside of the AONB. I am satisfied that it would conserve the scenic beauty of the AONB.
10. In summary, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or area. It would thus accord with the requirements of the LBCA and paragraph 199 of the Framework, which states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. It would also accord

with Policy HC8 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015, which seeks to ensure that proposals to extend dwellings are in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling and its wider setting.

Conditions

11. I have had regard to the planning conditions suggested by the Council. I have considered the conditions against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have imposed a condition specifying the approved plans as this provides certainty. I have also imposed a condition to ensure that matching materials are used to safeguard the character of the building and area. This would go beyond the details included on the approved plans by ensuring that the coursing and finish of stonework and joinery finishes match the existing building.
12. I have not imposed the condition suggested by the Council to control the hours that construction work can take place at the site as I am not satisfied that this is necessary to avoid a refusal of planning permission. The scheme is modest in scale and is not so close to neighbouring dwellings that construction activities taking place outside the hours suggested by the Council would always be unacceptable to the occupiers of those dwellings.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons above, the appeal should be allowed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR