

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2022

by Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2022

Appeal Ref. APP/C1570/D/21/3289138

Keepers Barn, Bullocks Lane, Takeley CM22 6TA

- 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 Jackie Collison against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application ref. UTT/21/2413/HHF, dated 26 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is "Erection of two storey extension".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a 2-storey extension at Keepers Barn, Bullocks Lane, Takeley CM22 6TA in accordance with the terms of the application ref. UTT/21/2413/HHF, dated 26 July 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans numbered: 1040-21.PL.001 REV:B; 1040-21.PL.002 REV:A; 1040-21.PL.003 REV:A; 1040-21.PL.004 REV:B; 1040-21.PL.005 REV:B; and 1040-21.PL.006 REV:A
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is well set back from the northern side of Bullocks Lane off a narrow private track. Having the appearance of a timber-clad converted outbuilding, Keepers Barn is nonetheless a newly constructed dwelling which occupies the footprint of a former dilapidated old barn. Although it has been
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built and finished to a high standard, it does not exhibit any outstanding architectural qualities as such.

4. Keepers Barn lies in an area of countryside where there has been considerable change in recent years. It falls towards the centre of a cluster of residential development consisting of established dwellings (to the south and west), several sizeable new houses (along Nursery Grove to the north) and 3 dwellings still under construction (to the east on the opposite side of the narrow private track). There have inevitably been a number of urbanising effects upon this rural area, the most notable being the sheer spread of the new residential developments and the gated access to Nursery Grove with a wide splayed junction on to Bullocks Lane marked by raised kerbs.
5. Whilst the Council's Delegated Officer Report refers in some places to 2-storey "*extensions*" and the "*accumulative impact of the proposed extensions*", it should be noted that it is proposed to add one simple 2-storey extension to the northern elevation of Keepers Barn. It would have a pitched roof projecting at right angles from the main building. Part of the roof on the eastern side of the extension would be swept down to cover a new entrance porch in the corner of the proposed near L-shaped plan form. On the same side, a modest dormer window would be included as a continuation of the wall face.
6. Given the rather secluded location of Keepers Barn and the fact that the extension would be added to its northern side, the proposed extension would have no material impact upon the Bullocks Lane street scene.
7. The scheme would respect the guidance on size and scale in the Council's Home Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The proposed extension would not be as high as or larger than the main building. It would be built over part of the rear lawn. However, there would still be ample garden area to allow for leisure activities in the form of a retained lawn area, about 12m deep beyond the end of the extension, and hard surfaced yards and patios. In terms of scale, as the appellant points out, the proposed internal floor area would be well below 50% of the existing internal floor area. The blank gable end of the proposed extension would be narrower than the gable ends of the original building which would remain fully expressed.
8. Given its limited overall size, scale and depth and the design of its gable-ended roof set below the main roof ridge, I consider that the additional bulk and mass of the extension would be within tolerable limits. It would certainly not overwhelm the existing dwelling. Rather, the extension would generally appear as a subservient addition to the dwelling when seen in private vantage points from within the appeal site and neighbouring properties or from the narrow private access track.
9. Given the position of the dwelling very close to the plot's southern boundary, the extension would not result in the dwelling appearing visually out of proportion with the remaining garden space to the north or reaching too far back in relation to nearby dwellings. Indeed, the blank gable end of the proposed extension would be further away from the common boundary with no. 4 Nursery Grove than the rear projecting 2-storey wing at that neighbouring property. Adequate space around the dwelling would remain such that the development would be sufficiently respectful of its setting and to the

particular character of the part of the surrounding countryside within which Keepers Barn is located.

10. The Council has not drawn my attention to any specific architectural details in the scheme it dislikes or to the removal of permitted development rights for extensions and alterations when the original dwelling was permitted under ref. UTT/19/1365/FUL. Noting the appropriate use of matching materials, including horizontal timber cladding, I consider that the scale, design and external materials of the proposed extension would respect those of the original building. The proposed extension would represent a visually attractive solution, exhibit a high standard of design and be sufficiently complementary and sympathetic to the parent building and the surrounding rural area, the character and appearance of which would be preserved.
11. I find on the main issue that the proposed extension would preserve the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings. As such, there would be no conflict with the aims of Policies S7, GEN2 and H8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, the SPD or the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it relates to achieving well-designed places and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
12. The scheme will enhance the quality of life for the occupiers of Keepers Barn by providing additional accommodation, including an entrance hall. This is a further factor that weighs in favour of granting planning permission. I realise that a previous planning application (ref. UTT/21/1527/HHF) for a similar proposal was refused. No appeal was lodged against that decision and in any event, I have assessed this current proposal entirely on its own merits. Following the receipt of the amended (REV:B) drawings on 26 August 2021, the Council found that the scheme would not significantly detract from the amenities of the neighbouring properties for any reason and I could see no basis to disagree with that stance.
13. In addition to a condition setting a time limit for the commencement of development, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the relevant approved drawings, as amended, is necessary as this provides certainty. I have also imposed a condition requiring the use of matching materials to ensure that the development would protect the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.
14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR