



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 April 2022

by Paul Singleton BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/22/3293481

The Pumphouse, Brooklands Barns, Winsford Road, Wettenhall, CW7 4DL

- 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 and Mrs A Williams against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 21/3437N, dated 23 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is a single story extension to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the group of former agricultural buildings within which it sits, and the site's wider countryside location.

Reasons

3. The property is one of 6 dwellings formed through the conversion of former agricultural buildings that are grouped in an L shaped block adjacent to the former farmhouse on Winsford Road. The buildings are mostly two storey but the wing standing perpendicular to the road (the southern wing) has a lean-to single storey extension to its rear elevation. The appeal property forms part of the eastern wing of the block.
4. I saw that the residential conversion scheme has been designed and implemented so as to retain most of the original building fabric, to minimise alterations to the external envelope of the original buildings, and to be sensitive to their traditional form and character. The conversion has retained the simple, unadorned form of the building elevations through the absence of new extensions, the re-use of original openings for windows and doors and the retention of the narrow ventilation slits between the ground and first floor openings. The scheme has also adopted common colour finishes to doors, windows and the rendering to the ground floor of the eastern wing. As a result, the buildings retain a strong group identity and, although obviously now in residential use, are readily identifiable as former agricultural buildings with a traditional rural character. The retention of the simple post and rail fencing to all the rear gardens, other than that of the appeal property, also helps to connect the building group to its strong rural setting.

5. In that context, the appeal proposal would cause considerable harm to the traditional character and appearance of the host property and of the building group as a whole. The extension would be of limited depth and the external materials would be in keeping. It would, however, be a discordant addition to the simple and plain rear elevation of the eastern wing of the group. Its position within that long elevation would erode the existing rhythm of that building when seen from the shared access road and parking area.
6. The loss, in terms of external appearance, of 3 of the 4 original openings at ground floor level and nearly all of the narrow ventilation slits in the rear elevation of the property would be harmful to its character. As these features make an important contribution to the uniform appearance and traditional character, both of the eastern wing and of the range as a whole, this would also significantly reduce the group identity of the buildings. The large, glazed opening in the extension would jar with the more traditional form of window and door finishes in the existing rear elevation to the host property and its neighbours. That incongruity would be apparent to all users of the access road and parking area.
7. I do not consider that the lean-to extension to the southern wing of the building group provides any precedent or design rationale for the appeal proposal. As a result both of its height and physical connection with the two storey element, by means of a shared and extended roof slope, that extension appears as an integral element of the former agricultural buildings. In contrast, the proposed extension would appear as an incongruous and obviously domestic addition to the building. The proposal would not be sympathetic to the traditional rural character of the host property and building group and does not, in my view, accord with the Historic England guidance in relation to former agricultural buildings.
8. The proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the building group of which it forms a key part and to their wider rural setting. It conflicts with Policy SD2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030, which requires that proposals should contribute positively to an area's character and reinforce local distinctiveness, and with Policy SD1 which seeks that development should contribute to protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment. The proposal would not achieve a quality of design compatible with the guidance on extensions to converted barns as set out in the Council's Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document or with the requirements of paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework. I find that there are no material considerations that outweigh the harm that I have identified or the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Singleton

INSPECTOR