

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 May 2022

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26TH May 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/R0660/D/22/3293977

'Crosswinds', 'Bickerton Hall Barns', Bickerton Road, Bickerton SY14 8AP

- 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 Hoyle against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application (reference 21/4904N, dated 17 September 2021) was refused by notice dated 3 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "single storey rear extension, replacement doorset and ancillary garden buildings".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a "single storey rear extension, replacement doorset and ancillary garden buildings", at 'Crosswinds', 'Bickerton Hall Barns', Bickerton Road, Bickerton SY14 8AP, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 21/4904N, dated 17 September 2021), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Hoyle (the Appellants) against Cheshire East Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. Bickerton lies in an attractive area of countryside, in a gently rolling agricultural landscape of fields and woodlands. The landscape is patterned by a network of country lanes and the appeal site is located close to the junction of Bickerton Road and Clay Lane. It forms part of a group of buildings, together with an imposing house and a number of other homes that have been created by the conversion of a range of agricultural outbuildings. A group of large, modern agricultural buildings stands some way to the south.

5. This small residential enclave is attractive in itself, although it is obviously residential in nature, in spite of its history. The conversion has retained local character and has created a pleasing group of buildings of some architectural and historic merit, characterised by old brickwork and stonework under tiled roofs with consistent architectural detailing that reveals its origins. 'Crosswinds' is at the south-west end of the old agricultural range, with a further building beyond, now apparently in use as garages. It has the benefit of its own relatively large garden (by modern standards) with an outlook over open countryside to the south and west, while the front elevation faces the shared courtyard area.
6. It is now proposed to construct an extension at the rear of the house, as well as to carry out works in the garden that include the erection of some ancillary garden buildings or structures. The south-west (gable) elevation of the house would be altered by the insertion of a "replacement doorset".
7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in July 2021) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history (while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change).
8. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan, notably at Policies SD1, SD2 and SE1 of the Cheshire East 'Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030' (dated 2017) and Policy RES.11 of the 'Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan' (which was adopted in February 2005). In principle, however, extensions to existing dwelling in the countryside are permissible, if the extensions are not disproportionate to the original and subject to considerations of design.
9. The Council's 'Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document' (dated July 2008) is also relevant, though it does not have the same force as Policies in the Development Plan.
10. The main element of the proposals would be the construction of a new extension on the rear elevation of the existing building, which would also involve some modifications to existing windows. The new extension would be in the form of a small "lean-to" structure, built of materials to match those of the existing building. It would be clearly subordinate to the existing building and would be in keeping with the existing character. The architectural form of the extension would imitate traditional alterations to agricultural buildings that may have evolved over time. The form of the proposed extension would be entirely appropriate to its host building and the effect on existing windows would be very minor in their context.
11. In short, I am convinced that the proposed extension would not have a harmful effect on the character or appearance of the host building or the surroundings and that it can properly be permitted.
12. The remaining elements of the scheme would have only a minimal effect on the existing house and garden and are not contentious.

13. The appeal scheme would amount to a modest extension to the existing dwelling but it would provide useful additional space and would, thereby, add to the stock of residential accommodation in the locality, albeit in a very limited way. I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the national legislation or the Development Plan, in principle, and that it is acceptable in planning terms.
14. Hence, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations (including comments by local residents), I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
15. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal).
16. In particular, I have concluded that standard conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained. These include a requirement to carry out the development in accordance with the approved drawings and to ensure that the materials to be used will match those of the existing building.
17. The Council have suggested a number of additional conditions, relating to various details of the extension and doorset, that could be advisable in relation to more sensitive heritage assets. Even so, I am not persuaded that these conditions are necessary in relation to this proposed development, bearing in mind the provisions of paragraph 56 of the 'National Planning Policy Framework', and I have not imposed them. On the other hand, the submitted drawings do not show sufficient detail of the proposed "ancillary buildings" and I have adopted the condition suggested by the Council, to require drawings of these (at a scale of 1:100) to be approved in due course.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number HOY1 (Existing Elevations & Site Plan);
 - drawing number HOY2 (Existing Ground Floor Plan);
 - drawing number HOY4 (Proposed Elevations & Site Plan);
 - drawing number HOY5 (Proposed Ground Floor Plan).
3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension and doorset that are hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
4. Prior to the construction/installation of the greenhouse, pergola and shed, as detailed on the 'Proposed Site Plan', drawings at a scale of not less than 1:100 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted drawings shall include the materials, colours and finish of these proposed ancillary structures/buildings. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.