



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 October 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/22/3301604

Castweazel Oast, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8EW.

- 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 Jeremy Shaw against the decision of Ashford borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00138/AS, dated 31 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is a double storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the architectural integrity of the former oast house and thereby the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Castweazel Oast is a former oast house, previously converted to a residential dwelling, located in the countryside. Despite its conversion and associated alterations, it still retains the inherent character and appearance of its form agricultural function. A number of traditional features including, the wind cowl, stowage and lucarne have also been retained.
4. Ashford Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance – *The Reuse of Agricultural Buildings*, states amongst other things that extensions should not dominate the original building in scale, material or situation. Further, they should be subordinate in scale proportion and mass to the existing building or related to the buildings to be retained. This guidance is reflected in the pre-ambles to Policy HOU8 Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Adopted February 2019) (LP) which address extensions to existing dwellings. It states, along with other things, that alterations and extensions should be designed to complement the scale massing and materials of the existing building, preserve features of architectural interest, provide a satisfactory relationship between old and new fabric.
5. The appellant proposes the removal of an earlier single storey addition to the rear elevation and the erection of a two-storey rear extension. This modest single storey addition is a utilitarian flat roof addition with pitched tile fascia detail and is domestic in appearance, its removal is to be welcomed.

6. The proposed two-storey addition would be almost as wide as the original roundel of the oast and have a steep double pitched hipped roof. Thereby making it a prominent competing addition to the host property.
7. Further, the north elevation of the extension would, by reason of its overall design, in particular its striking roof form and fenestration pattern, be symmetrical and somewhat formal in appearance. This would, in my judgement, be in direct contrast to the former agricultural rustic vernacular character of the original building.
8. In addition, the introduction of a number of domestic features such as French doors, Juliet balconies etc. as well as reinforcing the extension's a prominence would serve to further denude the rustic agricultural character of the former oast.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed extension as designed would due to its scale, mass and detailed design cause significant harm to the architectural integrity and inherent character and appearance of the former oast house. To allow it would therefore be contrary to the objectives of LP Policies SP1, SP6, ENV3a and HOU8, adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 10–*Domestic Extensions in Urban and Rural Areas*, Supplementary Design Guidance–*The Reuse of Agricultural Buildings* and Historic England's–*The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to Good Practice 2006* and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other matters

10. I appreciate that matching materials are proposed, the development would not, due to the separation distances involved, cause harm to the living conditions of any neighbouring occupiers or impact on the street scene. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor in my considerations and, as such, I have given these matters very limited weight in my decision.
11. The appellant has suggested that the building benefits from permitted development rights and therefore Juliet Balconies could be added to the existing dwelling without the need for planning permission. Further, he contends that a 3.0 metre two-storey rear extension could also be constructed under permitted development rights. However, these proposals would be subject to separate consideration and as there is limited evidence to suggest that they would come to pass, this consideration has minimal weight in my decision.
12. The appellant has referred me to other extensions to nearby former oast houses. Whatever the background to those cases, the existence of other additions within the Borough is not an appropriate justification for permitting the proposed development here, which I have considered on its individual design and planning merits and its impact on Catweazel Oast.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the support of the Parish Council, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR