



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2022

by C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/22/3305238

Rectory Cottage, Church Road, Biddestone SN14 7DP

- 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 S & C Bruce against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2022/02136, dated 14 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension to existing outbuilding and infilling of west elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a roof extension to existing outbuilding and infilling of west elevation at Rectory Cottage, Church Road, Biddestone SN14 7DP, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2022/02136, dated 14 March 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan, Floor Plan and Elevations RC4.

Preliminary Matters

2. The roof extension to the outbuilding has already taken place and appears to accord with the submitted plans. I have therefore made my decision based on my observations when visiting the site, as well as the submitted plans. I note that the description of development on the application form indicates that this is a revised proposal, but I have removed these words from my formal heading as they do not in themselves describe an act of development.
3. I also note that the Council has questioned whether the existing outbuilding, and other developments on the site, are authorised. However, that is not a matter for me to determine as part of this Section 78 appeal. My determination of this appeal is therefore based upon the proposal as described and does not prejudice the Council from taking any necessary enforcement action available to them should they consider it expedient to do so.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the Biddestone Conservation Area, including Rectory Cottage.

Reasons

5. Biddestone is a quiet rural village that is typical of the area. The Conservation Area is characterised by historic stone-built buildings, centred around the village green and duck pond. The buildings are generally set close to the roadside and are mostly two or three storeys high. They predominantly have tiled gable roofs, although there are also several examples of hipped style roofs throughout the village. The typical character and appearance of the numerous period stone-built cottages contributes towards the significance of Biddestone as a traditional rural village.
6. The appeal site itself is set well back from the road along a lengthy private driveway. Rectory Cottage was built relatively recently, but it contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area due to its overall design and the materials used. However, the contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole is limited by the fact that the views into the site from the public realm are largely obscured by mature trees and other planting.
7. Over the last few years, further buildings have been constructed on the appeal site including a large car house and the outbuilding that is the subject of this appeal. The outbuilding is constructed of stone-built walls with a hipped tile roof. The roof extension, which is already in place, matches the style of the existing roof.
8. The roof extension has the effect of visually linking the outbuilding to Rectory Cottage. However, while it stands forward of the main front elevation, it does not dominate the main dwelling due to its modest height. The appearance and colour of the roof extension is sympathetic to the cottage and its overall character. The hipped roof of the outbuilding matches the style of the roof of the existing car house and other buildings within the village.
9. When viewed from the garden area, the various buildings, including the large car house, combine to create a courtyard style space which does not feel crowded or incongruous with the appearance of Rectory Cottage. The proposed infilling of the west elevation of the outbuilding with glazing would not add to the bulk of the built form in any way, and as a result would not have a negative impact on the setting of the cottage. Furthermore, the garden is of a sufficient size to perform its function and help preserve the individual identity of the cottage by providing a feeling of space.
10. Despite the expanse of blank wall and unbroken roof facing the drive, on approaching the site from close range, the extended roof appears as part of a unified cluster of buildings. Therefore, when taken as a whole, the roof extension and the infilling of the west elevation, by nature of its design, scale and materials used, would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, both in so far as it relates to the appeal site and to the Conservation Area as a whole. It would therefore not result in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, or to the character and appearance of Rectory Cottage itself.
11. I have concluded that the development proposal is in accordance with Policies CP57 and CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015, as well as section 16 of the Framework, which taken together, seek to preserve character and appearance, including that of designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is not alleged by the Council that harm would arise to the AONB as a result of the proposed development. As the appeal site lies within the built form of Biddestone, the relationship between the settlement and the AONB would not change. As a result, given the limited built form proposed, the development would not cause harm to the scenic beauty of the AONB.
13. Similarly, the Council has not suggested that the proposed development would result in any harm to the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse at Mountjoy Farm which is close to the appeal site. There is nothing before me to suggest that the setting of this building goes beyond its immediate environs and general position within the wider Conservation Area. As I have already found that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area of which the farmhouse also forms part, it therefore follows that the proposal would also not cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

Conditions

14. Given that development has already started, the standard commencement condition is not required. I have also not imposed a condition regarding materials as the remaining work to infill the west elevation with glazing does not justify this.
15. With the exception of works allowed through permitted development, any further additions or alterations to the outbuilding would require planning permission. Therefore, imposing a condition to secure this position is not needed.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR