
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2022

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/22/3308345

Maynes Hill Barn, Winslow Road, Hoggston, Buckinghamshire, MK18 3LG

- 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 James and Gemma Topping against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01076/APP, dated 23 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is side and rear extension to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Maynes Hill Barn is a two storey brick built dwelling converted from a stable. It is located in open countryside and forms part of a small group of buildings including a farmhouse immediately adjacent to the south, a dwelling to the north and a number of agricultural buildings. It is of simple rectangular form with small rear extension under a catslide roof and a long low range at right angles along the southern boundary. It is partially visible across fields from the access lane/footpath during the winter, when the leaves are off the trees.
4. I consider that the relevant policies in this case include BE2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033, adopted 2021 (the local plan), which requires, among other things, new development to respect the scale and context of the site and its setting, and the vernacular character of the locality. Policy C1 relates to the conversion of rural buildings and requires that conversion should not involve major extension. Any extension to an existing conversion should, among other things, be modest in scale and subordinate to the main building. Policy NE1 relates to biodiversity and the protection of important species.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) and the National Design Guide 2021 offer advice on the design of development in terms of the context of the site and the surroundings, including local history and the vernacular character of existing buildings, and their scale and proportion.

6. The proposed development would include a large two storey gabled extension running the full depth of the existing building from front to back and projecting to the rear, and a two storey element incorporating a new hall and stairs and creating a second pitched roof parallel to the main roof line.
7. I consider that the proposal would result in disproportionately large extensions, out of keeping with the relatively modest traditional and vernacular character of the existing building. The original conversion has maintained the scale, form and proportions of the original building and this proposal would radically alter its character and appearance and its identity as a former farm building.
8. The Council has a long established commitment to the preservation of traditional farm buildings, as evidenced by its *Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings Design Guide* (adopted 1990). Although this is an old document, its philosophy is carried forward in up-to-date local plan policy C1 and supported by the National Design Guide. It promotes the attitude that farm buildings are part of the heritage and should be retained, and also that they should remain looking like farm buildings after their conversion. It identifies the roof form and the number and size of openings as features which should be kept to traditional proportions as far as possible.
9. The original simple main roof form and the catslide over the rear extension would be lost to the new gable and the proposed double pitch roof, and the large area of glazing and mass of the side extension would introduce an architectural form which would appear as an alien feature in the context of the simplicity of the original building itself. The replacement of the existing glazing and solid door with large bi-fold glazed doors, and other alterations to the openings at the rear would further erode the character of the building.
10. I accept that the building is now a dwelling and I understand the appellants' wish to enlarge the living accommodation. However, at present, it retains its character and identity as a former farm building within its rural setting. There are two nearby dwellings, including the adjacent farmhouse, but I consider that the overall character of the group is agricultural. The appeal site contributes to that character and the proposal would adversely affect it.
11. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing building and the immediate surroundings, contrary to local plan policies BE2 and C1, and the guidance in the Framework and the National Design Guide.
12. The rural location of the building and the proposed works to the roof are such that there may be an impact on bats. The appellant has not supplied sufficient information regarding the potential impact, and the proposal is therefore contrary to local plan policy NE1. This would not be sufficient reason, on its own, to dismiss the appeal, since this matter could be addressed by the use of a suitable condition requiring the submission of the relevant information.
13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR