



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2022

by **P. D. Biggers** BSc Hons MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/D/22/3307888

Bloodstock Barn, Mill Road, Ashley, Cambridgeshire CB8 9EE.

- 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 Garrity against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application 22/00842/FUL, dated 13 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is orangery extension to rear of the property.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings on Mill Road and the Ashley Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, Bloodstock Barn, forms part of a conversion of previously agricultural buildings to form residential accommodation. It sits on the east side of Mill Road and set back from it and forms an 'L' shaped built form with the later built, adjoining building to the east in use as a Bed and Breakfast. The site sits within the Ashley Conservation Area which extends to the north on the east side of Mill Road in which Bloodstock Barn and Butchers Farm are identified as 'significant' buildings in the *Ashley Conservation Area Appraisal*.
4. Bloodstock Barn provides accommodation over two storeys and is finished in flint walling with red brick reveals under a slated roof, materials which are typical of the Conservation Area. To the rear, the barn has a centrally placed, mono-pitched roofed offshoot which reflects the steeply pitched roof of the main barn. The positioning of the offshoot and the fenestration to the rear of the barn gives this elevation an attractive, symmetrical appearance.
5. The proposed extension to the property would introduce a flat roofed 'orangery' or garden room that would extend deeper than the existing offshoot and infill the area of the rear elevation to the west of the offshoot. It would have large bi-fold glazed patio doors to the garden.
6. I have been referred to other cases within the Ashley Conservation Area which the appellant considers justifies the appeal proposal. In respect of East and West Barn in Church Street the extension to the rear appears from photos in the appellants' statement to be a pitched roof rear offshoot. From my site visit it was not visible

from the public domain. With regard to Thimble Cottage, I was not able to view the extension but from the photographs in the appellants' statement I am not persuaded that the form of extension is one that should be taken as a model of appropriate design for Bloodstock Barn. I am not satisfied the cases are comparable and I will determine the appeal case on its own merits.

7. The result of the proposed extension to Bloodstock Barn would be to destroy the attractive symmetry of the rear elevation, apply an alien roof form and introduce largescale fenestration not in keeping with the scale and appearance of the fenestration on the rest of the rear elevation. Whilst I acknowledge that in the context of the barn the extension would not be large, in projecting deeper than the existing rear offshoot its form would appear disproportionate. Overall, the proposal would result in an overly-domesticated appearance and result in a loss of character in what is recognised as a significant building in the Conservation Area and which is otherwise a well-designed conversion.
8. It has been put to me that the extension would have no impact on Mill Road and the wider Conservation Area as it is contained to the rear of the property and is well screened by the outbuilding on the Mill Road frontage and by hedging. However, I am not satisfied that this would be the case based on my site visit. Bloodstock Barn has an extensive curtilage to the north extending along Mill Road which rises slightly away from the barn. Whilst I acknowledge that the hedged boundary provides an element of screening, from further along Mill Road and from the slightly higher elevation the proposed extension and its poor design in relation to the original building would be clearly visible over the hedging. In this view the proposed extension would appear dominant and out of keeping with the rest of the barn to the detriment of the appearance of this characterful and prominent building in the Conservation Area.
9. I have been invited to conclude that the choice of walling material for the extension (dark coloured timber cladding) would reflect materials in the vicinity and elsewhere on the barn and would help to integrate the extension with the original barn. Whilst I accept dark timber cladding may be a typical material in the Conservation Area this of itself would not compensate for the incongruous flat roof design and overlarge fenestration in this context.
10. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) at paragraph 130 requires that developments must be sympathetic to local character to create high quality buildings and spaces amongst other things and in these respects the proposal fails. Policy ENV2 of the *East Cambridgeshire Local Plan* (ECLP) reflects the Framework in requiring development to be of the highest design quality enhancing and complementing local distinctiveness and responding to local character and context including architectural traditions amongst other things. For the above reasons i.e. the positioning, form and design of the rear orangery extension, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the established character and appearance of Bloodstock Barn and constitute harm to the Conservation Area.
11. As such the requirements of the Framework at paragraph 199 and ECLP Policy ENV11 which, in conservation areas, requires development to be of a particularly high standard to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area including retaining attractive traditional materials and features, would not be met. I accept that the harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial and in these circumstances the Framework at paragraph 202 allows for any public benefits of the proposal to be taken into consideration. In this case the appellant has presented no public benefits. Any benefit from the extension would be a

largely private benefit to the owners of the property. As such the harm to the Conservation Area would not be outweighed and the proposal fails to at least preserve the Conservation Area.

Other Matters

12. I understand the appellants' wish to achieve additional living space and access to the garden through this extension and in that way make sustainable and effective use of housing land, an objective which is encouraged by the Framework in Section 11. However, paragraph 124 in the same section of the Framework states that this should not be at the expense of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting. As such, ssustainable and effective use of the dwelling would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the building and its Conservation Area surroundings as a result of the proposal.

Conclusion

13. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the matters before me but, for the reasons above, the appeal should be dismissed.

P. D. Biggers

INSPECTOR