

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2023

by John Whalley

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 March 2023

Appeal ref: APP/L3245/D/22/3313260

Wheelwright Cottage, Northwood, Shrewsbury SY4 5NH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal of planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr David Wicks against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application, ref. 22/03245/FUL, dated 12 July 2022, was refused by a notice dated 12 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side extension with glazed link to existing dwelling and alterations to dwelling for disabled family members.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed extension to Wheelwright Cottage on the character and appearance of the original dwelling.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an attractive 2 storey detached house a short way south of the settlement of Northwood between Welshampton and Wem. The Council described the house as a 2-storey cottage with symmetrical frontage dating from the early to mid-nineteenth century. It is constructed in red brick and roofed in slate. The property is deemed to be a non-designated farmstead that is recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) as part of the Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project where it is a smallholding.
4. Wheelwright Cottage is set back from the road. There is a single storey lean-to, also red brick, extension at the rear, seen in views to the house from the south. Another fine, large red brick building close to the north of the house has a name plate describing it as The Old Wheelwright Workshop. This and the house are linked by an inharmonious flat roofed structure. The house has large grassed grounds alongside and to the south.
5. Mr Wicks, the Appellant, said his sister cares for their disabled mother. Both live some 200 miles away. Mr Wicks' sister's health has deteriorated recently to the point she also needs specialised accommodation. She cannot now care for their mother alone. The intention is that both would move to live with Mr

Wicks at the extended Wheelwright Cottage, designed and enlarged to meet their needs.

6. The appeal project is for a 2 storey extension to the house to be connected by a glazed link on the south side of the house. The new extension would have a lounge, cloakroom, bedroom and bathroom for a carer on the ground floor. Above there would be 2 bedrooms with wet rooms suitable for persons with disabilities. Mr Wicks' mother and sister both use wheelchairs. A lift between the 2 floors would be installed to facilitate access.
7. Government guidance 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' at para. 039 describes non-designated heritage assets as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
8. National Planning Policy Framework at para. 199 says that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
9. In my view, the appeal extension does not meet the above test of minimal harm. I consider the Council right to conclude that it would cause undue detriment to the character and appearance of the existing attractive house. The separation of the proposed extension from the main house, intended to safeguard its original character and appearance has the advantage of providing some visual division. But particularly in views to the house from the south, the new extension would unhappily and incongruously dominate.
10. It was acknowledged that the extension would have similar proportions to the existing house. This would mean, however, that the extension and its link would be of such a size, doubling the ground covered and the overall structure, that the original dwelling would appear almost subservient, its original character, appearance and setting largely lost.
11. I cannot agree with the Appellant's assessment that the extension would fit in with its context and not harm the host building nor harm visual amenities. The pleasing aspect of the house when viewed from the south along Wem Road would be replaced by a large and inapt blank gable wall, unhappily obscuring the original house. That would not, in my view, be a fitting adherence to guidance in local policies CS6 and MD2 which require a high quality of design in all new development.
12. The Council said the appeal extension was to be assessed against their Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), particularly with regard to house extensions in the countryside. That says the size of dwellings in the countryside is an issue of concern; the market trend towards providing larger and more expensive dwellings which tended to exclude the less well-off, including those who need to live and work in rural areas. In this instance the projected effective doubling of the size of Wheelwright Cottage is not simply to substantially enlarge the dwelling, but to provide suitable disabled accommodation for Mr Wicks' mother and sister and for a carer. However, on the scale proposed, this would not be a project to

adapt an existing dwelling, with perhaps a modest extension. What is proposed is the permanent doubling of the size of the house, a situation which would exist long after its present justification.

13. I agree with the Council's conclusion that the extent and design of the proposed extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing non-designated heritage asset of Wheelwright Cottage which it would overwhelm in scale and have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the immediately surrounding rural area. The project conflicts with development plan policies CS6, CS17, MD2, MD13 and national policies and guidance as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The resulting large house would also conflict with the Council's SPD Type and Affordability of Housing guidance.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Whalley

INSPECTOR