



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2023

By A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/23/3314503

Shails Forwood Minchinhampton Stroud GL6 9AB

- 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 Richard Rawlinson against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref: S.22/1017/HHOLD dated 9 May 2022 was refused by notice dated 25 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey extension to the North and West with associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Both the Council and the appellant refer, at times, to the 'front' or 'rear' of the property, given the proposals would relocate the principal point of entrance (which currently is on the east elevation of the house) this may be confusing and I have therefore made use of the usual compass points where it is necessary to identify location or aspect.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling within its setting.

Reasons

4. Shails is a two-storey detached dwelling found within Forwood, a scattering of dwellings on the outskirts of the larger settlement of Minchinhampton. The appeal property is in a rural but not isolated location within a part of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) prescribed by small-scale valleys and steeply contoured hillsides.
5. Policy HC8 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 (Local Plan) sets criteria against which proposals for the extension of residential properties should be assessed, requiring proposals to accord with all. Criterion (2) requires that: "*the height, scale, form and design of the extension.....is in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling (taking into account any cumulative additions), and the site's wider setting and location*". As the full wording of HC8

(2) makes clear (*'taking into account any cumulative additions'*) the baseline for assessment of scale and character in this case is the building as found.

6. The appellant explains that Shails has been altered and extended over time, the earliest part of the house dating from the 18th Century. Notwithstanding the appellant's comments as to the late flat-roofed extension and the building's evolution in different periods, such change has been incremental over more than two centuries. Like many buildings of vernacular origin found in rural areas, Shails presents as a seamless harmonious built form absorbed into the distinctive local landscape, wherein, by virtue of continuous use of indigenous materials and unpretentious, traditional, detailing, the evolution of built form by addition and change is discernible but not conspicuous.
7. Although the appellant indicates a desire to add just one main habitable room (bedroom and bathroom) to the existing 8 (or 9) currently found in the property along with a degree of reconfiguration and 'future-proofing', the appellant acknowledges the extension(s) would be 'quite large'. In fact the result of what is proposed would almost double the floor area, adding a two-storey twin-gabled range of rooms on the north side and rebuilding the existing dining-kitchen (and bedrooms above) currently found on the western side as a deep gabled wing of two storeys with attic space lit by dormers and gable lights.
8. These additions would entirely envelop the north and west faces of Shails, leaving only parts of the original east and south elevation apparent. The introduction of a centrally-positioned 'front' entrance signifies reorganisation of the interior towards a more formal arrangement of space and a prominently symmetrical north elevation where there had previously been a secondary elevation. The drawings indicate some re-profiling of the sloping ground between the house and the adjacent road to accommodate the significant increase in footprint and new entrance arrangements.
9. Although it is suggested that the proposal would follow 'Arts and Crafts' influences by reference to the existing east range ('1930's extension'), this notion is entirely contradicted by the pursuit of symmetry and consistency in the elevational treatments proposed. For instance, the intimate scale apparent in the western end of the south elevation with its variation in fenestration, modest attic dormer and hand-crafted use of materials which are characteristics evocative of that movement¹ would be lost by the insertion of a wider gabled wing that seeks to 'balance' the original east wing.
10. The character of Shails is indivisible from the way the building sits within its distinctive rural setting, partly embedded in the hillside, presenting a secondary elevation (north) in the approach view such that it seems both the house and approaching visitor are sharing the common experience of an expansive southerly outlook. These are presented as shortcomings of the existing building to be in some way rectified by the introduction of symmetry and reorientation of the way the property would be experienced. What is proposed would significantly, and in my consideration, harmfully, change the character of the property both in built form and its relationship with its setting. The combined effect of these changes would be an entirely different sort of house to that which currently exists due to the great extent of works proposed and the

¹ The Arts and Crafts movement as expounded by late C19 architects such as William Morris and John Ruskin

imposition of classical formality on an essentially vernacular building which sits comfortably on the hillside without pretension.

11. Consequently I find that the proposal would fail to meet the second criteria set out in Policy HC8 of the Local Plan such that it cannot benefit from the provision therein to support residential extensions. The conflict is not outweighed by other considerations as it is plainly possible to devise other, more appropriate, ways to provide additional accommodation and access. For the reasons given and taking all matters raised into account I conclude the proposal conflicts with the Development Plan as a whole, such that the appeal cannot succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR