The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 August 2023

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 5 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/23/3320576
Highways, Little London, Rodborough, Stroud, GL5 5DY

- 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 Laurence Jones against the decision of Stroud District Council.
- The application, Ref S.22/2536/HHOLD, dated 21 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2023.
- The development proposed is the renovation of existing dwelling and addition of two storey extension with glazed link.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary and procedural matters.

2. The Council's third reason for refusal suggests that insufficient information was submitted to fully assess the proposal in terms of its scale and appearance or landscape impact. This appears to contradict the basis of the assessment carried out by the Council in respect of the first two reasons for refusal. For my part, having regard to the submitted plans, the additional levels information submitted with the appeal and the visual evidence obtained at my site visit, I am content that sufficient information is available to make an appropriate assessment of the proposal.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached dwelling standing at the northern end of a finger of development, outside the settlement boundary. It stands in a large plot, which slopes steeply downwards from east to west. Above the plot to the east is a lane, and access to the house is derived from there via a series of steps. To the west are school grounds, and to the north, beyond a track and public footpath, are open fields. These fields are comprised with the designated Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site contains many trees, and many others are evident outside the site, on or beyond its boundaries.

5. One of the requirements of Policy HC8 of the Stroud District Local Plan (LP) is that the height, scale, form and design of an extension is in keeping with the

scale and character of the original dwelling and the site's wider setting and location.

6. In this policy context, the appellant's attempts to convince me that the scale of proposed extension is subordinate and not disproportionate to the host property have not proved successful. It appears to me that the scale and bulk of the extension including the glazed link approximately doubles that of the existing dwelling.

7. In some instances, depending on location and the quality of the design, large extensions may not always prove inappropriate, but there are telling factors in this case which render the scheme unacceptable.

8. I consider that the extant dwelling, which has retained much of its historic character during its ongoing renovation, would be swamped by new development. I consider that the design of the extension pays little regard to the character of the host property, particularly having regard to its shape, form, scale, the use of materials and the pattern of openings and fenestration.

9. In the light of local ground levels, significant excavations would be needed to accommodate the proposals in addition to those already carried out. These, and the other acts of construction, would have a considerable and destructive impact on several trees to the north of the dwelling, as the appellant acknowledges.

10. The trees concerned play an important role in providing an appropriate verdant edge to the built-up area, and screening to extant development in views from the public footpaths within and adjacent to the AONB. The extent of tree removal would open the extension to view from the AONB. Because of its height, scale and bulk the extension, particularly in the light of its elevated position, would appear prominent and dominating in close range views from the AONB.

11. The appellant's landscape impact assessment prepared for the appeal has been noted, and although I acknowledge that the extension would barely be visible from the viewing points chosen, the appellant has not provided what I would regard as a complete appraisal particularly having regard to the content of the previous paragraph.

12. The Government attaches great importance to design, which is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The Framework provides[1] that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially when it fails to reflect local design policies. I intend to follow that guidance in this instance.

13. The Framework also provides[2] that development within an AONB's setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area. For the reasons already provided, I have found the AONB's setting to be adversely affected in this case.

14. I therefore conclude that the development proposed would prove harmful in terms of its effects on the host property and the surrounding area, including the impact on the setting of the adjacent AONB. Accordingly, a conflict arises

[1] National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 134
[2] At paragraph 176

with those provisions of LP policies HC8 and ES7 directed respectively to ensuring that extensions are appropriately and acceptably designed, and that on land comprising the setting of the AONB, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape.

Other matters

15. All other matters referred to in the representations have been considered but no other matter is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR