



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2023

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/23/3325282

The Cottage, Randalls Green, Chalford Hill, Stroud, GL6 8EF

- 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 Chris Rowles against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application, Ref S.23/0604/HHOLD, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is extensions and alterations to property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposals: (a) on the character and appearance of the host property and its' surroundings, having regard to its location on the fringe of the Chalford Hill Conservation Area (CA), and (b) on the living conditions of the residents of Field House with reference to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached dwelling built on the northern boundary of its garden. Part of the house is two-storey, but a mono-pitch single-storey protrusion extends westwards from its principal elevation, beyond which are some outbuildings. One of the protrusion's main walls backs onto a rural lane running to the north of and alongside the property.
4. The lane acts as a footpath which continues beyond the house and runs along the property's western boundary. The lane is coincident with the CA's southern boundary. In effect, the appellant intends replacing the single-storey protrusion with a two-storey extension. A single storey lean-to extension is also proposed at the western end of the proposed two-storey extension.
5. The proposed two storey extension by reason of its shape, scale and design would completely transform the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, which in terms of its materials of construction and appearance exudes the aura of a traditional Cotswold cottage. The principal elevation of the two-storey element of the existing house would be obliterated, becoming subsumed within the new development, and the newly formed south elevation would become the principal elevation of the new dwelling.

6. Sometimes, large extensions to dwellings are not unacceptable, but not in this instance. To my mind, the extensions proposed are far too large to be comfortably accommodated without destroying the character and appearance of the host property. The proposals are also poorly designed, in my view, particularly with regard to the depth, bulk and roof pitch of the proposed two storey element. These aspects pay scant regard to the proportions of the host property.
7. Although, from outside the site, the proposals, if built, would be screened by trees to a certain extent, the extension would be clearly seen from the footpath outside. The main extension would protrude well above the levels of the walls currently in evidence, and to my mind would appear overly bulky and intrusive, materially affected the setting of this part of the CA.
8. I therefore conclude that this development is of an unacceptable design having a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policies HC8 & CP14 of the Stroud District Local Plan (LP) directed to ensure that proposed extensions are of an appropriate design and appearance, respectful of the surroundings and local area.

Living conditions

9. Field House lies to the south of the property, and the new windows proposed at first floor level in the southern elevation of the proposed two-storey extension would face towards its rear garden. I saw that the boundary between the two properties was planted with trees and other vegetation, which would act as a reasonably effective screen. This, together with the distance between the windows and the bulk of Field House's generously sized garden, are factors which convince me that no unacceptable overlooking of Fields House would occur, so that its residents would not suffer harmful loss of privacy.
10. Accordingly, I find no conflict with those provisions of LP policy ES3 designed to prevent loss of privacy.

Other matters

11. All other matters referred to in the representations have been considered and I note that no objections were raised by neighbours or the Parish Council. I also note that the appellant responded positively to the Parish Council's suggestion as to external materials.
12. Reference has been made to other development plan policies but those I have referred to are considered the most relevant in the particular circumstances of this case. References to the *National Planning Policy Framework* have also been taken into account, in particular its guidance on design.
13. No other matter is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my overall conclusions set out below.

Overall conclusions

14. I find in favour of the appellant in respect of the second main issue identified at the outset, that in respect of the effect on neighbouring privacy.

15. However, I find against him on the first of the main issues, the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings, including the setting of the CA. Having regard to the Framework's advice that development that is not well designed should be refused, this is sufficient reason to dismiss the appeal.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR