



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2023

by David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/23/3320466

Willow Barn, Holt Lane, Romsley, Worcestershire, B62 0ND

- 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 Gary Goddard against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
- The application Ref 22/00690/FUL, dated 17 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2023.
- The development proposed is the erection of a two storey extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey extension at Willow Barn, Romsley, B62 0ND in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00690/FUL, dated 17 May 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the setting of the neighbouring farmhouse;
 - the effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - whether inappropriate development and if so do very special circumstances apply.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site forms part of a small group of buildings, originally around a farmstead, situated in open countryside to the north of Bromsgrove. The area forms part of the Green Belt. It is apparent that Willow Barn was an agricultural building converted to a dwellinghouse following the grant of permission on appeal in 2012¹. The adjacent property Holt Farm appears to be a replacement dwelling allowed in January 2002 and Naylor's Barn is a residence occupying both two storey and a courtyard of single storey buildings.

Effect on character and appearance

4. The Council refers to the setting of the non-designated heritage assets of the historic barn and farmhouse but it is now clear that Holt Farm is a relatively

¹ Under APP/P1805/A/12/2177823

new replacement house. Further, Naylors Barn appears to be much extended and this limits the weight that can be placed on its historic form and setting.

5. Willow Barn itself has a mainly linear form with elevations of wood cladding stained dark brown under a roof of dark sheeting with raised bands. Although the extension proposed would extend away from this linear form the degree of projection is not great and the proposal is to use matching external materials. Further, while the barn had origins as an agricultural building, the introduction of fenestration on the front and main side elevation also gives the building some domestic character. I find that the scale and form of the extension proposal would not materially harm the original form of the building.
6. Moreover, little of the proposed extension would be seen from the public realm as its presence would mostly be hidden by Naylors Barn and the high solid gates that exist from the shared access into the site. I also considered the impact of the proposal from the public footpath which runs to the north-west of Naylors Barn but most of the views here are restricted by the high boundary wall and the presence of other buildings around the overall enclave.
7. I have taken account of the guidance in the Council's High Quality Design SPD—particularly section 3.10 on residential extensions on previously converted rural buildings. In this case I am satisfied that the bulk and form of the extension proposed and including the matching external materials will reasonably maintain the character and utilitarian nature of the building.
8. Overall on this issue I find that the proposed extension would not detract from the setting of a nearby non-designated heritage asset and would reasonably fit in with the simple form and design of the original building and not have an imposing or harmful visual effect outside of the environs of the site. As such the proposal does not conflict with Policies BDP20.2 or BDFP.20.3 of the Bromsgrove Development Plan.

Whether inappropriate development and effect on openness

9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear in paragraph 149 that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the listed exceptions. The relevant one in this case is (c) the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework does not define 'disproportionate' however related local Green Belt Policy BDP4.4 indicates that for an existing residential dwelling an increase of up to 40% of the original dwelling would not be inappropriate, provided that this scale of development has no adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
10. The Council acknowledges that the proposal falls with the 40% limit as the total change amounts to about a 19% addition, however the Council considers that the further test on openness is not met.
11. It is established that the effect on the openness of a Green Belt can have both spatial and visual dimensions. My assessment on visual impact is similar to that set out above concerning the effect on the character and appearance of the area. The extension would not be very noticeable from the public realm around Holt Lane or the public footpath mentioned above as it would largely be screened by the presence of existing buildings and structures. Even considered

on its own under the spatial dimension I am satisfied that the size of the additional built structure proposed is not large as evidenced by the relatively low percentage increase as measured by the Council.

12. Overall on this issue I find that the proposed extension would not be a disproportionate addition to the original building and would meet the criteria set out in paragraph 149 (c) of the Framework. It would also not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. As such I conclude that the proposal does not constitute 'inappropriate development' and it accords with the provisions of Policy BDP.4. I therefore do not need to consider whether very special circumstances apply.

Planning balance

13. On the main issues I have found that the proposed extension would not detract from the setting of the nearby non-designed heritage asset and would reasonably fit in with the simple form and design of the host building and wider surroundings. The proposal should also not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would not result in a disproportionate addition and would not have an adverse impact on its openness. I have also found that the proposal reasonably accords with relevant local and national policy on these aspects.
14. This conclusion has to be balanced with other considerations but none arise which outweigh this conclusion. The appeal should therefore be allowed.
15. The Council suggests that four conditions be imposed which I will consider under the same numbering. Conditions 1, 2 and 3 are reasonable and necessary to define the permission and ensure that the external materials match the existing building.
16. Under recommended condition 4 the Council requests that various 'permitted development' rights are restricted in order 'to protect the openness of the Green Belt'. However, this type of restriction should not be imposed unilaterally without special justification. Nevertheless, I note that such a condition was imposed on the permission for the residential use of Willow Barn granted on appeal and it would be inconsistent and impractical for the extension not to have a similar limitation. The reason for the condition would be to maintain the basic form and scale of the original building and limit the effect of further extensions and alterations on the openness of the Green Belt. I will therefore impose it.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) All new external walls and roofs shall be finished in materials to match in colour, form and texture those on the existing building.
- 3) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Drawing No. 03 Proposed Floor Plan, dated May 2022, received 18.5.22
Drawing No. 04; Proposed Elevations Plan, dated May 2022, received 18.5.22; Drawing No. 05 Proposed Block Plan, dated May 2022, received 18.5.22.
- 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) no development included within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A to E shall be carried out without express planning permission first being obtained from the Local Planning Authority.