



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2023

by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3319190

**Rockwell End House Farm, Rockwell End Lane, Rockwell End
Buckinghamshire RG9 6NF**

- 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 A Reid against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
- The application Ref 22/07338/FUL, dated 24 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2022.
- The development proposed is the demolition of previous extension and section of greenhouse, erection of part single part two storey side/rear extension and detached garage/log store.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr A Reid against Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe). This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appellant has submitted amended plans which, in addition to alterations to the design of the extension, such as the removal of a balustrade and the incorporation of the existing lean-to projection into the proposed extension, also includes the relocation of the detached garage to the side of the house within the side extension.
4. I have considered the submitted revised plan under the principles established by the Courts. Notwithstanding the other alterations to the design of the extension, the removal of the previously detached garage, as described in the development description above, and its incorporation into the property represents a substantively different scheme to what was considered by the Council.
5. To consider the revised scheme would also deprive those who would have been consulted on the change, including interested parties. Therefore, I shall determine the appeal on the basis of the plans considered by the Council.
6. A heritage assessment¹ has also been submitted with the appeal, however this does not alter the scheme in any way which interested parties may have

¹ Heritage Assessment: Rockwell End House Farm, Buckinghamshire by RSK ADAS, dated February 2023

wished to comment on. As such, in my considering this document, there is no harm to natural justice.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its significance as a non-designated heritage asset, and the surrounding Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Chilterns AONB).

Reasons

8. The appeal property is a stone farmhouse of double fronted design located amongst a farmstead comprising buildings of differing design, some of which have planning permission for conversion to residential use. The simplistic and traditional appearance and scale of the farmhouse contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area, the Chilterns AONB and is prominent in views from the road.
9. The Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) establishes that non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) are 'those identified by the local planning authority'. Even if I considered that at present, the property was still not technically on a list identifying non-designated heritage assets, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (paragraph 40) sets out that local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications. This is set out clearly by the Council in its officer report, which explains why the property is considered as such by the Council, and recent applications at the appeal site² also identified the property as a NDHA. As such, I am satisfied that the appeal property has indeed been identified by the Council as a NDHA, and I have treated it as such.
10. The significance of the farmhouse centres on its inclusion on historic mapping, simple vernacular form and appearance and contribution to the wider traditional farmstead. Its simple proportions and compact scale result in a good example of its time and it contributes positively to the existing and historic farmstead layout. I acknowledge that the submitted heritage statement sets out various alterations to the farmhouse, such as its original L shaped form, however, its existing character remains evident.
11. The proposed extension would remove the existing side projection of the property. Whilst it may be built more or less contemporaneously with the farmhouse, its awkward proportions do not contribute particularly positively to the overall composition of the dwelling due to its width and ungainly fenestration position.
12. The replacement extension and alteration to fenestration would improve the symmetry of the frontage, and the new porch and front door area would provide a focus and emphasis to the front elevation, improving the relationship of the property to the farmstead buildings.
13. However, whilst set back from the frontage and set down from the ridge and eaves, the extension is of significant width at two storey level. The flat roof element of the rear projection is also of an extensive size and jars with the existing roof shape. Its footprint is substantial and disrupts the more simplistic

² Application reference 22/07338/FUL & 22/08329/OUT

proportions of the existing dwelling and extends away from the compact farmstead arrangement. It would not be subservient to the scale of the host dwelling. The addition of a balcony area at the rear, visible from the highway, would also emphasise and draw attention to the extensions.

14. I find that their design and scale would result in bulky additions which would visually compete with the existing dwelling. The existing form of the property would be overwhelmed by the development and prevent appreciation of the building's original character and appearance. The extensions would also therefore compromise the significance of the property as a non-designated heritage asset.
15. I note that certificates of lawfulness³ has recently been granted for a single storey rear extension and rooflights. The limited height and depth of this extension means it would have a lesser and not comparable visual impact on the existing dwelling as the scheme before me. As such, I give these certificates little weight.
16. The proposed detached garage would be sited where there is currently a large greenhouse structure, next to agricultural barn buildings. I observed that this site is outside the garden area and obvious farmhouse layout, and as such, the development, including new boundary treatment, would result in the encroachment of residential development into land in agricultural use. This would compromise the existing and historic farmstead layout and spread domestic structures across the site, diminishing its existing agricultural context and character.
17. The Framework identifies that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. The Chilterns AONB covers a wide area encompassing many different character areas and settlement types. Little information has been provided to outline the specific characteristics of the local area. Nonetheless, it has a prevailing semi-rural character with traditional vernacular buildings.
18. The site's existing connection to surrounding fields, countryside and the Chilterns AONB means it has value in terms of its contribution to the overall landscape and scenic beauty of the area. The Supplementary Planning Document Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (2010) also sets out that '*historic farmsteads... are important landscape features throughout the Chilterns*'.
19. In harming the character of the farmhouse and wider farmstead setting, given its prominence, the development would cause consequential harm to the beauty of the AONB.
20. The appellant references other development⁴ nearby, however, each case is considered on its own merits and would not replicate the particular circumstances of the proposal, such as the extension and garage, and context before me.
21. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding Chilterns AONB. The development would harm the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CP9, DM35, DM36, DM31, DM30 and

³ Application references :23/06896/CLP & 23/06897/CLP

⁴ Application reference 04/07941/FUL & 05/05424/FUL

CP11, which collectively seek to deliver the highest quality design and improving the character of the area whilst retaining positive characteristics, including the Chilterns AONB. They also seek to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance, special interest, character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

22. The handling of the application by the Council is not a matter that affects my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

23. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR