
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2023

by Rebecca McAndrew, BA Hons, MSc, PG Dip Urban Design, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/23/3329479

Clapton Farmhouse, Clapton Farm Lane, Clapton, Berkeley, Gloucestershire GL13 9QX

- 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 and Mrs Ricciardi against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0993/HHOLD, dated 18 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of a derelict outbuilding and the erection of an ancillary building, together with associated hard and soft landscaping and car parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the site and area.

Reasons

3. I acknowledge that the appeal proposals are an amended scheme which seeks to overcoming the reason for refusal of a previous application to demolish the existing structure and construct a replacement outbuilding. I recognise that the proposed replacement building includes a smaller and different shaped footprint than the original scheme and that the level of proposed glazing has been reduced. Also, when taking into account the size of the external proposed carport, the proposed internal floor area would be smaller than the existing arrangement.
4. However, the proposed replacement building would still be notably larger and bulkier than the existing outbuilding. The proposed building would be higher and include a greater level of glazing than the original. This would give rise to a domestic character and appearance in comparison to the rural appearance of the structure it would replace. As such, the proposal would fail to respect the context of the original outbuilding, the main dwelling and the wider rural setting.
5. I note the Appellant's comments that the proposed building has been designed to mirror the existing dwelling and that it would be lower than the main house,

so would appear subservient. Nonetheless, as I have described, the scheme would appear overly intrusive as it would fail to properly respond to the character and appearance of the agricultural outbuilding it would replace. Its overall scale and appearance would be tantamount to a separate dwelling, rather than an ancillary outbuilding.

6. I recognise that the building would include good quality materials, including the re-use of the stone from the existing structure. However, this would not mitigate the overall harm to the character and appearance of the site and area that I have described.
7. I note the Appellants comments that the building is not structurally sound and not capable of refurbishment. Indeed, on my site visit I observed that there were structural props in place in parts of the building. However, I offer limited weight to this matter in support of constructing a replacement building which would be significantly bulkier and different in character to the existing.
8. In view of the above, the proposed replacement outbuilding would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and the rural area. It therefore does not accord with Policies HC8(2) and CP14(5) of the Stroud District Local Plan (2015) which, taken together, require outbuildings to be of a high quality sustainable design, incidental to the enjoyment of the main dwelling and to properly respond to the context of the site and area.

Other Matters

9. In response to the Council's second reason for refusal, the appellant has submitted a Bat Report as part of the appeal. I have had regard to this additional evidence submitted. However, the conclusions of the Report would not be capable of outweighing the above identified harm to the character and appearance of the site and rural area, which is a Main Issue. I have not, therefore, considered this matter further or sought the Council's views on the Bat Report.
10. I have considered a number of matters submitted by the Appellants in support of the proposals. Whilst the building would be screened from the road by the existing farmhouse, it would be visible from the surrounding countryside. I recognised that this is a brownfield site, that landscaping will be undertaken to improve the overall appearance of the appeal site and that this is a large plot which is capable of accommodating a building of this size, without appearing cramped. However, none of these matters would outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the site or area which I have identified.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rebecca McAndrew

INSPECTOR