



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 March 2019

by Mr Kim Bennett DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/19/3220075

Sonning Villa, Christopher Row, Lynsted, Kent ME9 0JN

- 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 Stuart Bridger against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/504194/FULL, dated 3 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey extension to rear elevation. Roundhall style construction with typical roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Sonning Villa comprises a two storey cottage of traditional design located on the east side of Christopher Row. It is close to the road frontage but has a large plot to the rear which accommodates a garage and outbuildings. There is a single storey extension at the rear which was apparently built in the 1950s, and a more recent conservatory to the side. The property forms part of a loose knit collection of houses along this part of the road, which is rural in character with a field directly opposite and open countryside to the rear.
4. The appellant argues that the design would be in keeping with the rural area with an extension which would be similar to those found elsewhere. The appearance would be subtle but tasteful and additional landscaping would also be undertaken.
5. The proposed design would certainly be striking in appearance, resembling a traditional Kentish Oast of which many examples can be found locally. However, in doing so the resulting height, scale and bulk would totally subsume the original cottage and significantly change its character from what was originally a modest cottage of limited depth, to a building where it would be dominated by the proposed extension. In particular the cowl roof would be significantly higher than the existing main ridge height and the extension would be clearly visible in the street scene from both directions, but particularly so when approaching the site from the north. Whilst the design would be an

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Appeal Decision APP/V2255/D/19/3220075

interesting approach, it is one which would introduce a replica agricultural vernacular on a domestic cottage in a primarily residential street scene, for which there appears to be no local precedent. As such, it would substantially change its character and detract from the immediate rural surroundings.

6. The Council advises that the original floorspace of the cottage was approximately 60 square metres. The proposal would result in approximately an additional 75 square metres over two floors. Taking into account the conservatory extension plus the kitchen part of the rear extension (the bathroom area being demolished as part of the proposal) it would result in a total floorspace of 163 square metres or an approximately 170% increase in floorspace over the original dwelling. I note that the appellant has not disputed those figures.
7. Policy DM11 of the Council's Local Plan 2017 – Bearing Fruits 2013 (LP), allows for extensions to existing dwellings in rural areas, but the supporting text makes it clear they should be modest and of an appropriate scale, mass and appearance to the location. In that respect the Council's guidance in its Supplementary Planning Guidance – 'Designing an Extension – Guide for Householders' (SPG), advises that whilst allowing for extensions to properties in the countryside, they should not normally be in excess of 60% of the original floorspace. Clearly the proposal would greatly exceed that and in my view could not be described as modest.
8. In reaching my finding above, I am sympathetic to the desire of the appellant to develop the property for his family in the longer term. I also acknowledge that the property is limited in size at present and in need of upgrading. However, that does not justify the size and design approach which would so radically alter and harm the character of the existing building and to which I attach greater weight to in this instance.
9. I note the concerns that the appellant makes regarding the processing of the application. However such matters are not before me and I also note that the appellant has already taken the matter up with a senior officer of the Council.
10. Having regard to the above, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area. It would therefore be in conflict with Policies CP4, DM11, DM14 and DM16 of the Council's LP, and the SPG, in that its scale, mass and appearance would not be appropriate in relation to the existing building or the surroundings.
11. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR