
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 August 2015

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 September 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/15/3024289

Gardeners Cottage, Buckhold, Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire RG8 8QA

- 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 M Evans against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 14/03232/HOUSE, dated 2 December 2014, was refused by notice dated 29 January 2015.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/Y/15/3024338

Gardeners Cottage, Buckhold, Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire RG8 8QA

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs M Evans against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 14/03233/LBC2, dated 2 December 2014, was refused by notice dated 29 January 2015.
 - The works proposed are a two storey side extension.
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Decisions

1. Both of the appeals are dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in these appeals are;
 - The effects of the proposal on the special interest and setting of the listed building
 - The effects of the proposal on its countryside location within the AONB

Reasons

The effects of the proposal on the special interest and setting of the listed building

3. Gardeners Cottage is said to date from 1885 and is an isolated dwelling, constructed of red bricks and with a tiled roof. The elevations contain raised brick details in the gables. As the name suggests, it formed a workers' cottage which served the adjacent estate. The property has been extended in the form of a 2 storey structure, linked to the main building by a glazed link (referred to

- as a satellite extension). The special interest derives from its age, its attractive design and its modest form which reflects its original purpose. Its historic association with the main property, now forming a school, enhance its interest.
4. The proposal would extend the main part of the house with a 2 storey addition. The proposal would add a continuation of the existing roof and form a gable of a similar design as the existing one. The proposal would provide a large kitchen at ground floor and a bedroom and bathroom at the first floor.
 5. The previous extension to the house resulted in a 2 storey addition which provided a reception room at ground floor and a bedroom and bathroom at the first floor. The current proposal would appear as a significant addition to the original modest cottage; it would project substantially from the main core of the building. Taken in conjunction with the existing extension, the proposal would result in significant additions to the original building. This would alter the modest proportions of this cottage such that an important element of its special interest would be significantly and detrimentally altered. The extensions would form the major part of the structure and its original element would be largely subsumed and would be indistinct from the additions, rather than the additions being subservient to the historic part. Its original form is clearly reflective of its original function as an estate workers' dwelling. This attribute would be unacceptably affected by the proposal, which would result in a far-from-modest dwelling with significant levels of accommodation. I judge that this would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building.
 6. The appellants set out their need for the proposed extension, partly due to the unconventional internal arrangement and location of the bathroom in relation to the bedrooms in the main part of the house. Whilst I can understand the desire for a better internal arrangement, I am not convinced that an extension of this size and form is the only practical way of achieving this aim, which, in any event, does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the listed building. As a consequence, the proposal is contrary to the aims of Policy CS19 of the West Berkshire Corer Strategy (CS).

The effects of the proposal on its countryside location within the AONB

7. The appeal site is in a countryside location, outside any defined settlement boundary and is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Saved Policy ENV.24 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (LP) seeks to control residential extensions and ancillary buildings within the countryside; this includes that the proposal should not result in a dwelling that has been disproportionately extended, when compared to its original size and that it should not have an unacceptable impact on the rural character of the area. In addition, the Council has published its document '*Replacement dwellings and extensions to dwellings in the Countryside – Supplementary Planning Guidance*' (SPG). The SPG sets out that extensions to dwellings which result in a floorspace increase of 50% or more over the original dwelling would normally be regarded as disproportionate; it adds that previous extensions will be taken into account also. It adds that extensions which more than double the size of the original dwelling "...would be clearly disproportionate...and therefore contrary to criterion (d) of ENV.24".
8. The proposal would result in an increase of 120% above the original size of the dwelling. It is acknowledged that any judgement should not just be made as a result of the proposed numerical increase. However, in this case, I consider

that the proposal, when combined with the previous extension, would result in a dwelling that is significantly greater than its original size. The form of the extensions is also such that their combined effects would be obvious and would unacceptably affect the character and modest proportions of the original cottage. In this case, I consider that the proposal would result in a significantly and disproportionately extended property and there are no factors which would either disguise or mitigate that effect. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy ENV.24 and the SPG. I have taken account of the fact that the dwelling is in a secluded and largely screened location, but this does not alter my view of the harmful effects of the proposal as a matter of principle.

9. In relation to the AONB the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in, amongst other things, AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. This is translated at the local level into Policy ADPP5 of the CS, which is a highly detailed and comprehensive policy. Within ACPP5 the aim of the Framework is reiterated and it adds that development will conserve and enhance local distinctiveness, sense of place, whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity. It also states that development will respect and respond to the historic environment of the AONB. Although the appeal site forms only a small part of the AONB and is in a secluded location, for the reasons set out above I consider that the proposal would not respect and respond to the historic environment and, through the provision of a significantly larger building, would not conserve and enhance local distinctiveness and landscape quality. As a consequence, there is conflict with the aims of ADPP5.

Conclusions

10. I have taken account of the efforts that have been made to ensure that the proposed extension reflects the design of the original building. However, my objections are not overcome by this matter. I have also noted the appellants' stated desire for the proposal, which I can understand; however, neither this nor any other matter amounts to a public benefit sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and would have a harmful effect on the countryside and AONB. Therefore, the appeals are dismissed.

S T Wood

INSPECTOR