



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2016

by **Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC**

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

Decision date: 25 May 2016

Appeal Ref: **APP/L3245/D/16/3148105**

Powkesmore Holding, Ashfield Road, Ditton Priors, Shropshire, WV16 6TW

- 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 Hardy against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 15/04453/FUL, dated 6 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 12 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is extension and internal remodelling.
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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. The proposal is described on the application form as *extension and internal remodelling*, and on the decision notice and appeal form as *erection of two storey side extension together with balcony and internal remodelling*. The latter is a more precise description and I have determined the appeal on that basis.
4. The appeal property is a detached two storey house in a large plot of land in open countryside accessed by a long drive from Ashfield Road. Its basic footprint is L-shaped, with a single storey element on the northwest side. The latter appears to have been something of an afterthought because of its relationship with the main L-shape and its steep monopitch roof. It is, however, constructed of the same natural rubble stone brought to courses and red brick quoins and window surrounds and is likely to date from a similar period as the main house.
5. I consider that the house has a distinctive and substantial appearance within its setting because of the stone walls, the strong emphasis of the fenestration, including the gabled dormers, and the fairly steeply pitched hipped roof. The surrounding area is rural in character, with a mix of woodland and fields, and apart from the nearby cottage, the house is isolated from other residential properties. The cottage is of a similar style and construction.

6. The Council refers to the building as a non-designated heritage asset, noted on the HER as a 19th century farmstead. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires the significance of such assets to be considered in determining applications for development affecting them, having regard to the scale of any loss or harm.
7. Several policies in the Shropshire Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (the Core Strategy) are relevant in this case. Policy CS5 seeks to protect the countryside by strict control over new development. The supporting explanation stresses, among other things, the importance of high quality design which is appropriate to the locality and in its scale and use of materials, particularly in the AONB.
8. Policy CS6 seeks to ensure that development is designed to sustainable principles and also that it respects and enhances local distinctiveness and is appropriate in scale and design in the local context. Policy CS17 relates to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including heritage assets and the AONB.
9. These policies pre-date the Framework, but are consistent with it in encouraging sustainable development while protecting and enhancing natural and heritage assets.
10. Also relevant are the following policies in the Shropshire Sites Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015. Policy MD2 expands on Core Strategy policy CS6 in requiring development to contribute to and respect locally distinctive character by reflecting, among other things, locally characteristic design, materials, form and colour, together with scale and proportion, and to protect, conserve and enhance the character, significance and setting of heritage assets. It also encourages the use of contemporary design solutions which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics.
11. Policy MD12 seeks to protect natural assets such as the AONB from development which would have a significant adverse effect on their special qualities. MD13 relates to the impact of development on heritage assets.
12. The proposed extension would consist of two distinct elements projecting from the northeast elevation which faces the approach along the access from Ashfield Road. The lower element enclosing a new dining room and entrance hall would be finished in cedar cladding and full height glazing and incorporate a balcony at first floor level along the northwest side of the extension serving a new first floor bedroom. The upper element would comprise a bedroom and ensuite and would be clad in standing seam zinc with a flat roof. It would be cantilevered over the ground floor element and include a square zinc framed bay window. The extension would also contain a new staircase.
13. In my view, this proposal does not respond appropriately to its context and the contemporary design and materials do not take reference from or reinforce the distinctive local characteristics of this stone built vernacular building. The flat roof would break through the eaves of the existing house and overall, the extension would be sited in an awkward asymmetrical relationship with the hipped roof form. The variety of window openings would add further discordant features to the building.

14. Whilst, as a non-designated heritage asset, the building has less significance than a listed building, I consider that it has some value as an example of a rural farm house characteristic of this part of Shropshire, which apart from the modern windows, appears to be relatively unaltered.
15. The property lies within a valued landscape, the Shropshire Hills AONB. The surroundings are an attractive, mainly agricultural area characterised by large open fields interspersed with mature woodland. Public views of the property are limited by its isolation from the road, but a Public Right of Way runs through the site from which the proposed extension would be partially visible.
16. In my opinion, the proposal would neither contribute positively to nor enhance the landscape because it would introduce a new element which would be out of keeping with the existing simple form and hipped roof of the original house and constructed of a design and materials which do not reflect the character of the original house.
17. I acknowledge the appellants' need to improve the practicality of the accommodation in terms of size and circulation, the intention to construct an energy efficient extension to the property, and the constraints of the building in terms of the ability to achieve adequate headroom and allow the brick quoins to continue to be expressed. I also consider that there are circumstances in which a contemporary approach to the extension of a house such as this can be appropriate and successful without resorting to pastiche.
18. However, this is a non-designated heritage asset in the AONB. Although its status carries less significance than a listed building, it nevertheless has some historical significance as an example of a vernacular style characteristic of the farming landscape of the Shropshire Hills. This must be weighed in the balance in the determination of this appeal. In my opinion, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm because it would not respond to the character of the house itself or its rural setting, in terms of its materials, massing, design and relationship between the two awkwardly juxtaposed boxy elements and the overall form of the original house and roof.
19. The benefits of the proposal to the appellants are outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the building and the wider area. I believe that the house could be satisfactorily extended to provide a long term sustainable development but I am not persuaded that this is an appropriate solution.
20. The Council's policies are clear in their aims to ensure that new development is sustainable and of a high quality, while safeguarding the distinctive qualities of the built environment and the landscape. They are consistent with the corresponding aims expressed in the Framework.
21. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to Core Strategy policies CS5, CS6 and CS17 and SAMDev policies MD2 and MD12 and the Framework.
22. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR