



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2011

by Stephen J Pratt BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 July 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/A/11/2148512

Colemere Stables, Colemere, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 0QR

- 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 Jim Shipp against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref: 10/03449/FUL, dated 09/08/2010, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2010.
 - The development proposed is conversion of commercial store into one-bedroom dwelling, including installation of cesspit drainage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is **dismissed**.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by the appellant against Shropshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Reasons

3. This appeal concerns a proposal to convert an existing storage building to residential accommodation. The main issue is the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and its immediate setting, including the nearby Colemere SSSI & Ramsar site and Country Park, particularly in terms of the scale, design, appearance and nature of the conversion.
4. The relevant Local Plan policies have been superseded by the recently adopted Core Strategy. Policies CS5 & CS6 aim to conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, and ensure that the design of development takes account of local context and character, including rural conversions which make a positive contribution to the character of the building and the countryside. Policy CS17 aims to ensure that development does not adversely affect the visual and recreational values and functions of Shropshire's Environmental Assets.
5. As I saw on my visit, the existing structure is a small storage building, partly built into the embankment of the adjoining Llangollen Canal, next to the listed canal bridge (No.55). The western part of the building is an old stone-built stable, of single-storey with a slate roof, dating from the 19th century. The more recent eastern part of the building is constructed of brick on the ground floor, with an upper floor (loft) partly of brick, with timber on the front and eastern elevations and a slate roof, about 1m higher than the ridge of the older stone building. Amongst the surrounding vegetation are three mature trees, including a beech tree just to the east of the building. Colemere Lake (SSSI & Midland Meres and Mosses Ramsar site) and the Country Park lie to the east.

6. The appeal scheme would involve extending the front elevation of the smaller eastern part of the building by about 1m and extending the height of the upper floor by 1.1m. Most of the existing door and window openings would be retained, but the front elevation of the eastern part of the building would be significantly altered, with tall windows, opening doors, a balcony and gable feature on the upper floor, and rendering over the existing brickwork. The other elevations would remain much as they exist at present.
7. In my view, the scale and nature of the proposed conversion would be noticeably out of keeping with the more modest and traditional form, context and appearance of the existing building, particularly in terms of the increased height and depth of the extension to the eastern part of the building. As converted and extended, the increased height, scale and bulk of this part of the building would begin to dominate the older part of the building in both visual and physical terms. It would also represent a dramatic change to the character and appearance of this otherwise more modest traditional building, introducing windows, balcony and gable features, which would be out of keeping in this otherwise largely unspoilt rural setting. The associated domestic activities in and around the building, including car parking and external activities, would also begin to erode its rural surroundings. As such, the proposed conversion would not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the existing building, and would therefore not accord with Core Strategy Policies CS5 & CS6.
8. I have also taken account of the fact that the appeal site immediately adjoins the Colemere SSSI/Ramsar site and Country Park. Bearing in mind the physical and visual impact of the proposed conversion, particularly the extension and alterations to the front elevation of the eastern side of the building, and the nature of the residential use, I consider the proposal would erode the visual character and rural appearance of its surroundings and begin to detract from the recreational and environmental value of this publicly accessible and popular locality. It would therefore not accord with Core Strategy Policy CS17.
9. The appellant refers to two nearby structures which have been converted, rebuilt or permitted for residential use. However, I saw that these are wooden cabins sited at a higher level fronting the canal, and are significantly different from the appeal building. At least one of the cabins (*Waters Edge*) only has permission for occupation as holiday accommodation. I note that the last use of the appeal building was for storage and that it has been unsuccessfully marketed for this type of use. The structural report confirms that there are no defects and the building is capable of conversion, although some underpinning may be needed. I also understand that the Council's professional officers and consultees were satisfied with the proposed conversion. However, these more positive aspects of the proposal do not outweigh the adverse impact of the conversion on the character, appearance and setting of its surroundings.
10. Consequently, and having considered all the other points raised in the representations, including the views of the Parish Council, I conclude that this appeal should be **dismissed**.

Stephen J Pratt

STEPHEN J PRATT
Inspector