



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2019

by Mr W Johnson BA(Hons) DipTP DipUDR MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/19/3233793

The Chapel, Pool Head, Wem, Shrewsbury SY4 5UH

- 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 & Mrs T Rogers against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01382/FUL, dated 25 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: 'Erection of a single storey extension, attached to existing dwelling by a glazed link, together with re-sited vehicular access'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. For clarity and precision, I have taken the address of the appeal site from the appeal form as it is more succinct than the address given on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the significance, of the host building, a non-designated heritage asset, and the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The host dwelling is the former Primitive Methodist Chapel with a date of erection listed as 1864 on a date stone. Although, in the appellant's Heritage Impact Assessment¹ (the HIA), it states that a Primitive Methodist Chapel and school were either in existence or proposed as early as 1861. It is common ground between both main parties that the building is a non-designated heritage asset.
5. The proposed development is to extend the host building off the existing lean-to element on the side elevation facing the existing driveway, with a single storey extension comprising living room, bedroom with en-suite, lobby and boiler room. The extension would be connected to the host building through a glazed link, where the existing lean to roof would be replaced with a dual pitched roof, which would marginally increase its ridge height. The proposal would also involve the re-location of the access.

¹ Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken by Richard K Morriss & Associates dated March 2019

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in paragraph 197 indicates that the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining a planning application. A balanced judgement would be required having regard to the scale of a harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. I consider that the significance of the host building derives from the character and modest appearance of the building and its historic association as a former chapel, in its rural location.
7. I note that the extension will not extend above the height of the main section of the host dwelling that currently provides the accommodation for the appellant. Additionally, I note that the glazed link would create a visual break between the existing and proposed structures. However, I find that the proposal represents a notable amount of development when compared to the original property.
8. I note the comments in the HIA that the proposal could be read as an echo of an attached Sunday school, but confirms that such a facility was never built on the appeal site. Additionally, I acknowledge the comments surrounding the changes to the site through the residential conversion and that the appearance of the host building has also been altered. However, I find the existing alterations to the host building are subtle, resulting in a residential conversion where the former use is still very much apparent in its design.
9. The appeal scheme, in comparison, by virtue of its design, location and footprint, would result in an addition that would dominate the original building, fundamentally altering its shape and would unbalance its form. The resulting significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host property would be readily visible from surrounding roads, due to the visually prominent nature of the site.
10. The appellant has referenced 2no. appeal decisions² for residential extensions in the Council area. However, relatively little detail has been provided regarding the particular planning backgrounds to these schemes and I do not know what evidence was before the Inspectors at the time of their decisions. Additionally, with regard to the more recent decision, the scheme did not involve a non-designated heritage asset. Consequently, I cannot be sure that these are entirely representative of the circumstances in the appeal before me. In any event all appeals are judged on their own individual merits. Accordingly, that is how I have assessed this appeal scheme.
11. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the significance of the host building as a heritage asset, and the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area. This conflicts with the design, heritage, character and appearance aims of Policy CS6 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework, Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (CS); Policies MD2 and MD13 of the Council's Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan 2015 (SAMDev), the guidance contained within the Council's Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2012, and the Framework.
12. CS Policies CS5 and CS17, and SAMDev Policy MD7a have been referred by the Council in its decision notice. However, these policies appear to relate to Countryside/Green Belt, Environmental Networks and Managing Housing

² APP/L3245/D/18/3206777 and APP/L3245/D/19/3226633

Development in the Countryside, respectively. Therefore, I find these policies are not directly applicable to the case before me.

Other Matters

13. I have also had regard to various other matters raised by the appellant, including his need to develop a family home with a living room away from the road junction, and no objections from third parties including Wem Rural Parish Council, but on the evidence before me these are not reasons to grant permission in the face of the harm identified. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.
14. In addition, the Local Highway Authority raise no objections to the proposal. However, a lack of harm associated with highways is a neutral factor that weighs neither for nor against the development. The appellant has also expressed concerns about the way that the Council handled the application, but this does not affect the planning merits of the case.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

W Johnson

INSPECTOR