The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2019

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/19/3239105
Great Hough, Dingle Lane, Rushton Spencer SK11 0RG

- 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 & J Gardiner against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2019/0357, dated 6 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2019.
- The development proposed is a single storey extension to side and rear.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt, and accordingly the main issues are:

   - Whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policy;
   - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
   - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling;
   - If the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. The appeal site is a large detached house in a rural location in the Green Belt. The house is a linear former farmhouse on an east-west alignment, and has an attached former barn which is now converted to living accommodation at its eastern end.

4. The proposal is to create a single storey extension at the western end of the farmhouse. This would be in two parts, a small lean-to forming a new entrance way, and a larger garden room projecting southwards off the rear elevation.

5. Paragraph 145(c) of the Framework allows for the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

6. The extended building would be around 19% larger in plan area than the 'original' building as it stood in 1948, including additions made after 1948. This figure is agreed by both parties, and the Council does not consider that this would represent a disproportionate addition. Furthermore, I consider that the scale and layout of the proposed extensions means that they would read as subservient to the original building. I therefore concur that the proposal would not represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In that regard it would not be in conflict with Policies SS6c, R1 and R2 of the 2014 Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (SMCS) which seek to protect the Green Belt, nor with the requirements of Chapter 13 of the Framework.

Openness of the Green Belt, very special circumstances

8. As the proposal can be regarded as not inappropriate in the terms of Paragraph 145 of the Framework, it is not necessary for me to consider the impact of the development on openness, nor whether there are 'very special circumstances' which would otherwise be required to justify the scheme.

Character and appearance

9. The proposed rear part of the extension would be of relatively simple dual pitched roof construction, with larger parapet walls at each end. It would use a variety of materials, including stone to match the existing local material, Staffordshire blue tiles, aluminium window and door frames, and zinc roof and façade panels.

10. It is undisputed that Great Hough dates from at least the early 19th century and may be older still, and although not a Listed Building it is considered by the Council to be a non-designated heritage asset.

11. A large 'picture' window on the eastern elevation would look across the garden courtyard, while the external western elevation would have a high level broad horizontal window. Neither of these windows would be in keeping with the generally much smaller form and vertical emphasis of the other windows in the existing building. None of these features would reflect the traditional character of the host dwelling, and consequently they would appear somewhat incongruous. I consider that the horizontal emphasis which these windows would have would be at odds with the existing building and would detract from its appearance and traditional character.

12. The form of the zinc roof would mirror the agricultural outbuildings to the west, and although it would be somewhat jarring when seen alongside the smaller lean-to extension proposed for the north western corner, in my view this on its own would not cause significant harm. However, the combined massing of the zinc roof and cladding would also overwhelm the modestly-scaled brick corner of the existing farmhouse when seen from within the rear garden courtyard, and this would be harmful to the building's appearance.

13. I accept that the use of modern materials and designs can be appropriate for some extensions to historic buildings, where they can differentiate between the older and newer parts of the building and can emphasise a building's evolution. In this case, I consider that the proposed materials are not in themselves inappropriate, and the siting of the rear extension would prevent the loss of original stone features on the existing building. However, the form of the proposed rear part of the extension, in particular the size and layout of the windows, and the use of zinc panelling on the inward facing façade, would neither respect the traditional appearance of the farmhouse, nor would they represent an appropriate contemporary response to its character.

14. The Council did not object to the smaller lean-to part of the extension which would sit alongside the farmhouse's front elevation, and I agree that its design and materials would be appropriate to the character and appearance of the host building. However this does not outweigh the harm which I consider would arise from the rear extension.

15. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building. It would conflict with Policies SS6c, R1, R2 and DC1 of the SMCS. Together these policies seek to ensure that new development is sensitively designed, has detailing which respects the character of the rural area, and that extensions do not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of existing buildings. For the same reasons, the proposal conflicts with paragraphs 127 and 130 of the Framework, as well as advice in the Council's 2018 Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

16. I also find that the proposed development would conflict with Policy DC2 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and paragraph 197 of the Framework, which seek to ensure that development protects heritage assets including those which are not statutorily listed. I note that the Local Plan has not yet been adopted and consequently I afford conflict with that policy limited weight in my decision, although this does not alter my overall conclusion.

Conclusion

17. I conclude that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building. For this reason, the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector