



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2022

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/22/3291934

Wivelrod House, Wivelrod Road, Bentworth, Alton GU34 4AS

- 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 Johanna and Roger Parry against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 37737/013, dated 30 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension over an existing detached garage to provide home office work space.
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by Ms J Waterous and Mr R Parry against East Hampshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

3. The Council based its refusal of the appeal application on amended plans reducing the size of the proposed extension and moving it from the front section to the back section of the part of the garage building closest to the street. I likewise base this appeal decision on those amended plans.

Main issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building and the hamlet of Wivelrod.

Reasons

5. Wivelrod is a small, rural settlement of traditionally designed buildings spread out along a single road. Wivelrod House is a substantial country house with extensive grounds including a range of brick, flint and slate outbuildings built in the local vernacular style, which are thought to date from the 19th Century and likely served as cart sheds and other farm buildings. These outbuildings are set

- back from the street behind an open, paved area. The proposal is to build a zinc clad first floor extension over the back part of the double pitched roof frontage section of the outbuildings, to provide home office space. The extension would have mansard style steeply sloping roofs to 2 sides, plus a vertical wall on the side closest to the street and low-pitched roofs on the top. On the fourth side it would gradually rise out of the existing roof.
6. The house and outbuildings are not listed and are not in a conservation area or designated landscape, so that they have no special protection. They are, nevertheless, attractive rural buildings which are central to the character and appearance of Wivelrod. The garage building range is of uniform appearance with a straightforward, harmonious design and materials, including its low-pitched slate roofs. The proposal would add a contemporary element to the building with a much different roof form and materials.
 7. In general terms, this contrasting design approach can align with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework's) encouragement for appropriate innovation in design. Likewise, East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Policy CP29 states that design criteria are not meant to put a ceiling on innovation. The older, 2006 East Hampshire District Local Plan Second Review (LP2) Policy HE2's statement that the roof form of any extension should respect the form of the original building also allows scope for innovation.
 8. The proposed extension, however, would sprout from the simple roof form of the existing building in a complex and inharmonious way with various roof pitches, none of which appears to match the existing building. The use of dark grey matt Anthra zinc cladding would work well with the existing slate roofs but the form of the extension would not respect the existing building's much more straightforward architecture, appearing as an awkward and unsympathetic addition. It is appreciated that the appellants would not want to build a poorly designed extension and that this proposal is architect designed, but no clear design justification has been provided for important aspects of this proposal, including its complexity.
 9. The extension would be screened from most public views, limiting its visual impact. The appellants say that it would not be seen at all from Wivelrod Road, but have not supplied any section drawings to demonstrate this point. I have therefore made my own assessment from the submitted plans and observations at my site visit.
 10. The extension would be about a metre taller than the existing building, but it appears that the roof of the front section of the building would screen almost all of the new structure in direct and angled views from the street opposite the site. The sliver of matt grey roof cladding that might be seen in these views would not be intrusive or out of character. There would, however, also be some angled views of the extension across the front garden of Wivelrod House. These are largely screened or filtered by existing hedges and trees. The mature oak tree near to the site would, however, provide little screening in winter months so that the extension would be clearly visible in some views. The hedges and other trees are largely evergreen, but long-term retention in their current condition and locations cannot effectively be guaranteed, so that more views could potentially be opened up in the future. These angled views, both as existing and potential, would be significant. Clearly, the extension would also

be seen by residents and visitors to the courtyard, but I give comparatively little weight to these non-public views.

11. Weighing up these various factors, I find that the extension would fail to respect the form or character of the existing outbuilding range, which is important part of the rural character of Wivelrod. Whilst the screening of the extension from most public views would significantly lessen the amount of harm caused, on balance I find that this is insufficient to justify this unsympathetically designed proposal. I conclude that the proposed extension would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the building and Wivelrod. It therefore conflicts with the aims of JCS Policy CP29, LP2 Policy HE2 and the Framework, to secure good design that is visually attractive and respects local character, identity and context.
12. The appellant submits that JCS Policy CP29 and LP2 Policy HE2 are out of date because they set out different or more stringent design tests than those of the current version of the Framework. I find, however, that the design aspirations and policies of these 3 documents closely align. I therefore give the JCS and LP2 policies substantial weight as part of the adopted development plan for the area. I have in any case also found conflict with the Framework's design policies.
13. I have taken account of all other points raised. I note that the local objections relate to the original design and that there are letters of support for the revised design. I also note that the appellants need additional space for a home office and that the existing outbuilding has structural issues which the new steel framing of the extension would help to address. I am not convinced, however, that the current proposal is the only solution to those legitimate issues. I find nothing to override my objection in regard to the main issue.
14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR