
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2015

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 October 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/G1630/D/15/3130917

Chapel Cottage, Calcotts Green, Minsterworth, Glos GL2 8JN

- 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 Tony Laken against the decision of Tewkesbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/00403/FUL, dated 7 April 2015, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2015.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension - sunroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the existing house and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Chapel Cottage is a traditional, albeit altered, detached house set within the context of detached dwellings either side of varying, but nevertheless straight forward gable ended designs. The setting is also a pleasantly open and spacious one, including fields opposite.
4. The existing dwelling is identified by the Council as being a non-designated heritage asset, having regard to paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which relates to taking account of the effect of an application on the significance of such assets. The building's significance in this respect is disputed by the parties, particularly in light of the appellant's claim that the current appearance, including the box timber-framing, is largely a result of his renovation works. Although I understand from the Council that the building is present on all editions of historic Ordnance Survey maps, the evidence before me is inconclusive as to its current status as such an asset.
5. Nevertheless, even if the significance has been weakened, the existing building still has a distinct, generally rectangular and gable ended design which sits comfortably alongside the uncomplicated designs of the dwellings either side, without dominating the street scene. The first floor rooms are largely within the roof space such that the eaves of the main roof are at a fairly low level.

6. The house is set fairly well back from the road, and partially screened by trees and other vegetation. It is also set noticeably further back than the adjacent Camden Cottage and slightly further back than the front of Rosemary Cottage on the other side. Nevertheless it still makes a significant contribution to the street scene, particularly due to its raised position and fairly open front garden.
7. The proposed extension would introduce a distinctly different form and design of development to that of the existing house. This would be largely due to the proposed angled sides and correspondingly sectioned up hipped roof, together with noticeably differently proportioned fenestration compared with that of the existing ground floor windows. The disparity would be further highlighted by the ridgeline of its roof joining awkwardly with the lower main roof slope of the existing house.
8. It would be intended to utilise materials to match the existing house in respect of the roofing materials and fenestration, and although also proposed to use reclaimed bricks, contrary to the render finish of the main house, the appellant states that he would be willing to render the walls to match if necessary. However, the materials used would not disguise the harm that I have found would otherwise be caused by the contradictory form and design features.
9. As such the proposed development would result in an incongruous and dominating addition to the existing dwelling. This in turn would have a jarring effect in the general streetscene, particularly as other properties in the vicinity do not clearly exhibit similarly contradictory features.
10. I have had regard to the design of Camden Cottage which the appellant highlights as having been from the same era as Chapel Cottage and which has been extended towards the road in recent years, having previously also had a front elevation in a single plane. However, I saw that the design of that forward projecting element of Camden Cottage was clearly different to that proposed, being two storey and gable ended, and I have determined the appeal case on its own merits.
11. For the above reasons, the proposed extension would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the existing house and surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy HOU8 of the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan. That policy, in respect of this issue, states that extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that the proposal respects the character, scale, and proportion of the existing or, where appropriate, the original dwelling; the detailed design reflects or compliments the design and materials of the existing dwelling; and the proposal respects the character and appearance of surrounding development. It would also be contrary to the Framework which, in Section 7, sets out the requirement for good design.
12. The appellant has highlighted that no objections were received from anyone, and that the Parish Council supported the application. However, I have determined the appeal on its planning merits taking into account all material considerations.
13. The appellant also refers to advice given by the Council's Planning Officer concerning alternative development options which he claims would be impractical. However, again, I have determined this appeal on its merits based on the proposal before me.

Conclusion

14. I acknowledge that one reason for the appellant wanting to add the proposed sunroom would be to capture the sun's heat into the house due to the existing lounge receiving little sunlight from its small windows. However, such a benefit would be insufficient to outweigh the unacceptable harm that I have found it would cause to the character and appearance of the existing house and surrounding area.
15. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR