
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2021

by Patrick Hanna MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/20/3264575

The River House, Balderstone Hall Lane, Balderstone, Lancashire BB2 7LA

- 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 and Mrs G Clarke against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2020/0488, dated 22 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is an extension to annexe accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an extension to annexe accommodation at The River House, Balderstone Hall Lane, Balderstone, Lancashire BB2 7LA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/2020/0488, dated 22 June 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans; Location Plan; 4820-103 (Site Plan); and 4820-102A (Proposed Plan and Elevations).
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in materials to match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposed extension is of a suitable size, with particular regard to development plan policies for annexe accommodation.

Reasons

3. The appeal site contains a detached single-storey building, which comprises a two-bedroom annexe associated with the adjacent The River House. The effect of the proposal would be to enlarge the annexe to a three-bedroom property of smaller size than the host dwelling.
4. Policy DMH5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014)(CS) states that proposed accommodation for elderly or dependant relatives should, amongst other things, 'generally speaking provide only a modest level of accommodation'. The supporting text to the policy offers no explanation of what modest means. The Council argue its case on the basis of the cumulative level of accommodation provided.

5. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to indicate that a three-bedroom property cannot, in its own right, be considered as providing a modest level of accommodation. In this case, whilst the extended annexe would have three bedrooms, it would remain a simple building, with space saving open plan living accommodation and bedrooms that are not excessively large, even with en-suites. On the other hand, the host dwelling The River House, also said to be a three-bedroom property, is of quite substantial scale and proportions which, it could reasonably be said, provides an example of what would not fit the description of modest.
6. Given that any annexe accommodation must, as a matter of logic, comprise a single planning unit with its host dwelling, it would also be reasonable to conclude that the definition of modest should be a comparative one. On that basis, even though both properties would have three bedrooms, the host dwelling at River House would remain very substantially larger. Indeed, the footprint of the proposed enlarged annexe would be no larger than the footprint of the rear extension to The River House, which is approximately half of the overall host dwelling footprint. Furthermore, the extended annexe would remain single storey, with low pitched roof and low overall height, whereas The River House is a two-storey building with substantial roofscape. In visual terms, the extended annexe would remain clearly subordinate.
7. The Council indicate that the level of accommodation provided by the enlarged annexe would be commensurate with an independent dwelling. That may be the case, however, the proposal before me is not for an independent or separate dwelling, neither is it suggested that the enlarged annexe would be occupied as such.
8. I conclude that the proposed extension would be of a suitable size, with particular regard to development plan policies for annexe accommodation, such that it complies with policy DMH5 of the CS.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Patrick Hanna

INSPECTOR