



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2011

by Mrs A L Fairclough MA, BSc(Hons), LLB(Hons), PGDipLP, MRTPI, IHBC
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17 January 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/11/2163203

1 The Walled Garden, Woodfold Park, Mellor, Blackburn BB2 7QA

- 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 Duncan Weisters against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2011/0472, dated 14 June 2011, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2011.
 - The development is described as proposed extensions to create new living space and double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The appeal site is located within the former walled kitchen garden of Woodfold Hall, a Grade II listed building. The surrounding Woodfold Park is included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens at Grade II. The appeal property, a detached dwelling, is positioned some 200m away from Woodfold Hall and is separated from it by a large copse of trees. However, it is readily visible in juxtaposition with the hall from the south and, as such, forms part of the setting of the listed building. On that overall basis, the main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, Woodfold Park, and the setting of Woodfold Hall.

Reasons

3. The former walled kitchen garden forms an important part of the minimalist planned landscape of Woodfold Hall Estate and complements the classically designed Woodfold Hall. The simple landscaping treatment allows Woodfold Hall to dominate the long wide views across the valley from the south.
4. The former walled kitchen garden is divided into two levels and enclosed, in part, by high brick walls. The upper level includes 2 dwellings, which appear as mirror images of each other. These dwellings have very simple south facing elevations in terms of design and form. Although there is accommodation within the roof space, they appear as single-storey buildings, with relatively low eaves and an uncomplicated roof form. This simplicity of form and design allows the historic landscape to remain the most important aspect of the locality.
5. The proposal includes a 2-storey, oak framed extension to the eastern end of the existing dwelling and a double garage. Given its mass form, detail, materials and position, it would create a prominent addition to the dwelling, which would appear

strident when viewed from the adjacent parkland. Furthermore, it would disrupt the symmetrical arrangement of the pair with No.1 appearing dominant.

6. Whilst the proposed development has been carefully designed, in itself, it would not empathise with the simplicity of the existing dwelling nor would it complement the surroundings in which it would sit. As such it would harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and Woodfold Park. Thus it would conflict with Policy G1 of the *Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan* (LP), which indicates that development which adversely affects the amenities of the surrounding area should not be permitted and LP Policy ENV21 which requires strict control over development proposals which effect historic parks and gardens.
7. Moreover, given the height, mass and form of the proposed extension, it would be visible when looking northwards from the historic parkland and would appear as a prominent vernacular feature in an otherwise classically designed setting. It would be conspicuous and incongruous when looking northwards across the parkland to the Hall and, as a result, would harm the setting of the listed building. This would be contrary to LP Policy ENV19, which resists development proposals that would harm the setting of a listed building.
8. The appellant has referred to other developments in the park including new residential development and garaging adjacent to Woodfold Hall and permissions relating to the Orangery building. Reference has also been made to a recently completed barn conversion in Lancashire undertaken by the appellant's architect, which has received national recognition and awards. I am unaware of the full background of these developments. However, I am aware that the developments adjacent to Woodfold Hall were extraordinary in that they formed part of an enabling development to secure the retention by conversion of Woodfold Hall (Ref 3/2001/0672/P) as the Hall was considered to be a 'Building at Risk' by English Heritage. Therefore, this development is not directly comparable to the appeal before me. In any case I am required to determine each appeal on its own merits in the light of current policy. I have done so in this case.
9. I acknowledge that the proposal would create additional accommodation and a double garage. However, this would not create a benefit sufficient to outweigh the significant harm the proposed extension would cause to the designated historic assets that it would impact upon. This would be contrary to the approach set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning For the Historic Environment* (PPS5).

Conclusions

10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Mrs A Fairclough

INSPECTOR