
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 31 August 2016

by Brendan Lyons BArch MA MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 22 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/W/16/3147394

Manor House Barn, Oldham Road, Scouthead, Oldham OL3 5RD

- 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 Mrs J Dronsfield against the decision of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HH/337901/15, dated 3 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as extensions and internal alterations (resubmission of HH/335801/14 and LB/335802/14).
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Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/Y/16/3147402

Manor House Barn, Oldham Road, Scouthead, Oldham OL3 5RD

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs J Dronsfield against the decision of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref LB/337902/15, dated 3 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2016.
 - The works proposed are described as extensions and internal alterations (resubmission of HH/335801/14 and LB/335802/14).
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of the proposed extension and alterations on the special interest of the host listed building and on the setting of the adjoining listed building.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a former barn that has been converted to residential use and linked to a new wing containing an indoor swimming pool. The barn and the adjoining former farmhouse, which is now in separate residential use, stand in an elevated position on the side of a steep valley. Both buildings are listed Grade II.
 4. It is now proposed to add a single-storey flat-roofed extension across the rear of the barn to engage with the swimming pool building, whose roof would be
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extended towards the barn, housing an extra bedroom lit by dormer windows to each side.

5. In considering proposed works to a listed building, Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting. Section 66 of the Act imposes a similar duty with regard to proposed development. The Courts have ruled that the execution of these duties is a matter of considerable importance.
6. National policy guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') confirms the great weight in favour of the conservation of 'designated heritage assets', such as listed buildings. The particular significance of any element of the historic environment likely to be affected by a development proposal should be identified and assessed. Any harm should require clear and convincing justification.
7. In this case, the applications are not supported by a detailed analysis of the significance of the listed building, such as a record of its evolution from farm building to well-appointed residence. The application drawings are also at very small scale, which does not assist evaluation of the detailed implications of the appeal proposals.
8. The list entry records the barn's original early-eighteenth century date. It is clear that its significance lies mainly as an example of an agricultural building of this period, whose character has survived largely intact, despite alterations over time. In particular, the insertion of bold concrete, steel and glass elements to the east gable has significantly altered the appearance of a main elevation. Nevertheless, the overall built envelope of stone walls and slate roof has been well retained and the main internal volume respected, so that the building's primary form and robust character can be appreciated.
9. The gabled outbuilding that adjoins the rear elevation provides a reminder of the likely range of smaller service buildings that would have been found on the working farm. The building continues to provide a service use, housing the ancillary functions for the pool. It is clearly subservient to the principal building. The pool building is less subservient, because of its size and scale, but great care was taken at the time of its addition to maintain a clear separation from the older outbuilding and original barn, with only a minimal frameless glass link providing the connection between them. In this way the integrity of the listed building has been preserved.
10. The proposed flat-roofed extension would disrupt the original form of the listed barn. The photograph provided shows that there was in the past a smaller single-storey extension in this location, but the detail of its origins and design are not clear. The extension now proposed would have a larger footprint and a greater impact on the original building. There would be little historical precedent for a stone-built addition of this type, with a parapeted flat roof, which would not relate well to the low eaves of the original building. The original form of the building would no longer be clear and good details, such as the stone lintel and jambs of the rear door would be obscured.
11. The continuation of the flat roof across the existing outbuilding would lose the separate identity of that element. I agree with the Council that greater harm would be caused by the extension of the pool roof over the outbuilding and

considerably closer to the barn. As a result, the clear separate identity of each element of the building group, which is visible from the road above the site, would become indistinct and the primacy of the original building would be reduced by the greater bulk of the pool wing. The proposed dormers would form an ungainly addition to the otherwise simple roof forms. While the appellant would now be willing to omit this part of the proposal, no satisfactory alternative has been tabled.

12. For the above reasons, I endorse the Council's conclusion that the proposal would be harmful to the special interest of the listed building. I understand that the current proposals have attempted to address the concerns that led the Council to refuse the previous submissions referred to in the application descriptions. Those proposals do not form part of this appeal, and although the revised scheme may well be an improvement, taken on its own merits it does not provide a satisfactory solution.
13. The reason for refusal of each application also refers to harm to setting, but the Council's statement does not address this aspect. From the list information, the barn has a historical connection with the adjoining farmhouse, as well as being seen together with it from many viewpoints, including from the opposite side of the valley. The farmhouse's relationship with the former barn makes a positive contribution to its heritage significance. The harm to the form of the barn would therefore also have a minor adverse effect on the setting of the farmhouse.
14. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets. In those circumstances, paragraph 134 of the NPPF advises that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the benefits appear entirely related to the family's wish for improved bedroom accommodation. This is essentially a private benefit, and there is no suggestion that the accommodation is necessary to secure the building's continued viable use. The harm would not be outweighed.
15. I consider that the proposal would be contrary to national policy and to Policy 24 of the Oldham Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2011, which seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, and also to Policy 20, which promotes high quality design that reflects the distinctiveness of local sites, and to Policy 9, which aims to protect and improve the quality of the local environment.
16. For the reasons set out above, and having taken careful account of all representations made, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

Brendan Lyons

INSPECTOR