
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 September 2016

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 September 2016

Appeal A Ref: APP/J3720/W/16/3150071

Morgrove Barn, Morton Bagot Road, Morton Bagot, Warwickshire, B80 7EP

- 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 R & T Williams against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02836/FUL, dated 2 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is a subterranean extension to form new bedroom, ensuite and living room.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/J3720/Y/16/3151921

Morgrove Barn, Morton Bagot Road, Morton Bagot, Warwickshire, B80 7EP

- 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 R & T Williams against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02837/LBC, dated 2 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is a subterranean extension to form new bedroom, ensuite and living room.
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building at Morgrove Barn.

Reasons

3. In considering proposals for planning permission, the duty imposed by section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of new development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. The paragraph goes on to say that significance can be harmed or lost through development within its setting. Paragraph 134 requires that where the harm is less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

4. The development plan now includes the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy (CS) 2011-2031 which was adopted in July 2016 after the date of the Council's decisions and has superseded the Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan 2006. The objectives of CS policy CS.8, in seeking to protect and enhance the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the district, are compatible with the Framework's requirements.
5. Morgrove Barn is a grade II listed building, a C17th/C18th field barn which has been converted to a single dwelling. Its architectural and historical interest lies in its timber frame of square framing with brick infill on high coursed lias and a brick plinth with central wagon door openings to the front and rear. Its isolated, rural setting amongst fields and woodland also contributes strongly to its significance. Tree planting has been carried out in recent years on nearby land to the rear of the property. Within the grounds of the property are a detached garage and a stable block in an adjoining field.
6. The proposals would provide a subterranean extension some 3m below ground level between the side of the barn and the garage, comprising a new bedroom, ensuite and living room together with a curved, stepped terrace which would accommodate a pool, spiral staircase, stone walling and areas of glazing with a non-reflective coating. The extension has been designed on the lines of a sun dial. I have noted the appellant's efforts to address the Conservation Officer's concerns and that some of the Council's officers expressed differing views. I have also noted that the Council approved a semi-subterranean extension at another property, Underhill House, but from the appellant's reference to the Conservation Officer's comments it would seem that the other property is not listed and it therefore differs significantly from these proposals. In any case, each proposal must be determined on its merits.
7. The proposed extension is almost entirely below ground level. Above ground the main visual elements would be two escape rooflights which would be raised 150mm above ground level. Stone copings of 65mm above ground level would also be visible and would mark the edge of the underground terrace (for security purposes). Although these would be seen from a footpath some 50m to the east of the site, they would be barely discernible from there and would not be seen from the lane either.
8. However, when approaching the property along its drive, a sizeable area of cut away ground and a substantial length of glazing would be clearly seen in close proximity to the barn. It would replace much of the existing gravelled area between the barn and the garage block and would introduce a distracting, semi-formal feature into the foreground of the view across the lawn, a small field and recent tree planting towards a wooded hillside in the background. Its siting, form and appearance would be at odds with and significantly detract from the open, rural and informal setting of the listed building, thereby harming its architectural and historic significance and contrary to Historic England guidance. Although in this case the harm would be less than substantial, I must give it considerable importance and weight.
9. The additional living space provided would be a private benefit and is not necessary to secure the continued optimum viable use as a dwelling given the size and condition of the existing house. Therefore, there are no public benefits arising from the proposal that would outweigh the identified harm as required in paragraph 134 of the Framework.

Conclusion

10. I conclude then that, for the reasons given above, the proposed extension would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building contrary to CS policy CS.8. As such it would not accord with the environmental dimension of sustainability required in the Framework and would not constitute sustainable development. It would, therefore, be contrary to the Council's development plan and to national policy in the Framework as a whole. I have taken into account all other matters raised but none is sufficient to alter the outcome of my findings. Both appeals should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector