
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2016

by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A3010/W/16/3153702

Land adjacent to Larkfield House, Blyth Road, Ranskill, Nottinghamshire DN22 8LR.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Amanda Henton against the decision of Bassetlaw District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/01546/OUT, dated 20 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 5 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of 2 No detached dwellings, garage block, associated entrance, driveway and car parking areas.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The application is in outline; with all matters reserved for future consideration except for access. The appellant has submitted plan ref 15_1695 1A which details not only the proposed access but also the siting of two dwellings. I have therefore treated the siting of the dwellings as for indicative purposes only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. There is no dispute between the parties that Larkfield House is a non-designated heritage asset together with Larkfield Cottage, the former Maltings and the Bluebell Public House all of which are within the vicinity of the appeal site. To the north on the opposite side of the road is the Old Hall together with the Pigeoncote, both of which are grade II listed buildings. The character and appearance of the road is therefore heavily influenced by the heritage assets.
 5. The appellant's Settings Impact Assessment (the SIA) demonstrates the evolution of development on and around Larkfield House including the appeal site. It identifies that the walls do not form part of the original historic setting for any of the heritage assets, with the exception of Larkfield Cottage to which
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it is probably contemporary. The other walls are mainly nineteenth century in origin with the exception of that at Judy Croft which is more modern in appearance. Furthermore, it does not assess the wall in the body of the report as it is not a heritage asset or a listed or protected monument of any kind. While that may be the case, nonetheless, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve'.

6. Larkfield House is a large house with a gable elevation at the back edge of the footway and its front elevation facing towards the appeal site. It has a high brick wall along the boundary to the road both to the east and west of the house. To the east the boundary wall contains a large garden, which given the residential nature of the property, forms its current, enclosed garden setting. It has a small curved vehicle access within the boundary wall.
7. The other heritage assets in the street, surrounding Larkfield House, have their own settings. The Old Hall is set back from the road and has a wall along its boundary with the road which incorporates the Pigeoncote. This too therefore has an enclosed walled garden setting. The Pigeoncote, Larkfield Cottage, Malt Kiln House and the Bluebell Public House are sited close to the appeal site. All are sited at the back edge of the pavement. In my opinion each has a setting within Blyth Road that consists of a hard edge to the road, contributing to the assets significance, either through a boundary wall or a built structure which are punctuated by small, narrow discrete vehicle accesses. As a result therefore the road has an enclosed character and appearance either through boundary treatment or buildings.
8. I have had regard to the SIA however I cannot agree with the findings that the proposal would only have a slight- neutral effect on the setting of the heritage assets. The proposed access would necessitate the removal of about 16.5 metres of the boundary wall to allow an access for two dwellings which would comply with the requirements of the Highway Authority. As a result a substantial part of the boundary wall would be lost midway in its siting around the garden of Larkfield House. Although the wall would be curved, I saw from the existing access that it was still apparent in the street scene that there was a break in the wall. An access of greater width would therefore be more dominant and obtrusive. Accordingly the loss of the wall would considerably erode the enclosure of the site and consequently significantly affect the setting of Larkfield House.
9. All of other heritage assets I have referred to can be viewed at various points within Blyth Road in association with the boundary wall of the appeal site and therefore the substantial loss of hard edge to the street to facilitate the proposed access would also have some effect on the setting of the other heritage assets on the street. Consequently the introduction of a plot in the street with a more open setting and wide access would attract more prominence in the street scene, detracting from its enclosed character and appearance.
10. For the reasons above therefore I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets. This harm to the setting of the assets would dilute their significance. It would therefore be

contrary to save Policy DM8 of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2011 and paragraphs 131, 132 and 135 of the Framework. These require that development preserves or enhances the setting of a heritage asset.

Other matters

11. I had the opportunity to view the parking space adjacent to Larkfield Cottage where a section of boundary wall adjacent to the highway had been removed under planning permission 13/00659/COU. However, I saw that this development would have necessitated the removal of a much shorter section of wall than the appeal proposal. Furthermore the part of the structure to be removed was at the end of the wall rather than in the middle as currently proposed.
12. The appellant has also brought to my attention two planning applications which have been approved for development adjacent to heritage assets (13/01034/FUL, and 39/10/00010). I do not have full details of the 2013 application or what made it acceptable at the time. In particular I cannot be sure that the character and appearance of the area or the significance of the heritage assets are directly parallel to that of the appeal site. Furthermore, the 2010 application was granted before the Framework and therefore would have been determined under different policy guidance to that in place now.
13. I have had regard to comments from the Council regarding the proposed layout of the two houses and their impact on the character and appearance of the area. However, the submitted layout plan is for indicative purposes only and does not constitute definite proposals. Therefore I cannot determine at this stage whether the proposed layout would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Balancing and Conclusion

14. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the setting of non-designated heritage assets and hence the character and appearance of the area contrary to local and nation policy and I give significant weight to this harm. In the parlance of the Framework the harm to the designated heritage asset would be less than substantial. Nevertheless, I must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the asset and any harm should require clear and convincing justification. The harm I have found carries great weight in my decision, but in accordance with Paragraph 134 of the Framework this harm should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.
15. I note that the two houses in an accessible location would contribute to the Council's five year housing land supply as required by the Framework. However, a net increase of two dwellings would be a small contribution so I afford this benefit only moderate weight.
16. In addition, the construction of the dwelling would derive some economic benefits but this would be for a limited time. Furthermore, given the small scale of the development, the contribution to the local economy from the spending power of future occupants is unlikely to be significant.
17. Therefore the public benefits that might accrue if the development was to be allowed would not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset. Along with the other harm that would arise from the impact on the character and

appearance of the area this leads me to find that overall the scheme would not be sustainable development as envisaged by the Framework. Consequently, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR