

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2016

by Elaine Benson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/16/3152864

Egypt Mill, Stroud Road, Nailsworth, Stroud GL6 0AE

- 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 Matthew Webb against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.16/0574/FUL, dated 16 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'timber garden wedding facility'.
-

Preliminary Matter

1. The Council described the application as for a 'covered timber structure to provide wedding facility' which I consider more accurately describes the proposal than the description in the heading above. The appeal has been determined on this basis.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a covered timber structure to provide wedding facility at Egypt Mill, Stroud Road, Nailsworth, Stroud GL6 0AE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref S.16/0574/FUL, dated 16 March 2016.

Application for Costs

3. An application for costs was made by Mr Matthew Webb against Stroud District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are the statutory requirements to determine whether the timber structure which has already been constructed preserves the setting of the listed Egypt Mill Hotel and Restaurant buildings, which are designated heritage assets, and whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within the original grounds of the Grade II* listed Egypt House which dates from 1698. It is described in the listing as a good example of a cross-gabled Cotswold House and is thought to be an early example of a double-pile house. Egypt House is close to the Grade II* listed Egypt Mill building which dates predominantly from the 18th and 19th centuries, but also incorporates earlier structures. These buildings are part of the complex
-

- operated as the Egypt Mill Hotel and Restaurant business which also holds weddings and other functions.
6. A timber structure used for outdoor wedding ceremonies has been erected in an area of the garden between Egypt House and a hotel annexe building. The garden is an important part of the setting of the listed buildings and contributes towards their significance. The garden is attractive and well maintained and the structure is sited within a planted border, close to overhanging trees and bushes.
 7. The Council raises no objection in principle to a facility for outdoor wedding ceremonies, and there are no reasons to disagree. Its concerns relate to the size, design and location of the structure, describing it as solid sided, with 'chunky detailing' and a timber shingle roof. The appellant indicates that its size stems from the physical parameters officially required for an outdoor civil wedding building.
 8. I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed buildings. The structure has a simple, rustic design and modest overall dimensions. In my judgement it has the acceptable appearance of a temporary garden structure, rather than as a building of any solidity or permanence. Furthermore, its location close to trees provides a degree of concealment and screening, which soften the appearance of the structure, whilst also incorporating it into the overall garden design. It is not therefore prominent or a visual distraction from the listed buildings.
 9. I conclude that the timber structure does not harm the setting, or the significance, of the Grade II* listed buildings. The size, design and location of the structure have not diminished the importance of the garden to this setting and significance, nor adversely affected the spatial relationship between Egypt House and the neighbouring buildings.
 10. Based on the evidence provided and my observations made at the site visit, I have also considered whether the isolation of the Egypt Mill site within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area has been eroded and whether the historic relationship between Egypt Mill and Dunkirk Mill which is also within this conservation area has otherwise been harmed. For reasons including that there is a limited loss of open garden land to a new building, I judge that the spatial relationship between the Mill buildings is maintained. Furthermore, the visual prominence of the timber structure is minimal and it would not affect views between the Egypt Mill and Dunkirk Mill buildings nor through them. I conclude that there is no erosion of the important sense of isolation and that the character and appearance of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area is preserved.
 11. The Council raise no concerns relating to the effect of the development on Nailsworth Conservation Area in which the appeal site also lies. There are no reasons to disagree and I conclude that the proposed development preserves the character and appearance of this conservation area.
 12. For the reasons set out above there is no conflict with Delivery Policy ES10 of the Stroud District Local Plan which in summary seeks to ensure that the historic environment will be preserved, protected or enhanced, or the similar requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. As I have concluded

that there is no harm to the heritage assets, there is no need to consider the public benefits of the proposal or the optimal viable use of the heritage asset.

Other Matters

13. I note that there is public support for the planning application and that there would be significant commercial benefits to the hotel business derived from having outdoor wedding facilities. However, these are not determinative issues in this appeal.

Conclusion

14. The appeal is allowed. As the structure is already in place there is no requirement for any conditions to be imposed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR