
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by H Porter BA(Hons) PGDip IHBC

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

Decision date: 20 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/16/3156979

Chequers, Wylye Road, Hanging Langford, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 4NW

- 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 Ms Jill Bowler against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/03776/FUL, dated 6 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is extension of existing chimney flue to 1.8 metres above thatched-roof ridge, in order to comply with building regulations/HEATAS requirements for the installation of a replacement wood-burning stove.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the host property and the character and appearance of the Hanging Langford Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Hanging Langford Conservation Area (the Conservation Area) encapsulates a cluster of residential development fronting Wylye Road, set within a wider rural valley landscape. While there is some diversity in the age of buildings, built form is united by a broadly consistent scale and palette of stone, flint and brick walls, and thatched or tiled roofs. A distinctive characteristic of the local vernacular is the use of chequer-work detailing in the walls, which, combined with softly moulded thatched roofs, adds a distinctive charm and richness to the area. The variety of chimney stacks is an additional defining townscape feature, which tends to reflect the age, scale or internal layout of individual properties.
 4. The appeal site comprises one side of an attached thatched cottage addressing Wylye Road, towards the eastern end of the Conservation Area. The pair of cottages is notable for their modest scale, chequer-work walls and dense, low-profile thatched roof. The site is prominent within its context of open fields, set just off the bend of the road, and the cottages make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
 5. The existing main chimney stack corresponds to the junction of the attached cottages and so extends just off-centre of the ridge. The proposed development would extend the brick chimney stack and pots to a cumulative
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height of 1.8 metres above the ridge. While there are taller stacks in the locality, these tend to be where the host property is of an overall larger scale, where the stacks are at the gable end, or where the roof covering is slate or tile. The diminutive scale of the existing stack is entirely fitting with the overall proportions of the property and helps to emphasises the softly moulded thatched roof.

6. Regardless of the material treatment, at the scale proposed, the rebuilt stack would dominate the roof and appear as disproportionately large in relation to the squat proportions of the host property. The balance between the thatch and the chimney would also be compromised, causing the chimney to stand out noticeably against its low profile and soft mouldings. Given the appeal site's relationship to Wylve Road, and its prominence within the street scene, there would also be a harmful visual impact in the wider context. The positive contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would consequently be harmfully eroded.
7. For these reasons I conclude the proposed development would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the host property, as well as to the Hanging Langford Conservation Area. However, I would quantify the extent of this harm as being less than substantial when considered in the context of paragraphs 133 and 134 of the Framework. Having found harm to the heritage asset, however, I must give this considerable importance and weight. Even though I recognise an upgraded wood burner and use of their inglenook fireplace would be a benefit to the appellant, this can only be afforded minimal weight. The Council contest the validity of the appellant's assertion that the development is necessary to meet fire standards for a wood-burner and to get fire insurance. In the absence of any substantive evidence, by way of fire officer's report or heating engineer's survey for example, this places significant doubt over whether it is necessary to modify the existing chimney to the extent and in the manner currently proposed. In light of this, any wider public benefits are clearly outweighed by the harm the development would cause to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.
8. The proposed development would therefore not be in accordance with the requirements of S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which require that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. As such, the development is also contrary to Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, January 2015, which seek to ensure development is complementary to the locality and that areas of built heritage significance are protected. For the same reasons, the proposed development would fail to conform with the policies relating to design set in section 7 and to the historic environment set in section 12 of the Framework and specifically engaging paragraph 132, which makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR