

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2017

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3010/D/16/3162374

Hermeston Hall, Doncaster Road, Oldcotes, Nottinghamshire S81 8HS

- 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 D Hunt against the decision of Bassetlaw District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/01083/HSE, dated 3 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the partial demolition of the garage due to it being unsafe and erection of new wall to make room for a car to fit in the garage, thus making the garage bigger.
-

Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by Mr D Hunt against Bassetlaw District Council and is the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; and the effect on the setting of Hermeston Hall.

Reasons

4. Hermeston Hall lies within the Oldcotes Conservation Area. The designation statement dated 2010 identifies that Hermeston Hall is an important area to the south, with its lodges and service buildings. The oldest elements date back from the early to mid-seventeenth century. This proposal relates to part of a separate brick built range which is laid out in a horseshoe arrangement to the north of the main building. The outbuildings are subdivided to serve the separate ownerships of Hermeston Hall. The appellant advises that the outbuilding dates back to the 1880's and was the groom's quarters. This date is supported by the report produced by English Heritage although they describe the use as having been kennels and stables.
 5. The proposal would result in the demolition of the rear wall and its replacement to increase the depth of the building. The details are not entirely clear as to exactly what other elements would be removed but the plans show that the
-

existing front corner of the building, which has chamfered brickwork, would also be replaced. Given this change in the detail and the scale of the new openings required to provide the proposed garage doors, it would appear that this leg of the building would be replaced and re-built in breezeblock with a rendered finish.

6. The brickwork, including the ornate corners, the sill and lintel details to the timber windows and doors and the design of the slate roof, complement the more detailed features of the remainder of this range of accommodation. Overall, this ancillary range complements the appearance of the main building and sits prominently to the north, adjacent to the access to the east wing of Hermeston Hall.
7. Although the works would result in the building having a greater depth, this would not be apparent from the entrance to the site. The introduction of the garage doors and the change in materials, including the loss of the chamfered corner, would however result in a substantially less attractive building. Given that it is a prominent feature when arriving at the property, the reduction in the quality of the building would represent poor design. The loss of the detailed brickwork and the change in materials, which are unifying features of this range of service accommodation, would detract from the overall character of the building.
8. I acknowledge that the building would have a more effective use if extended to accommodate garaging and the works may reduce demand for an alternative structure elsewhere. A productive use would also help to ensure that it would be maintained in a good and safe condition, although the loss of character would reduce the benefits of retaining the building. These matters weigh in favour of the extension in the manner proposed and offer support for the introduction of garage doors which would not be a positive feature of the redevelopment.
9. I appreciate that the cost of retaining as much of the original structure as possible would be greater than demolition and rebuilding. I note also the concerns with regard to the condition of the building, although the structural report does not demonstrate that an alternative approach would not be possible or practical. I am not persuaded that brickwork to satisfactorily match the existing could not be sourced or that the important elements of the end gable could not be retained.
10. I consider that the proposed works, particularly the re-building and rendering of the front and gable elevations, would result in harm to the character and appearance of this building and they would represent poor design. The proposed works would have only a limited wider prominence due to the lack of public access in the vicinity and given the screening that would result from the proposed boundary treatments. However, although limited, the loss of this historic fabric and its unsympathetic replacement, would result in some harm to the character of the conservation area.
11. Although English Heritage have assessed the Hall and found it to have been too much altered to be listed, it nevertheless represents an important building within the conservation area. I have no reason to doubt that it should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would result in

harm to the setting of Hermeston Hall but given the intimate physical and social relationship, age and historical uses of this range of service buildings, I consider that they should be assessed as part of the overall building complex when considering the significance and heritage status of the Hall.

12. Reference has been made to the use of rendering within the area but I have not found any of the examples to be similar to the proposal before me. The image of the nearby Coach House demonstrates the important contribution that ancillary brick and slate structures make to the area.
13. Overall, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; would result in harm to the setting of Hermeston Hall; would detract from the character and appearance of this range of service buildings; and would represent poor design in this context. As it would fail to protect and enhance the historic environment, it would be contrary to the heritage requirements of Policy DM8 of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011.
14. The *National Planning Policy Framework* is clear that any harm to a heritage asset, such as a conservation area, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I find the harm to the conservation area to be less than substantial, as described in paragraph 134 of the *Framework*, but I am not satisfied that the public benefits, particularly when more sensitive alterations would be practical, would be sufficient to outweigh the harm.
15. The *Framework* also requires a balanced judgement with regard to the scale of any harm to a non-designated heritage asset. I am not satisfied that there are any matters that are sufficient to outweigh the harm that would result from the use of the materials and the changes in details proposed. Overall, I find conflict with the heritage requirements of the *Framework*.
16. The *Framework* is clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design. Regardless of the heritage status of this specific building or that of Hermeston Hall, I find no support for the details proposed in design terms. As the matters put forward by the appellant do not outweigh my concerns, I dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR