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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

**by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/W/16/3163320**

**Harts Farm House, 327 Everton Road, Everton SO41 0JX**

- 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 & Mrs Bottomley against the decision of New Forest District Council.
  - The application Ref 16/11063, dated 26 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2016.
  - The development proposed is a new contemporary detached dwelling with associated parking, access and landscaping.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve the setting of the adjacent listed building.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site consists mainly of a flat grassed area which is within the grounds of a former farm house. Harts Farm House is a Grade II listed building. The former farm house is set within very large grounds with mature landscaping and planting. To the north of the appeal site is a former threshing barn which still has the ventilation holes apparent within the southern elevation facing towards the appeal site. There is residential development surrounding the appeal site and Harts Farm House. The boundary of the site is a mix of mature hedgerow, close boarded fence and the rear wall of the former threshing barn.
4. I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The Framework defines significance as being archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The listing for Harts Farm House describes a number of architectural features and the proposal is accompanied by a Heritage Statement<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Forum Heritage Services, July 2016

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5. I acknowledge that the former farm house does not have any functional relationship with the rural landscape of the wider surrounding area. The size of farmland reduced significantly over time as residential development in the village occurred. Modern development surrounds the site and the grounds of the house. The conversion of the barns associated with the farm has also taken place. However, despite the lack of farming activity in the immediate area, the large grounds, Harts Farm House and the former farm buildings contribute significantly to the rural character of the village.
6. Harts Farm House has also been extended over the years. Nevertheless, it retains some of its original features and has architectural value. Despite the conversions to other uses, the farm buildings also retain sufficient character to be recognised for their original purpose. The former farm house also has some communal interest and is referred to in the Hordle Village Design Statement as being originally the first building experienced in the village when travelling from Hordle.
7. With regard to the consideration of the listed building, the setting includes the surroundings in which the building is experienced. From the mapping information provided by the appellant, it seems to me that the appeal site has been related to the farmland or the farm itself since the farm house was built. The boundary of Harts Farm House with Everton Road consists of a thick hedge and the house and its grounds are not highly visible from the street. Nevertheless, the size of the plot is discernable from the very long front boundary. The large grounds including the appeal site are reminiscent of its importance to the original rural character of the area and the space which surrounded the farm originally. The fact that the appeal site and the former farm house cannot be readily seen from the road does not lessen the significance of the listed building.
8. Whilst within the appeal site the surrounding residential development is very evident. That said, I consider that due to its size and position, in combination with the rest of the grounds of the house, the appeal site provides an important buffer from this development. There is a slight separation of the appeal site from the house by features such as planting and a large pergola. It is not landscaped in the same way that the rest of the house and as a result is more open than the rest of the grounds on the south side of the house.
9. However, there are glimpses of the site when stood close to the house and parts of the garden to the southwest. Furthermore the open nature of the site would have been an important feature when the threshing barn was in use, as this required an open area for ventilation. The threshing barn is a key feature of the boundary of the appeal site. Taking these factors into account, I consider there is still a strong relationship between the former farm house and its origins despite the appearance of the appeal site. The appeal site therefore makes an important contribution to the setting of the listed building.
10. The proposal is for a contemporary dwelling with parking and a garage within the site. The new dwelling would be located fairly close to the former threshing barn and would have a similar orientation with the main elevation facing south. Access to the dwelling would be along the southern boundary with a shared entrance with the former farm house. I note that the footprint of the dwelling would not be much larger than the former threshing barn.

11. Nevertheless, the dwelling would be large, and the ridge line of the roof would be higher than that of the former threshing barn. This would result in the dwelling being very prominent within the plot and it would compete for dominance with the barn. Due to the orientation of the proposed dwelling and the position of the garage building this would considerably reduce the sense of space associated with the threshing barn, and diminish the understanding of the purpose of the barn and the former agricultural uses on the site. Furthermore, built development would occupy a significant proportion of the plot and this would erode the landscape setting of the farm house. Landscaping within the scheme would not be sufficient to mitigate this effect.
12. I acknowledge that the design of the house is intended to achieve a distinction between it and Harts Farm House. The design of the dwelling would incorporate dormer windows. These would lead to the building having a much more domestic appearance than the barns and as a result it would not relate well to the former agricultural use of the site or its surroundings. Although the materials would be compatible with those found in the wider area, it would be considerably at odds with the materials found on the barns which are very close by. They would add to the prominence of the dwelling, further negatively altering the balance between the domestic and rural features found in the area.
13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building. It would be in conflict with Policies CS2 and CS3 of the Core Strategy for New Forest District outside the National Park 2009 and Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Document 2014. These amongst other things seek new development that protects and where possible enhances the environment within the area, and contributes positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Development should also conserve or enhance the significance, character and appearance of heritage assets. It would be contrary to the provisions of the Framework in respect of protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment.

#### *Other matters*

14. The Council does not object to the proposal in terms of its effect on the living conditions of neighbouring residents and future occupiers, trees on the site and parking and highway safety. Based on observations on my visit and the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree with these matters. However, these are not sufficient reasons to justify the appeal scheme.

#### **Conclusion and balance**

15. When the proposed development is considered in the context of harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, the harm may be considered as less than substantial. The Framework requires that any such harm be assessed against any public benefits including securing its optimum viable use. The appeal scheme would make a very small contribution to the supply of housing within the area and the dwelling would add to the mix of family homes. The site is in an accessible location. These factors could be considered to be public benefits in the widest sense. However, these would be very modest benefits.
16. The Framework identifies three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The Framework makes it clear that the three roles the planning system is required to perform in respect of sustainable

development should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependent. There would be some contribution to the economic and social roles arising from the provision of a new dwelling in the area. However, in terms of the environmental role the scheme would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building and the adverse impact on the heritage asset would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The proposal would not comply with the development plan as a whole, and it is thus not sustainable development for which there is a presumption in favour.

17. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised including the lack of objection from neighbours and support for the proposal from the Parish Council, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*L Gibbons*

INSPECTOR