

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/16/3161928
Heathermoor, Hale Purlieu, Hale SP6 2NN

- 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 Dr C Goodfellow against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 16/00487, dated 10 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is replacement stables and ancillary storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. As part of the appeal process, the appellant submitted revised drawings, although these were returned to them. The Authority did not accept the revised drawings and indicated that there would be a need for additional consultation with other parties. The drawings would include changes to the design of the building which were not minor in nature. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the original plans.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area having regard to its location within the New Forest National Park.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and is within the New Forest National Park. The area surrounding the appeal site includes woodland to the rear and fields. The area has a slightly enclosed quality with a strongly wooded backdrop. The site is screened from the road by a thick hedgerow, although glimpses of the roof of the existing stable can be seen. The house is very large and has a distinctive design, and is dominant within its wooded setting. There is a garage to the east of the house which is large, although the roof and eaves height are lower than the house.
 5. The existing stable building is slightly separated from the house and garage block although it is sufficiently close as to be seen as being part of the setting of the house. The building is simple in appearance and I accept it does not have the same quality of design and materials of the other buildings. However, it
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- has a much lower profile than these buildings and is much smaller in scale and bulk, and it therefore appears subservient to both the house and the larger main outbuilding and does not look significantly out of place in this context.
6. Policy DP12 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (CSDMP) 2010 permits domestic outbuildings in the National Park where they are located within the residential curtilage, are required for purposes incidental to the use of the main dwelling and are not providing additional habitable accommodation. The parties refer to the building being within the residential curtilage, and I see no reason to disagree with this. Policy DP22 of the CSDMP sets out that planning permission will be granted for stables which are sensitively sited to be unobtrusive in the landscape and simple in appearance and modest in scale and constructed of appropriate materials. However, this policy does not distinguish between stables within a residential curtilage or elsewhere, nor between new and replacement buildings, and I consider it is a relevant policy in relation to the appeal proposal.
 7. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing stable block to be replaced with a stable and storage building. It would be positioned in a similar position to the existing stables, and the materials to be used in the construction would be appropriate to the area and the design of the house. I accept that the building has been designed to include storage for machinery used within the grounds and that it would potentially reduce the need for additional buildings. The individual loose boxes would provide more space than the existing boxes for larger horses, and I note that the British Horse Society Guidelines on the size of loose boxes are minimum standards.
 8. The New Forest National Park Authority's Guidelines for Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2011 sets out that if new stables are required then they should be inconspicuous as possible to minimise their impact on the landscape. I accept that the building would not be highly visible from the public highway due to the hedgerow in place on the front boundary. However, the value of the landscape and character and appearance of the area is not necessarily dependent on the degree to which it can be seen from public vantage points.
 9. Indeed, the building would have a much larger footprint and there would be an increase in height such that it would be taller than the garage building and would have a similar scale. Furthermore, due to its design it would have significantly greater bulk and mass than the existing stables and as a result it would not be a modest building. The replacement building would therefore be very dominant and would not appear subservient to the other buildings. The scheme would lead to a significant increase in the amount of built development on the site and I consider this would not be sympathetic to the setting and dominance of the main house.
 10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be in conflict with Policies DP1, DP6 (bullet a), CP8 and DP22 (bullet b) of the CSDMP. These amongst other things seek new development which enhances the built heritage of the New Forest and local character and distinctiveness. It would be contrary to the SPD.

Other matters

11. The Authority refers to the effect of the proposed development on the bat population which is to be found within the existing stable building and that insufficient information was provided with the planning application. The scheme would result in the destruction of a bat roost and would affect others. The Authority refers to the need for an additional survey of the bat population and that this could be dealt with by a condition. The appeal is accompanied by a survey and includes recommendations relating to bat roosts and nesting birds. Were other matters acceptable I am satisfied that this could be dealt with by means of a suitable condition.

Conclusion and balance

12. There is some tension between Policy DP12 and Policy DP22 of the CSDMP in respect of this particular proposal. I consider the proposed scheme would meet with the criteria set out within Policy DP12. That said, the supporting text refers to large buildings which may be visually intrusive or detrimental to the character of the New Forest National Park, and there is no reference to stables within the policy or supporting text. Furthermore, Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would fail to comply with Policy DP22 and Policies DP1, DP6 and CP8 of the CSDMP and so to the development plan as a whole.
13. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR