

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by R Barrett BSc (Hons) MSc Dip UD Dip Hist Cons MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 29th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/16/3163047 (Appeal A)

Stonebridge, Henley Bridge, Henley on Thames, RG9 2LN

- 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 Mulberry Estates against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 162367, dated 16 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is 'erection of side extension (Variation of F/2014/2828)'.
-

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/Y/16/3163048 (Appeal B)

Stonebridge, Henley Bridge, Henley on Thames, RG9 2LN

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mulberry Estates against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 162368, dated 16 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2016.
 - The works proposed are 'erection of side extension (Variation of F/2014/2828)'.
-

Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Appeal A and Appeal B relate to the same site. Whilst I have considered each proposal on its own merits, given that they are similar proposals, and in the interests of brevity, I have dealt with them in one document.
3. It is confirmed in the evidence that the appeal site was formerly known as Bird Place Cottage and is listed under that name. I have taken this into account in my decision.
4. Planning permission and listed building consent have already been granted for a side extension in the same place, albeit slightly smaller and with a different roof design¹. The appeal seeks permission and consent for what has been built, which deviates from those authorised schemes.
5. It is agreed between the two main parties that the appeal development has been carried out on site. It is agreed also that the appeal plans accord with that development and works. On the basis of its size and detailed design, I have no reason to take an alternative view.

¹ F/2014/2828; LB/2014/2829

6. Recent appeal decisions in relation to the appeal development and works along with other development within the appeal site are before me². Although relating to enforcement appeals, as they are very recent decisions, where relevant to this appeal, I attach significant weight to them.
7. On my site visit, I was able to appreciate the appeal building and proposals from the outside. Internal access was not possible. However, I was able to see sufficient to determine this appeal.

Main Issues

- Whether the proposed works and development preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the grade II listed building and its setting; and
- Whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area (RHBCA).

Reasons

Listed Building

8. Stonebridge is a two storey, five bay timber framed late 17th century building. It is attached to a larger and taller building known as Bird Place, which is also grade II listed. It is suggested that it was once used as a service wing to that house and as it is attached to that building and has a secondary relationship to it, in terms of height, size and design, I have no reason to take an alternative view.
9. Despite much alteration and some extensions, the remaining elements of the appeal building's historic fabric, its simple linear footprint and low elongated form, along with its historic relationship with Bird Place, all add to its significance as a heritage asset. The appeal building's close relationship to Bird Place and the river contribute to its riverside setting, which in turn add to its significance as a heritage asset.
10. The appeal extension is mainly glazed with a zinc stepped flat roof structure. Overall, it relates appropriately to the main building in terms of its size. Its front glazed elevation is roughly in line with the forward most projection of the main building and in this regard I consider it is acceptable.
11. However, it includes a roof structure with a solid appearance. As that has a thick profile, its bulky proportions and solid appearance appears 'top heavy' in relation to the lightweight glazed elevations below. This renders the side extension uncomfortable and dominant in relation to the main listed building. Further, it has a large overhang that projects forward of the host building. As its profile is deep and bulky, it appears dominant and erodes the simple, linear footprint and elongated form of the host building. The bulk of the roof structure along with the large overhang gives the impression of an assertive and dominant addition, which is visible from the river side and interrupts views of the gable end of the listed building. It also adversely affects its relationship with Bird Place behind.

² APP/X0360/C/16/3156745; APP/X0360/C/16/3156742; APP/X0360/C/16/3156738 and APP/X0360/C/16/3156792 and APP/X0360/W/16/3156787

12. In coming to this finding, I have taken into account that views from the river and the opposite side of the river bank are at some distance and that some boundary features and planting, particularly when in leaf, interrupt some views. I also acknowledge other development nearby and high quality craftsmanship and detailing have been employed. It is suggested that a single storey front extension with a similar roof treatment brings balance to the listed building overall, but for the reasons given, I take a contrary view. I have had regard to the provision of better drainage for the side addition provided by the deep roof profile. However, I am not convinced that this could not be done in another way, which would not involve such a dominant roof structure. Whilst I appreciate the benefit to the occupiers of additional living space, all in all, for the reasons given, none of these matters lead me to a different conclusion on the acceptability of the appeal proposals.
13. The appellant suggests that the fascia could be two tone to break up its solid appearance. However, I am not convinced that this would overcome the impact of the bulk of the roof structure and its solid appearance in relation to the lightweight glazed structure and its relationship with the listed building.

RHBCA

14. The RHBCA includes riverside development on this side of the river and the green, planted and open spaces between. It includes an eclectic mix of development in terms of type, scale, age and architectural detailing and most have a riverside setting. The appeal site, its historic fabric, the form of the listed building and its appearance along with its riverside setting, significantly contribute to the character and appearance of the RHBCA. For the reasons stated therefore, it follows that the appeal proposals, in harming the significance of the appeal listed building would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the RHBCA.
15. Overall, I conclude that the appeal proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the grade II listed building and its setting and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the RHBCA. For these reasons, it would be contrary to Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010) Policy CP3 and Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) Policy TB24. Those policies, together, seek to conserve and the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings and that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area.
16. In accordance with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I accord great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. I consider that the harm to the significance of the listed building, its setting and the RHBCA would be less than substantial, a matter to which I attach considerable importance and weight. In this case, no public benefits, as identified in paragraph 134 of the Framework, are before me, which would outweigh that harm.

Other Matters

17. A Weeping Willow tree is situated close to the river frontage, protected by Tree Preservation Order 1106/2006³. As that tree would be some distance from the appeal development and works, no adverse impact would be a consequence.
18. I note that the appeal proposal is in the Green Belt and the countryside. The Council suggests that, together with other structures within the appeal site which are additions to the original dwelling, the appeal extension would be disproportionate to the original dwelling and amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Further, it suggests that it adversely affects the openness of the Green Belt and countryside.
19. However, I am aware of my Colleague's findings in this regard⁴ and no change in circumstances is before me since that decision. It is unclear to me how the issue of other additions within the appeal site, in the context of inappropriate development, was dealt with in that case. If the matters of Green Belt and countryside were critical to my decision, I would have gone back to the parties on this matter. However, as this appeal turns on the issue of the effect of the side extension on heritage assets, I have no reason to consider this further.
20. I note the appellant's concern regarding the way in which the Council has dealt with the appeal applications. However, that is a matter between the appellant and Council in the first instance.

Conclusions

21. For the above reasons, and taking all other matters raised into consideration, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

R Barrett

INSPECTOR

³ The Wokingham District Council (Parish of Remenham) Tree Preservation Order No. 1106/2006

⁴ APP/X0360/C/16/3156745