
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2017

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/17/3174430

Morley Manor, Brighton Road, Shermanbury RH13 8HQ

- 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 Winfield against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/2769, dated 1 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new paddock access track from the existing entrance splay up towards the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised in respect of the appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Grade II Listed Building.

Reasons

3. The appeal site falls within the countryside. Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) indicates that the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development, unless the development is essential to its countryside location. Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF reinforce this as they seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment and the landscape character of the district. Policy 34 of the HDPF seeks to reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment.
4. The proposed access track would extend a considerable distance northwards of the existing gated access. At its termination would be a parking area and turning circle. A pea shingle surface is proposed to replace the existing vegetated landscape to create the formalised access, parking and turning areas. The land to which the proposal relates forms part of the wider grounds belonging to Morley Manor. I observed that the land relating to the proposed access track and parking area visually connect with the wider grass land that surrounds the lake, although the turning circle would be surrounded by trees and ornamental planting that relate more closely to the garden of the dwelling.
5. The proposed development, by introducing an extensive pea shingle surfaced access drive and large areas of parking and turning, would substantially change

the appearance of the existing vegetated landscape. I accept the existing mature trees and vegetation that run alongside Brighton Road would limit the visibility of the proposal in views from the public highway. Nonetheless, the proposed development would create a development of more urbanised appearance within the countryside that would be visible in viewpoints from the wider landscape. This would be detrimental to the character and appearance of this natural landscape and it would visually intrude into the rural landscape character of this location.

6. Morley Manor is a Grade II Listed Building. The development is proposed to the south of the house and its landscaped gardens. I observed that the garden immediately to the rear of the dwelling opens onto the wider grass landscape that surrounds the lake with paddocks beyond. The appellant highlights that a Desk-Based Assessment that supported the planning application for the lake identified that this wider landscape setting contributes to the significance of the listed building. I agree and consider that the wider setting forms part of the estate and that the green, open, rural nature of this landscape contributes to the context of the listed building and its setting.
7. I therefore consider that the wider natural landscape is critical to the setting of the listed building. Although the proposal would be positioned away from the listed building itself and would be located at the edge of the field to avoid it interfering with views of the listed building, the proposal would have a substantially urbanising impact. This would be harmful to this natural landscape and correspondingly, would harm the setting of this listed building. The appellant draws my attention to details of the planting and landscaping management agreed as part of the lake proposal which he advocates enhances the setting of the listed building but it has not been explained how this relates to the proposed development.
8. The appellant contends that the proposed access track is essential for the safe loading and off-loading of horses and farm machinery and supports the management and maintenance of the property, agricultural land and lake, as well as the upkeep and welfare of the horses throughout the year. I acknowledge that the turning area is proposed in a location where it would be wide enough to turn a horsebox and facilitate machinery drop-off. Turning would also allow vehicles leaving the access to emerge onto the busy Brighton Road in forward motion. I accept that these are benefits of the proposed scheme.
9. I observed that the existing driveway at Morley Manor has a constrained layout due to the arrangement of walls and buildings within and around the complex. Nonetheless, I have not been provided any substantive evidence that would indicate that the layout of the existing complex is so restrictive as to prevent access to the wider land or that it would significantly hamper the management and maintenance of the land and horses. I acknowledge that the proposed access track would support the management and maintenance of the land and horses, but I cannot conclude, from the evidence before me, that it would be essential or that the existing circumstances at Morley Manor are so restrictive as to prohibit this.
10. Given the extent and scale of the proposal and its relationship to the Grade II Listed Building, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the heritage asset. In accordance with paragraph

134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I must weigh the harm against the public benefit of the proposal. I accept that the proposal would make use of an existing access and could divert some existing activity away from existing Morley Manor complex benefiting privacy. I also acknowledge the scheme would assist with the management and maintenance of the land and horses. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have identified above. Therefore, the public benefits of the proposal would also be limited and insufficient to outweigh the harm identified.

11. For these reasons I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies 25, 26, 32, 33 and 34 of the HDPF that seek both to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside and to reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment, amongst other matters.

Other Matters

12. The appellant refers me to a planning permission for a new access with gravel surface and brick pillars relating to a listed building at Brook Place, Horsham Road, Cowfold (Council ref: DC/13/2438). I have insufficient information before me to be able to determine the planning circumstances of that development and the similarities, if any, to the proposed development. The appeal before me relates to a different site and therefore can and should be considered in its own right.

Conclusions

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

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR