
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 29 November 2017

by D Boffin BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI Dip Bldg Cons (RICS) IHBC

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

Decision date: 20th December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/17/3178949

Pond House, The Street, South Stoke, Reading RG8 0JS

- 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 S Barratt against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P17/S0329/HH, dated 26 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is new entrance porch, link between house and adjacent outbuilding, and garden room.
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Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/Y/17/3178954

Pond House, The Street, South Stoke, Reading RG8 0JS

- 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 Mr & Mrs S Barratt against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P17/S0330/LB, dated 26 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2017.
 - The works proposed are new entrance porch, link between house and adjacent outbuilding, and garden room.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are both dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Notwithstanding the descriptions of development/works set out above, which are taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details before me that the garden room was withdrawn from the applications during their determination. The Council dealt with them on this basis and so shall I.
3. Reference is made in the documents before me to the PPS 5 Practice Guide, but this has been withdrawn and national policy is now provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Main Issue – both appeals

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development and works would preserve the listed building known as Ponds House (listed as Manns Cottage), any features of special architectural and historic interest it possesses, its

setting and whether any harm would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Reasons

5. The appeal building is a detached, timber frame dwelling with a hipped tile roof. The dwelling is surrounded by mainly residential development within the settlement of South Stoke. The settlement is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There is a modern timber framed outbuilding to the side of the dwelling that extends towards the frontage with The Street.
6. The list description states that the appeal building is of a 2-unit lobby entry plan and probably dates from the late 17th Century. The existing dwelling has clearly undergone a series of changes which have altered its internal layout and external appearance. Some of these changes have partially obscured its original form but when viewed from the Street that original form is plainly discernible and is the focus of attention.
7. From the details available to me, including the listing description, I consider that the significance and special interest of the listed building is largely derived from its age, form, fabric and architectural features. The significance of Ponds House is mainly experienced from within its curtilage. However, due to its proximity to The Street its significance is also experienced from that road. Consequently, the generous mature landscaped garden setting of the appeal dwelling also makes a valuable contribution to its significance.
8. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Paragraph 132 of the Framework advises that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset.
9. The proposal would involve a number of internal and external alterations/additions including an entrance hall, pergola, gallery above the living room, rooflights/glazed panels above the living room/entrance hall and a new opening from bedroom 2 to the store. The entrance hall extension would provide a physical link between the dwelling and the outbuilding. It would have a partly flat and partly pitched roof and it would be timber framed on a low wall with mainly glazing between the framing. The ridge of its roof would be similar in height to that of the existing outbuilding and its footprint would not be significant taking into account the size of the existing dwelling.
10. However, even though the proposal would be subservient to the main house in relation to its height and overall footprint it would significantly increase the size of the dwelling visually when viewed from The Street or the rear garden. The design of the link extension would be of a sympathetic style to the vernacular architecture of the building. However, the tiled pitch roof of the extension would exaggerate its bulk and massing and the current sense of visual separation between the outbuilding and the house would be lost.
11. As a result, the outbuilding would appear more as an extension to the dwelling than a separate building and the clear distinction between the historic fabric of the dwelling and the modern outbuilding would be lost. Moreover when viewed

from The Street, the bulk and massing of the extension in combination with the outbuilding would divert attention away from the principal part of the listed building. Furthermore, this would be exacerbated by the main entrance to the house being within the extension.

12. I acknowledge that the existing gate and fence/trellis between the outbuilding and dwelling means that the gap between the two isn't entirely open visually. However, there are views above the gate/ fence and the lack of built form to its rear is clearly apparent from The Street. Even though houses can be linked to outbuildings historically there is no indication that in this case that the previous outbuilding was linked to the house by another building.
13. Whilst the proposal would remove the flat roofed dormer window which is not entirely sympathetic to the architecture of the main building it would replace it with a much larger partly flat and partly tiled pitched roof structure. This structure would have rooflights in the flat and sloping sections of the roof. These rooflights would highlight the appreciable expanse of flat roof and would draw attention to the changes brought about through the proposal. Moreover, at present there is a clear separation visually at first floor level, on the north-west elevation, between the modern extensions and the principal part of the listed building. The proposal would obscure this separation and would inhibit the appreciation of the listed building when viewed from the garden.
14. The amount of historic fabric that would need to be removed in connection with the external extensions would appear to be limited. However, a new door opening is proposed between bedroom 2 and the store. Whilst modern plasterboard is evident in the store timber framing members are evident in the wall construction of bedroom 2. I have no evidence before me to indicate the height of that door opening or the details of the wall construction. There is little evidence before me to provide clear and convincing justification for this opening. The Council have not specifically raised concern in relation to this part of the works. Moreover, my decision does not turn on this matter.
15. The appellants have brought to my attention extensions and additions to and within the curtilage of Ditton Cottage which they have stated is grade II listed. I noted on site that Ditton Cottage appears to have been linked to an adjacent building with a glazed structure. However, I do not have the full circumstances before me that led to this proposal being accepted and therefore cannot be certain that it is directly comparable to this case. Moreover, in each case the significance of the heritage asset and the proposal will be site specific. As a result I attribute little weight to it. In any case, I am required to determine this case on its individual merits.
16. Whilst the proposal would leave space around the building for parking and amenity for the reasons given above I consider that it would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its setting contrary to the expectations of the Act. I must attach considerable importance and weight to these considerations when reaching my decision.
17. In this case I conclude that the harm caused to the designated heritage asset, would be, in the context of the significance of the asset as a whole and in the language of the Framework, less than substantial. In those circumstances, paragraph 134 of the Framework says that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

18. The additional accommodation provided by the extension would clearly be beneficial to the appellants, but I regard this as a private rather than public benefit given the absence of evidence that the current accommodation is deficient to an extent likely to threaten the viability of the house as a dwelling. Consequently, there are no public benefits that would outweigh the considerable importance and weight to be given to the harm to the heritage asset. As such, the proposal would not comply with paragraph 134 of the Framework.
19. It would also conflict with Policy CSEN3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and Policies H13, CON2 and CON3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. These policies together, amongst other things, seek development that will conserve and enhance the historic significance of heritage assets, is of a scale and design in keeping with the character of the dwelling, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design and scale and does not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities of the listed building which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.

Other matters

20. The site is within the AONB and the Council considers that given the scale of development and its relationship to the surrounding built development in the settlement that the scheme is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the character of the landscape. I have no reason to disagree with this finding as even though the proposal would infill the gap between the house and the outbuilding it would also be seen in any longer distance views against the backdrop of the surrounding dwellings and the predominantly residential character of The Street. Consequently, I consider that the proposal would preserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.

Conclusion

21. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

D. Boffin

INSPECTOR