



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2019

by H Porter BA(Hons) MScDip IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/19/3236055

5, Harvest Barn, Farlands, Pucklechurch BS16 9PD

- 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 M Rawlins against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P19/5011/F, dated 23 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a new timber detached double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the Grade II and II* listed buildings or their settings; and the effect on the character and appearance of the Pucklechurch Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Grade II listed building known as Harvest Barn is part of an historic farmstead complex that was ancillary to Moat House, a Grade II* listed building. Both are situated within the Pucklechurch Conservation Area (CA).
4. The Grade II listed barn is early-18th century and is of simple, linear form, constructed of rubble limestone with a clay tile roof. The barn's use and historic context have clearly changed significantly, not least having been subject to residential conversion in c. 2001, and now approached via a cluster of modern two-storey houses.
5. The appeal site, No. 5 Harvest Barn is delimited by high boundary walls, which, along with the open forecourt, provide an important degree of separation from the small suburban development beyond them and reflect something of a traditional yard-like setting. Despite changes over time, the listed barn has retained its authentic, unassuming agricultural character and continues to be experienced as an historic remnant, which underpins its authenticity, significance and special interest.
6. According to the statutory list description, Moat House dates from the 17th century, although it is probably of earlier origin. The significance and special interest of Moat House lie, in part, in the structure itself, its surviving fabric,

form and historic associations. There is also an inextricable link between its former functional relationship with the agricultural structures that were ancillary to it. The setting of the Moat House therefore unquestionably includes the buildings that were historically a part of its former farmstead complex. The appeal site therefore forms a part of the setting of the Moat House and contributes to its overall significance.

7. The appeal site lies at the western edge of the CA, the designation of which focuses on the historic core of the village. The special interest of the Conservation Area is underpinned by the survival and variety of historic buildings that reflect the settlement's evolution and its historic connection with the surrounding rural landscape. The Pucklechurch Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document, 2010 (SPD) emphasises the 'distinctly rural character' of the area around the Moat House, where it is also sought to protect the rural margins and its agricultural setting. The traditional form of Harvest Barn reflects the local vernacular of farm buildings and the agricultural origins of the village. As such, it contributes to the character and appearance as well as the heritage significance of the CA as a whole.
8. The proposal is to construct a 1.5-storey double garage within the forecourt to the front (west) of No. 5. Taken in isolation, the proposal would be well designed and of quality materials. That said, positioned within the gap that separates the listed barn and the housing development beyond its high boundary walls, the proposed garage would appear prominently in the mid-ground on approach to the listed barn. The proposal would dominate what is a relatively contained forecourt and erode the important degree of separation it provides. Introducing such a large structure of this type within the setting of the listed barn would inevitably increase the domestic appearance of its surroundings.
9. Whether or not the extant gap between the barn and the neighbouring garage is historic or has been populated by structures in the past, the proposal would substantially encroach into the undeveloped space around the listed building. Moreover, replicating the building-line and roof-pitch of the neighbouring modern garage would cause the appeal garage to be read as part of the suburban development that it is currently distinguished from. Indeed, weakening the degree of separation between the listed barn and the modern housing would undermine the legibility of the barn's agricultural origins.
10. Fundamentally, the proposal would undermine the legibility of the listed building's former agricultural use, to the detriment of its significance and special interest. Although the proposed garage would not be overtly obvious from Moat House, it would cause a further dilution of its former farmstead complex. Through development within its setting, therefore, to some small degree, the proposal would also detract from its significance and special interest.
11. The Grade II and II* listed buildings in this case are a part of the built backcloth of Pucklechurch's, which reflect the settlement's evolution and the role farming played in its development. The harm that the proposed development would cause to the listed structures would inevitably cause some slight residual harm to the special interest of the CA as a whole, the character and appearance of which would not be preserved.

12. The proposed development would therefore fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II and II* listed buildings known as Harvest Barn and Moat House. The proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Consequently, the appeal scheme runs contrary to the expectations of Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
13. The harm to the significance of the listed buildings and CA as designated heritage assets would be less than substantial. However, the reasons for the development are to satisfy the personal needs and wishes of the appellant, which does not provide any wider public benefit. Accepting a small economic benefit associated with the construction phase, even the cumulative benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm I have identified. Conflict therefore arises with the historic environment policies within the National Planning Policy Framework, Revised February 2019. So too would there be conflict with Policies CS1 and CS9 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy 2006 - 2027, 2013 and Policy PSP17 of the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places Plan, 2017. Amongst other things, these policies require development safeguards existing features of heritage value; ensures heritage assets are conserved, respected and enhanced; and better reveals the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

Conclusion

14. In considering whether to grant planning permission, the relevant Act requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building; and pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area. Even though the overall harm would be less than substantial in this case, the overarching statutory duties must be given considerable importance and weight. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSEPECTOR