



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2020

by David Carter BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24TH April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1825/D/19/3242269

Cottage Farm, Field Farm Lane, Redditch B98 0AP

- 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 P Bennett against the decision of Redditch Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00763/FUL, dated 10 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is a detached single storey 3 bay garage. Re-submission of 18/01360, with garage reduced in size from 4 to 3 bays and sited further from the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Planning Officer's report indicates that a Heritage Statement was not submitted by the appellant prior to determination of the planning application. However, a Heritage Statement has been submitted as part of this appeal and I have taken account of this in coming to my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the setting of Cottage Farm, a Grade II listed building.

Reasons

4. The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Cottage Farm is a Grade II listed building and a surviving C17 timber-framed former farm building attached to Field Farm in a large plot of around 0.4 hectares. The property is significant architecturally and historically as a surviving modest rural building before the area was developed as part of Redditch new town. Only a few other historic properties lie nearby. It is now mostly surrounded by residential development comprising mainly modern detached dwellings. The appeal proposal does not comprise any works to the listed building itself.
5. The Framework also defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which it is experienced. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special regard should be paid to the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings, where those settings

would be affected by proposed development. The appeal proposal involves the construction of a free-standing garage building within the extensive garden to Cottage Farm. The garden, along with the semi-rural nature of Ipsley Lane and Field Farm Lane, provide the only remaining remnants of the historic Worcestershire countryside setting of the former farm building. Views to and from Cottage Farm, including those through that part of the garden adjacent to Ipsley Lane, are particularly important. This openness is significant and thereby integral to the heritage value of the building itself.

6. The proposed garage block, in conjunction with 2 existing prefabricated garages nearby, would substantially reduce views from/to Cottage Farm through and within that part of the garden lying beyond. This is because the gap between the existing prefabricated garages and the boundary with Field Farm Lane would be reduced by around one half. The effect would be to significantly devalue the contribution of the garden area to the openness of the remaining historic rural setting of the heritage asset.
7. I understand the appellant intends to remove the 2 prefabricated garages and to restore their footprint to the garden thus helping to restore views of the cottage from this important part of its setting. However, he also states (in paragraph 3.9 of the Heritage Statement) that these garages would be removed following the restoration of Cottage Farm itself. This means that the demolition of the 2 garages is not integral to the appeal proposal and there would, therefore, be no certainty in respect of the timescale in which the demolition and restoration of the land would take place, if at all.
8. Accordingly, I find on this main issue that the proposed detached single storey garage would cause less than substantial harm to Cottage Farm a designated heritage asset. This would arise from the cumulative effect of the proposed new garage building when coupled with the 2 prefabricated garages which would shield a significant proportion of the setting of the listed building. With regard to the degree of harm the Framework indicates (paragraph 196) that in circumstances where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
9. I acknowledge the benefits arising from the proposal would include the provision of garaging appropriate to modern living, improving security thereby reducing theft and vandalism as well as introducing the scope for vehicles to turn on-site which would improve highways safety. However, while these matters would help to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset, they would be mainly private benefits which would not outweigh the harm to the heritage asset that I have highlighted.
10. Consequently, giving considerable weight to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, in line with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I find the appeal proposal conflicts with Policies 36 and 37 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (2017) (LP) and the provisions of the Framework. Policies 36 and 37 aim to protect the historic environment including the setting of listed buildings. This approach mirrors that in the Framework (Section 16).

11. The reason for refusal also refers to Policy 40 of the LP which encourages high quality design and safer communities. However, in the light of my observations above I find that the appeal proposal does not breach this policy.

Other Matters

12. In support of the proposal, the appellant has referred to deteriorating mobility affecting one of the residents of Cottage Farm, and how the proximity of the proposed garage and improved driveway would assist easier accessibility. While I sympathise with the appellant's desire to improve access for a mobility impaired resident, I do not find that this would be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified above.
13. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a comparable garage block at nearby Field Farm. I viewed this on my site visit but the concerns I have on the appeal proposal are different and relate to its cumulative impact with other existing buildings on the site.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons stated above, the appeal is dismissed.

David Carter

INSPECTOR