
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2020

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/20/3245358

The River House, Wick Lane, Bournemouth BH6 4LB

- 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 Ian Griffiths against the decision of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2019-12018-AE, dated 26 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is replacement of existing garage buildings with new garage and boat store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement of existing garage buildings with new garage and boat store at The River House, Wick Lane, Bournemouth BH6 4LB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 7-2019-12018-AE, dated 26 September 2019, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - a) Whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wick Village Conservation Area; and,
 - b) Whether the development would preserve the settings of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

Conservation Area

3. The appeal site lies in the Wick Village Conservation Area (the CA), which encompasses the historic village centre and the open land between Wick Lane and the River Stour. I have not been provided with a Character Appraisal describing the special character of the area. From my site visit, however, I found that its significance lies in the quality and layout of the buildings and spaces around the historic village centre, combined with its open, riverside setting.
4. The appeal site lies on the eastern edge of the CA alongside the river, from which it has its own private inlet. The site is long and narrow, and a driveway leads from the entrance gate, alongside the inlet, to the highly distinctive house at the eastern end. The house has a steeply pitched roof that slopes

almost to ground level and the building is raised on staddles. It has little in common with the historic buildings in the village centre and is set well away from any other buildings in the CA.

5. Just inside the entrance gate there is an unattractive flat-roofed garage/store building, which would be replaced by the proposed development. This building does not make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. However, the site is well screened by boundary vegetation on both of its long boundaries, so it is not a prominent feature. Although the house is readily visible from the opposite side of the river, the boundary vegetation contributes to the otherwise undeveloped, landscaped appearance of the riverside, so the overall site makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
6. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
7. The proposed building would be in roughly the same position as the existing garage/store. Its footprint would be larger, but not significantly so, and it would remain a modest-sized structure for its purpose. I saw a range of items stored in the open alongside the building, including a trailer and dinghy, which suggests that the current building is not large enough for its purpose. The drawings show that the building would accommodate a boat and a car, with a small workshop and store alongside. A pitched roof would be provided, but the eaves would be at single-storey level, with a roofslope that would be characteristic of other buildings in the CA. The loft storage would be accessed via an external stairway and the building would be open-fronted. It would therefore have a utilitarian, rather than residential appearance.
8. The Council's Residential Extensions: A Design Guide For Householders (2008) (the Design Guide) advises that garages should be subservient to the existing property. The River House is a substantial building in an extensive garden. It has a much larger footprint than the proposed building and has a very much higher roof. Consequently, the perception of it as the primary building on the site would not be challenged by the functional design and comparatively modest size of the proposal. The building would be similar in scale and form to the range of ancillary garage buildings at Wick Farm, to the south. Whilst it would not have a close visual association with these buildings, it would nevertheless relate well to the established character that they give to this part of the CA.
9. The provision of a pitched roof would result in the building being considerably higher than the current structure. Nevertheless, it would still be effectively screened from the north, in views from the opposite bank, by planting on the land between the slipway and the river. Similarly, the building would be largely hidden in views from the open land to the south and east by boundary planting. It would therefore only be readily visible from the west. From this direction, the existing flat-roofed building is barely noticeable above the existing boundary wall and gate; therefore, the enlarged ground floor footprint would not be readily evident. The gable end and roof would be seen rising above the wall and gate, but they would be contained within the existing enclosed residential curtilage, would be partly screened by boundary planting, and would be viewed against the backdrop of high vegetation.

10. Consequently, the building would not harmfully intrude into the open riverside character of the CA. Furthermore, as the site is outside the core of the original village, it would not harm the characteristic layout of the buildings and spaces around the historic centre. I therefore conclude that the significance of the CA would not be harmed by the development. In this regard, I find that the proposal accords with Policies 4.4 and 4.14 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (2002) (the Local Plan), and Policies CS39 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012) (the Core Strategy). These policies seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, and to ensure all development is well designed. The proposal would also meet the Framework's aim to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Furthermore, I find no conflict with the Design Guide's advice on garages.

Settings of listed buildings

11. The buildings at Wick Farm are Grade II listed, and comprise a former agricultural courtyard dating from the early 19th century. They are of red brick construction with half-hipped slate roofs and are now in residential use. The buildings are appreciated in an open, rural setting, when viewed from the south and east. From the north they are experienced in a riverside setting, from the opposite bank. These open aspects are significant to the appreciation of the heritage asset, as they allow the buildings to be seen as a coherent group, with a visual connection to the open agricultural land, with which there would have been a historic functional connection. The legislation¹ requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving these buildings or their settings, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
12. The appeal site lies quite close to the northern corner of the group of buildings, and the boundary vegetation contributes positively to the open riverside setting in which the buildings are experienced from the north. However, the enclosed nature, and residential character of the site, means that its significance to the setting of the listed buildings is diminished. There are limited viewpoints from which either of the existing buildings on the site are viewed in juxtaposition with the listed buildings, and I have no evidence to demonstrate any historic or functional relationship between the site and Wick Farm. I therefore find that, apart from the boundary vegetation, the appeal site does not make an important contribution to the significance of the setting of the listed buildings.
13. The building would not result in any significant loss of vegetation, so it would be effectively screened by planting to the north. Consequently, the contribution that the site makes to the open landscape setting of the listed buildings would not change when viewed from across the river. The building would not be readily visible from the open land to the south and east, so there would be no harm to the rural setting of the listed buildings when viewed from these directions.
14. The building would be visible from the west, and it would be larger than the one it replaces. However, it would be contained within the existing residential curtilage of the appeal site, and it would only be partially visible above the access gate. It would be physically separated from Wick Farm by the boundary treatments of both properties and the public footpath that runs between the two. It would be of timber construction, which would differentiate it from the

¹ Section 66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

more robust brick buildings of the listed courtyard. Consequently, it would not challenge the visual presence and coherence of the listed building group when viewed from the west.

15. For these reasons, I find that the development would preserve the setting of the listed buildings at Wick Farm. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policies CS39 and CS41 of the Core Strategy, which seek to protect designated heritage assets, and to ensure all development is well designed. The proposal would also meet the Framework's aim to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Conditions

16. In accordance with the legislation, I have imposed a condition limiting the period within which the development must commence. I have also included a condition specifying the relevant plans, as this provides certainty. The council has submitted a schedule of suggested conditions to cover other matters. I have considered all the suggested conditions against the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. Where I have agreed that the conditions are necessary, I have altered some of them, in the interests of clarity and precision, to better reflect the guidance.
17. A condition requiring approval of details of external materials is necessary to ensure that the building assimilates well into its surroundings. In view of the important contribution that the existing boundary trees and vegetation make to the character of the CA and the setting of the listed buildings, I have imposed a condition requiring a scheme for their protection during construction works. Finally, I have attached a condition to ensure that the building is only used for purposes ancillary to the main dwelling on the site.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: ASP.19.046.001 Rev B - Block and Location Plan; ASP.19.046.002 Rev A - Proposed Site Plan; ASP.19.046.003 – Existing Plans and Elevations; ASP.19.046.100 Rev E - Proposed Plans; ASP.19.046.200 Rev E - Proposed Elevations.
- 3) No site clearance, preparatory work or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of the roots and crown spread of trees, groups of trees and other vegetation to be retained on and adjoining the site (the tree protection plan) and the appropriate working methods (the

arboricultural method statement) in accordance with paragraphs 5.5 and 6.1 of British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or in an equivalent British Standard if replaced) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme for the protection of the retained trees and vegetation shall be carried out as approved.

- 4) Development shall not proceed above ground level until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 5) The building hereby permitted shall not be used at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as The River House, Wick Lane, Bournemouth BH6 4LB.