
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2020

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/20/3245692

Manor Farm House, Wall Lane, Silchester, Reading RG7 2HL

- 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 and Mrs A and N Burghes against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01663/HSE, dated 20 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of replacement single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Burges against Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The Council has confirmed that in February 2020, since the Council's decision and the submission of the current appeal, Manor Farm House was added to the Council's List of Buildings of Local Historic and Architectural Interest. I have determined the appeal on this basis. As the Council were in the process of undertaking a review of the building for inclusion on its Local List at the time of the determination of the planning application, and the appellant's Statement of Case includes an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, I do not consider that the appellant has been prejudiced by the recent locally listed status of the appeal property.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Impact of the development on the character and appearance of the host property, which is a locally listed building (LLB); and
 - Impact of the development on the significance of the scheduled monument of Silchester Roman Town.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the host property

5. Manor Farm House is a large detached nineteenth century former farmhouse dwelling set within a spacious, landscaped garden. It has a traditional design with brick walls under a slate pitched roof.
6. The compact square footprint of the main part of the building, combined with its two and a half storey height, steeply pitched roof gables on all sides and on the front porch, tall, narrow, windows, high chimneys and roof finials, all combine to give the building a strong vertical design emphasis.
7. The building has been locally listed by the Council due to its architectural interest which is noted in the listing description as '*minimally Gothic*' with '*attractive architectural detailing*'. Decorative architectural features include Flemish bond brickwork, relieving arches over windows, brick string coursing, brick chamfering, large brick potted chimney stacks, and roof parapets with stone coping and finials.
8. The architectural detailing contributes to a strong sense of symmetry on the front elevation and there is a high degree of regularity in window design and positioning on the front, rear and east side elevations with vertical and horizontal alignment of windows.
9. I find that the aforementioned building features are indicative of the house's historic development and contribute towards its significance. Moreover, I agree with the local listing description which identifies that the building has considerable architectural interest as a very high quality C19 dwelling.
10. As the appeal property is a LLB, in accordance with paragraph 197 of the *National Planning Policy Framework 2019*, (the Framework), I have had regard to the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.
11. The appeal scheme comprises the replacement of two single storey extensions, a courtyard and an enclosing brick wall on the west side of the building, with a more contemporary-designed single storey addition. This would incorporate a front-facing element with brick walls under a slate membrane monopitch roof, with a deeper flat-roofed component behind with glass-panelled walls containing a brick chimney.
12. I do not disagree with the appellant's assertion that the western side of the building is of lesser architectural importance than the front, rear and east side elevations. I acknowledge that the existing single storey projections do not display the aforementioned design detailing and architectural interest of the main dwelling. However, the additions clearly have the appearance of having been designed as ancillary accommodation, providing service/storage areas in addition to an old kitchen, and performing an integral, but subordinate role within the overall architecture of the building.
13. The existing extensions complement the main building due to their materials and roof form. As a result of their narrow footprints, unadorned brick design, low height, and fewer and smaller windows, they do not compete visually with the architectural interest of the main building, and form a subservient

courtyard feature, so that the two-storey element of the building is the focal point of visual interest.

14. I find that the proposal would notably alter the appearance of the building. Whilst showing some conformity with the main dwelling in terms of materials, the front part of the proposal would appear at odds with the front elevation of the main building. It would assume visual prominence due to its deep and wide monopitch form, whose ridge height would exceed that of the dental course brickwork and bottom of the first floor windows of the main house, and whose eaves height would be higher than that of the midpoint of the ground floor windows. As such, it would jar with the strong horizontal alignment of architectural features characteristic of the front elevation of the main building. This misalignment would be exacerbated by the proposed glazed element at the western end, whose height would differ from those of the eaves and ridge of the monopitched part of the proposal.
15. The proposed contemporary windows would relate poorly to those of the front elevation of the host building due to their lack of glazing, header and cill detailing, their less pronounced vertical design and their position immediately adjacent to the roof eaves. A further form of incongruous fenestration would be introduced by the floor-to-ceiling glazing at the western end of the front elevation. Accordingly, the proposal would appear visually at odds with the front elevation of the main part of the house.
16. The proportions of the glazed panels and feature chimney on the rear elevation of the proposal would be wider and squarer than those of the windows and chimneys of the main building, and the proposed glazing would lack the fine detailing of the existing rear elevation windows. These factors, combined with the greater width of this element of the development than that of the rear wall of the main building, and a proposed predominance of glazing in comparison to brick, would combine to give the proposal a perceived disproportionately large scale in relation to that of the rear elevation of the main building. As such, the development would assume a visual prominence, and would not appear subservient to, or in harmony with, the rear elevation of the main house, thereby detracting from the architectural features which make a positive contribution to the significance of the building.
17. I acknowledge the positive impact on the host property that would arise from the proposed alterations to the rear elevation temporary kitchen dining window. The appellant has also drawn my attention to the comparative width of the proposed glazing panels in relation to this window. However, the alterations to this window do not overcome the aforementioned harm I have identified in respect of the rear elevation of the proposal.
18. Accordingly, I find that, due to a combination of its height, width, massing, and design detailing, the proposal would not read as a subservient part of the host property. It would appear as an incongruous addition, which would fail to harmonise with the existing building, and would undermine the architectural legibility of the host property. As such, the proposed extension would erode the architectural character of the appeal property and fail to preserve the special interest and significance of the LLB.
19. In accordance with paragraph 197 of the Framework I must have regard to the scale of any harm or loss, and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The building as a whole is considered noteworthy. I find that moderate

harm to the LLB overall would be caused by the introduction of an unsympathetic, non-subservient single storey extension, which would detract from the significance of the decorative design features of the main building to an unacceptable degree.

20. I acknowledge the practical benefits for the appellant that would arise from the proposal in terms of the levelling of part of the ground floor of building. I also note that the proposal would be screened in some wider views towards the appeal property from the public realm and that the proposal would not be disproportionate in size in relation to the building's private garden setting. However, these factors do not outweigh the aforementioned harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the host property.
21. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locally listed host property. As such, the appeal scheme would be contrary to Policies EM10 and EM11 of the *Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029* (2016) (the Local Plan), which, amongst other things, require development proposals to be of a high quality, conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and ensure that extensions respect the historic form, setting, fabric and any other aspects that contribute to the significance of the host building. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment as set out in Chapter 16.

Significance of the Scheduled Monument

22. The site lies within the scheduled monument (SAM) of Silchester Roman Town. The Historic England list entry confirms that the SAM includes the Late Iron Age oppidum, nucleated settlement, and Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum and associated earthworks, which together extend over an area of circa 129ha. The listing explains that the town was important as a civitas capital, functioning as an economic, cultural and administrative regional centre, and that it is one of a small number of Roman towns where subsequent building has not obscured the origins and development of the site.
23. The list description advises that the third century AD wall is the most complete and well-preserved of a series of defensive circuits which enclosed the town, reflecting a contraction of the defensible area, and that it provides an impressive visual feature. Earthwork defences and the amphitheatre are also noted as upstanding.
24. The appeal property is located close to the Roman town wall on the outer edge of the large defensive Roman ditch. The amphitheatre lies to the north of the appeal site.
25. The listing confirms that, whilst all modern houses and associated structures and areas of hardstanding are excluded from the SAM, the ground beneath them is included, and that, although not visible, roads, building foundations and other features are known, from partial excavation, to be preserved below ground.
26. The proposal therefore has the potential to impact on the setting of above ground elements of the SAM and underground archaeology within it, both of which are identified in the listing as important to the significance of the SAM.

27. Paragraph 006 of the Planning Practice Guidance¹ (PPG) confirms that in legislation and designation criteria, the term 'national importance' of a scheduled monument is used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance. I therefore concur with the Council's second reason for refusal that the planning application included inadequate consideration of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the SAM, and the potential impact of the proposal upon its significance, having regard to paragraph 189 of the Framework which sets out the information required to be submitted at planning application stage, and paragraph 194 which confirms that scheduled monuments are designated heritage assets of the highest significance.
28. In respect of the matter of setting, the appellant's heritage statement in response to the second reason for refusal, contains no detailed assessment of how the existing building contributes to, and how the proposed development would impact upon, the setting of the SAM, including from key views within and around the SAM, particularly noting the proximity of the proposal to the Roman stone wall. Notwithstanding the limited extent of proposed new building westwards beyond the west-facing walls of the existing extensions, and given my findings above on the first main issue, I am not persuaded by the appellant's argument that the reflective nature of the rear elevation glazing would result in less of a visual impact upon the setting of the SAM than the existing brick walls.
29. I acknowledge the wider package of measures the appellant is undertaking within the appeal site with the aim of improving the setting of the SAM, including the removal of waste, poor quality outbuildings and the existing timber garage. However, such proposals do not form part of the appeal scheme before me for determination, and as such, I do not afford any significant weight to them in my decision-making.
30. Having regard to the archaeological impact of the development, the appellant has not provided evidence of having carried out an investigation into, or evaluation of, any existing below ground archaeology on the appeal site and no documentation has been provided to show that the appropriate historic environment record has been examined, as required by paragraph 189 of the Framework.
31. Furthermore, in the absence of information in respect of the existing building foundations, the appellant has not proved that the proposed cantilevered ground beams is a workable form of construction in practice. Even though the construction of the existing building may have impacted on archaeology in the past, I do not agree with the appellant's suggestion that this matter can be dealt with by condition, given the contribution of subterranean archaeology to the significance of the SAM, as identified in the Historic England list entry, and the lack of detailed information about any potential below ground archaeology on the appeal site.
32. I also note that, whilst Historic England (HE) has confirmed that the proposal would require Scheduled Monument Consent, HE has also advised that the appellant's assertion that any excavation is controlled and approved and monitored in any event by HE is not the case.

¹ Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723

33. For the above reasons, I am unable to conclude that the proposed development would not harm the significance of the scheduled monument of Silchester Roman Town. As such, the appeal proposal would not accord with Local Plan Policy EM11, which, amongst other things, requires development proposals to conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, how this has informed the proposed development, and how the proposal would impact on the asset's significance. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment as set out in Chapter 16.
34. Set against paragraphs 195 and 196 of the Framework, whilst any harm would be likely to be less than substantial, given the relatively small size of the appeal proposal, this would not equate to a less than substantial planning objection. The appellant has not put forward any public benefits associated with the appeal scheme, and as a domestic extension, I do not find that there would be public benefits arising from the appeal scheme that would outweigh any less than substantial harm to the significance of the SAM.

Other Matters

35. The site lies within the setting of a group of Grade II listed buildings comprising the Old Manor House and associated farm buildings located to the south of the proposed development. As such, I have a statutory duty to consider the effect of the proposal on these designated heritage assets. The Council has not found any harm to the significance of these heritage assets as a result of the proposed development, and neither do I, due to the distance between the proposed extension and the listed buildings and boundary vegetation which would screen the extension in views from the listed buildings.

Conclusion

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

S Leonard

INSPECTOR