
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2020

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/D/20/3244422

The Old Rectory, Pershore Road, Little Comberton WR10 3EP

- 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 J Kottler against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02268/HP, dated 8 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey extension to form a residential annex.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey extension to form a residential annex at The Old Rectory, Pershore Road, Little Comberton WR10 3EP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/02268/HP, dated 8 October 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) Unless otherwise agreed under the conditions below, the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans: 3984/1, 3984/2D, 3984/3B, 3984/4, 3984/5A, 3984/6A, 3984/7A, 3984/8 & 3984/12B
 - 3) No development shall take place until sample panels of all new facing brickwork showing the proposed bricks, mortar mix, brick bond and pointing profile have been made available to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample panels.
 - 4) No development shall take place until a sample of the roofing slate has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample details.
 - 5) No development shall take place until details of all new windows and external doors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall be at a scale of 1:1 to 1:20, and shall also include sill and lintel detailing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the significance of this non-designated heritage asset, and whether the works would fail to preserve the character or the appearance of the Little Comberton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Little Comberton Conservation Area encompasses a range of buildings and spaces that reflect the growth over time of this small, historic rural settlement, and this diversity contributes notably to its significance as a designated heritage asset. At the south-eastern corner of the conservation area is found The Old Rectory. This is a large, graceful detached house that stands in spacious grounds and includes much fine detailing. As a result, it is clearly a building of some age and status in the village, whilst its links with the church are emphasised by its siting next door. Overall, although the dwelling is not listed, these factors add to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset and mean it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and its significance as a designated heritage asset.
4. The courtyard to the side of the house is an important element of this status, as it was no doubt a focus for the servicing of the property. Its separation from the formal gardens is still apparent, as it is enclosed by a stable building and an outbuilding with a tall curved wall running in between.
5. The wall is an unusual feature, but I am not persuaded that, beyond its enclosing of the space and defining the yard, it contributes positively to an understanding of The Old Rectory. Moreover, it is in poor condition, and has been repaired in the past with brick types, mortar mixes and jointing that were not particularly sympathetic. As such, its loss in itself need not cause harm to this non-designated asset if it is replaced appropriately.
6. The annex would be somewhat larger than the combined size of the existing outbuilding and stable. It would also be of a different height and design, while its footprint would depart from the current pattern around the yard and extend rearwards into the garden behind.
7. However, it would maintain the important sense of enclosure in the yard by filling the gap between the stable and the outbuilding. Moreover, the simplicity of the design is not unacceptable in this context, and through conditions there would be opportunity for detailing to reflect in a sympathetic manner the functional nature of this part of the house. A window and a door would open into the yard, and I consider these would contribute to the expected vitality of the space.
8. The increased size would not be so great as to extend this group of service buildings unduly or result in a discordant element, while the loss of garden arising from the rearward projection would not be significant. Overall, the differences in the footprint, height and design of the annex when compared to the existing stable and outbuilding would not be at odds with the informal nature of this service complex. In the light of the above I therefore consider this would not be an overdevelopment of the site.
9. As part of the scheme an existing shed is to be relocated. As that is already having some impact on the area and as it would remain concealed by heavy planting, moving it in the manner proposed would not be unacceptable.

10. Taking these factors together, I consider the proposal would not cause harm to the significance of The Old Rectory. Moreover, given this and mindful of its concealed nature, I also find it would not fail to preserve either the character or the appearance of the conservation area.
11. The Council has suggested conditions be imposed if I am minded to allow the appeal that concern agreeing joinery, materials and wall detailing. I consider such conditions are necessary to maintain the historic integrity of the building and given their importance they should be agreed before development begins. I am not satisfied though that sound planning reasons justify a condition requiring compliance with the water management statement.
12. Accordingly, I conclude the development would not harm the significance of this non-designated heritage asset, while it would not fail to preserve the character or the appearance of the Little Comberton Conservation Area and would not harm the significance of that designated heritage asset. As such, it would not conflict with Policies SWDP6 and SWDP24 in the *South Worcestershire Development Plan* that broadly seek to ensure development safeguards the significance of heritage assets. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR