
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2020

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/Y/20/3246933

Sutton Lodge, Cornhill Way, Puddledock Lane, Weymouth DT3 6LZ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Bugler against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref WP/19/00698/LBC, dated 22 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 November 2019.
 - The works proposed are described as single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. This decision concerns an appeal against the Council's refusal of an application for listed building consent. Though the submissions also indicate the existence of a related planning application, reference WP/19/00697/FUL, which was also refused by the Council, this has not been appealed. It is not the purpose of this decision to consider the potential merits of such an appeal were it to be lodged.
3. The decision notice cites Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act, which set out duties with regard to listed buildings and conservation areas. As Section 66 concerns applications for planning permission, the relevant sections in this case are 16(2) and 72(1). This is reflected in my definition of the main issues below.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve Grade II listed Sutton Lodge, its setting, or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Sutton Poyntz Conservation Area (the Conservation Area).

Reasons

5. The proposed works would be undertaken to Sutton Lodge. Sutton Lodge is attached to Sutton House. These 2 early nineteenth century buildings are separately listed, however they were historically parts of the same building, previously known as Sutton Farmhouse.
6. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the special interest and significance of Sutton Lodge lies in its historic role and formal architectural design as the front range of what was Sutton Farmhouse. It features a bold rectangular form, symmetrical 3-bay frontage, 12 pane sash windows, and lined stucco finish.

7. Sutton House, which once formed the service range, consists of 2 joined parallel ranges which are directly attached to the rear elevation of Sutton Lodge. In contrast with the main frontage its design is more informal, featuring exposed rubble walls and casement windows. The historic functional and associated architectural relationship between the 2 listed buildings clearly also forms a crucial aspect of the special interest and significance of Sutton Lodge. This remains most readily appreciable from within the surrounding garden and yard spaces which form the immediate setting.
8. Neither party considers that the small kitchen extension attached to the north end of Sutton Lodge, or the adjacent detached garage, hold any merit. I agree. These modern structures together fill much of the limited space remaining at the north end of Sutton Lodge, which is one of the least visually exposed parts of its immediate physical setting. The small but distinct gap between the existing structures nonetheless allows external circulation around the north end of building, and space within which the original form of Sutton Lodge, and its relationship with that of Sutton House, can be clearly perceived.
9. The proposed works would see replacement of the kitchen and garage with a structure that would span the current gap between them, and sprawl forward of the front elevation of the house. No historic fabric would be lost. The extension would however cause significant imbalance to the regular form and external symmetry of the house. This would also be perceived internally due to related changes in the overall plan form, involving addition of a series of spaces whose proportion and irregular shape would not complement that of the principal ground floor rooms. In each regard the effects would far exceed those of the existing kitchen extension.
10. The forward projection of the extension in a single mass would also introduce greater visual competition with the main frontage of the house than is currently generated by the detached garage. This would undermine the perceived visual and architectural status of the main frontage relative to that of the rest of the former Farmhouse. The effect would be amplified by the use of window details of a type more reflective of those found in Sutton House, and use of a complex roof shape finding no parallel in the simple form of the historic building.
11. The continuity of built form and loss of external circulation space around the north end of the building, would furthermore reduce the extent to which both the original form of Sutton Lodge, and its relationship with Sutton House, could be clearly perceived within their setting.
12. As the design, layout and form proposed would in no way clearly acknowledge or better reveal the significance of Sutton Lodge or its historic relationship with Sutton House, I reject the appellant's claim that the proposed works would achieve any clear 'improvement'. Indeed, for all the above reasons, the proposals would fail to preserve the listed building, or the setting of its neighbour, contrary to the expectations of the Act.
13. The site is located within the Conservation Area. This is principally designated to cover the historic village of Sutton Poyntz, including some adjacent areas. The significance of the Conservation Area thus to a large extent lies in the historic layout of the settlement, and the range, date, design, historic function and interrelationship of the different building types and spaces it contains. In this context, the size, architectural design and past function of Sutton Farmhouse, suggests that the building played an historically important role within the village. Though now crowded on some sides by modern housing, the south elevation remains visible across open garden space from along Puddledock Lane, and much

of the main frontage can be viewed from within Cornhill Way. In these regards, Sutton Lodge, and more particularly its perceived relationship with Sutton House, makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area.

14. Subject to boundary treatments being retained in their current state, the extension would not be clearly exposed within any public view. Boundary treatments may however change, and even if they didn't, the extension would be apparent to anyone entering the grounds of Sutton Lodge, and from the garden space on the north side of Sutton House. From these locations the harm the extension would cause to the character of both parts of the building viewed together, would be clearly appreciable. By both harming and undermining the integrity and identity of the former Farmhouse, the works would both harm and undermine the important contribution it makes to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole. For these reasons the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the expectations of the Act.
15. In view of the above, and with reference to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I find that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of both Sutton Lodge and the Conservation Area. Having further regard to the considerable importance and weight to be given to the statutory objective of preserving or enhancing conservation areas, I attach considerable importance and weight to the harm that would arise in this regard. The proposal would provide additional accommodation for the occupant, with the only clear public benefit being the very small amount of economic activity generated by the building work involved. This would be insufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of Sutton Lodge and the Conservation Area.
16. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of Sutton Lodge, or its setting, or that of Sutton House, and that it would additionally fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would thus fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act; heritage policy set out within the Framework; and, insofar as it is relevant, Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015, which, though drafted with particular reference to 'development', nonetheless requires applications affecting the significance of a heritage asset to demonstrate how the proposals would positively contribute to the asset's conservation.

Other Matters

17. The site is located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB), within which there is a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty. As the proposal would involve works with little exposure beyond their immediate setting, and none within the surrounding landscape, the natural beauty of the AONB would be conserved.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR