



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2020

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/D/20/3253734

Hunters Lodge, Mill Street, Gislingham, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8JP

- 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 Peter Mason against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/00625, dated 10 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is conversion of a former cart lodge and construction of a small addition to form a studio.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of a former cart lodge and construction of a small addition to form a studio at Hunters Lodge, Mill Street, Gislingham, Eye, IP23 8JP, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/20/00625, dated 10 February 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) Notwithstanding the footprint shown on the block plan, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PD01(red line boundary only), PD06A , PD07A and PD08A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be those shown on approved drawing numbers PD07A and PD08A.

Procedural Matters

2. Planning permission was refused for, amongst other things, insufficient information to enable the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess whether the proposal has the potential to affect protected species (namely bats) or their habitat. An appropriate survey was submitted with the appeal, a copy of which has been sent to the LPA. The survey confirms that there are no significant ecological constraints that would prevent the proposed works from being undertaken. As this reason for refusal has been addressed, I have not considered it further.

Main Issue

3. In light of the above, the main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the historic former farmstead.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is part of a former farmstead that was converted to residential use in the 1990's. The single storey building is constructed from a mixture of red brick and flint with small areas of dark stained timber boarding. It has a clay pantile roof and windows and doors are dark stained timber. Within the block paved courtyard there is a red brick, lean to garage, with a shallow, mono pitch, corrugated sheet roof, which was approved by the LPA as part of the original conversion scheme. The remainder of the courtyard is enclosed by walls and gates. In front of the site there is a large gravel parking area.
5. Although the site retains its historic agricultural scale, form and layout, the number and size of openings, together with other previous extensions, alterations and associated garden/parking areas, give the converted farmstead a domestic appearance.
6. It is proposed to enclose an open fronted section of the building, which according to the Council's Design and Heritage Officer is not an original opening. The Council do not object to this part of the proposal and I have no reason to disagree. It is also proposed to erect a small lean to extension, with a shallow mono pitched roof. This would be finished in dark stained timber boarding above a red brick plinth, with a black standing seam metal roof and black timber stained windows and doors to match those in the existing building.
7. I observed on my site visit, that in addition to the lean to garage at Hunters Lodge, the adjacent barn conversion known as Willow Barn, has two single storey lean to extensions, one on either side. It has been brought to my attention that one of these extensions was allowed on appeal in 2011. These are visible from the road and parking areas and to my mind do not harmfully detract from the agricultural character and appearance of the former farmstead.
8. The proposed extension would project marginally further into the enclosed court yard area than the existing garage and would be of a similar scale and form. Given the width of the court yard, the historic form and layout of the converted farmstead would be retained. The shallow, lean to, roof pitch is typical of extensions to single storey farm buildings and to my mind, a dual pitched roof projection would further domesticate the appearance of the site. Due to the surrounding walls and buildings the extension would not be visibly prominent.
9. I therefore find that the proposal would not be harmful or incongruous and would not conflict with saved policy H18 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (September 1998), which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that extensions to existing dwellings are in keeping with the size, design and materials of the existing dwelling and will not materially or detrimentally affect the character and appearance of the area. I also find no conflict with saved policy H15, which relates to new housing and as such is not relevant to the appeal proposal.

10. The LPA refer to the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and the appellant has not disputed this. However, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that only a minority of buildings have enough heritage significance to merit identification as a NDHA. It goes on to state that decisions to identify NDHA should be based on sound evidence and that assets should be clearly recorded and identified as such in the public domain e.g. in local and neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals or local lists. There is no evidence before me that identifies the appeal property as a NDHA. Although the LPA are entitled to identify a NDHA as part of the decision making process on planning applications, there is no sound evidence within the LPA's report as to how this view has been reached.
11. However, even if the site is a NDHA, I have found that the proposal would not result in any loss of built fabric or any harm to the character and appearance of the building. As such there would be no conflict with the requirements of paragraph 197 of the Framework.
12. Lady Margaret House, to the east of the site, is a Grade II Listed Building. Both parties are agreed that the proposal would have no impact on the setting of this building. Having had regard to the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I would concur with this view. The proposal would be well screened from the listed building and there would be limited visibility of it due to existing built development surrounding it. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not harm the setting of the listed building and would have a neutral effect on the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Conditions

13. I have imposed the statutory time limit condition and a condition listing the approved plans in the interests of certainty. I have also imposed a condition to ensure that the external materials of the extension match those stated in the approved drawings, which do not show the cement fibre roofing, which the LPA were concerned about. During the course of the application amended plans were submitted reducing the size of the extension. However, the footprint of the extension was not amended on the site layout plan (Drawing No. PD01). As such drawing no PD01 is conditioned only in respect of the site location and red line boundary.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR