



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2020

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/20/3252296

**Land between Green Acre and the Old Vicarage, Church Lane,
Rangeworthy, Gloucestershire, BS37 6SN.**

- 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 Heggarty against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council (the LPA).
 - The application Ref. P19/11852/F, dated 28 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two detached dwellings with associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The three main issues are: firstly, whether the proposal would preserve the settings of the grade II* listed buildings at Rangeworthy Court and the Church of the Holy Trinity; secondly, the effect upon the character and appearance of the area and; thirdly, whether occupiers of the proposed dwellings would be dependent upon private motor vehicles for accessing services and facilities.

Reasons

Planning Policy

3. The development plan includes the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) adopted in 2013 and the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (LP) adopted in 2017. The most important policies to the determination of this appeal are: CS policies CS1 (design), CS8 (improving accessibility), CS9 (managing the environment and heritage) and; LP policies PSP2 (landscape), PSP11 (transport) and PSP17 (heritage assets).

The Site and Surroundings

4. This 0.2 ha appeal site comprises part of a larger paddock/open pasture land. It lies to the east of Rangeworthy Court and the Church of the Holy Trinity and to the west of The Old Vicarage. The site is separated from Rangeworthy Court by the chalet bungalow known as Green Acre. There are tall trees growing along the boundaries of Rangeworthy Court, the church and The Old Vicarage.
5. With the exception of the churchyard on the opposite side of Church Lane, the site cannot be seen from the Church of the Holy Trinity. When viewed from the

B4058 (Wotton Road) to the north east, the site and the agricultural land on the opposite side of Church Lane, form part of the rural settings to the church and the imposing Rangeworthy Court. The site allows the countryside to penetrate this part of the settlement. Its green open qualities provide a pleasing break in development along the north side of Church Lane.

Settings of Rangeworthy Court and the Church of the Holy Trinity

6. The heritage interest (significance) of the early 17th century, 3½ storeys Rangeworthy Court is derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its 'L'—shaped plan, roughcast rubble walls, plain clay tiled roof with raised coped verges, diagonal stacks, casement windows and its historic function as a manor/important building within this part of the district.
7. The Church of the Holy Trinity dates from the 11th century. Its significance is primarily derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its stone rubble walls with slate roof, nave, porch, chancel, octagonal bell-turret, 20th century stained glass windows by Sir Ninian Comper, as well as its historic function as a place of worship within this part of the district. There is an historic associative relationship between the church and The Old Vicarage.
8. The above listed buildings have extensive settings. There have been some changes to these settings over time, including Green Acre. I concur with Historic England that this is a rather unfortunate intrusion into the open settings of these listed buildings. It appears as a rather 'awkward' suburban element along Church Lane on the approach to these grade II* listed buildings.
9. Nevertheless, the appeal site remains part of the historic rural settings to these listed buildings and maintains the historic separation between these high status buildings and the rest of the settlement. It assists in affording an appreciation and understanding of the heritage interest of these designated heritage assets and makes a small, but positive, contribution to the significance of buildings which are of more than special interest. Whilst the LPA has also described the character as "*tranquil*", given the proximity of the school and hotel, there is likely to be much activity along Church Lane during parts of the day.
10. The proposed buildings and associated hard surfaced areas would occupy a sizeable part of the appeal site. This would considerably erode the unspoilt green open qualities of the site and, in so doing, detract from the historic rural setting of Rangeworthy Court and, to a lesser extent (due to tree screening), to the historic landscape setting of the Church of the Holy Trinity.
11. As advised by Historic England in its consultation response, the loss of this historic relationship between Rangeworthy Court and this part of the countryside would have an adverse effect upon the setting of this listed building. In particular, the development would close up the last remaining space on this side of Church Lane, between this designated heritage asset and the rest of the settlement. It would harmfully intrude into the setting of this high status building. This would be apparent from Church Lane and in views from the B4058, where these new buildings would detract from an appreciation and understanding of the countryside setting of Rangeworthy Court.
12. In the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Rangeworthy Court and the Church of the Holy Trinity. If there

is a sliding scale of harm within this category, the impact of the proposal would be between the middle and lower end of harm for Rangeworthy Court and towards the lower end for the Church of the Holy Trinity. However, this does not amount to a less than substantial planning objection. Great weight should be given to an asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

13. The Framework also provides that any harm to designated heritage assets must be weighed with any public benefits. In this regard, the proposed development would increase the choice and supply of housing within the district and would help support the construction industry. Residents of the dwellings would also be likely to help support and sustain existing services. However, neither these public benefits nor any other benefits of the appeal scheme would outweigh the harm that I have identified above.
14. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would fail to preserve the settings of Rangeworthy Court and the Church of the Holy Trinity and would conflict with the provisions of CS policy CS9 and LP policy PSP17.

Character and Appearance

15. The proposed three bedroom chalet bungalows would be set back from Church Lane and would have a rather squat appearance with rooms in the roof space. They would be finished with Pennant sandstone walls and grey slate coloured roofs. Whilst there is no cogent evidence to demonstrate that these would comprise high quality buildings, the LPA is unconcerned by this matter.
16. The proposed dwellings would have far more in common with Green Acre than any locally distinctive building within the settlement. Together with the erosion of the unspoilt green open qualities of the site, the proposed development would comprise a further 'awkward' suburban element along Church Lane and would detract from the character and appearance of the local area. It would also intrude into the vista from the B4058 and detract from the attractive countryside setting of Rangeworthy.
17. I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area and conflict with CS policy CS1 and LP policy PSP2.

Access to Services and Facilities

18. The settlement includes a range of services and facilities including schools, a public house, church, a village hall and a bus service. Whilst occupiers of the proposed dwellings would largely be dependent upon the use of private motor vehicles for accessing shops, employment and healthcare facilities, the increase in the use of private motor cars would be very small. On its own, the appeal scheme would not generate a significant increase in demand for travel or conflict with the provisions of CS policy CS8. Although there would be a small degree of conflict with LP policy PSP11, when weighed with the above noted public benefits, this would be insufficient ground for withholding permission.

Other Matters

19. The proposal before me is materially different to the two previous appeal schemes involving a larger area of land that were dismissed in 2015 (10

dwellings)¹ and 2017 (6 dwellings)². Whilst I have determined this case on its own merits, there is nothing in these previous appeal decisions that lends any weight to the appellant's argument for allowing this appeal.

Planning Balance / Overall Conclusion

20. My findings in respect of the third main issue do not overcome or outweigh the harm that I have found to the settings/significance of listed buildings and to the character and appearance of the area. Having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector

¹ APP/P1099/W/15/3133771.

² APP/P0119/W/17/3170940.