



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2021

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/20/3262220

Long Sutton Manor, The Street, Long Sutton, Hook RG29 1ST

- 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 Mrs Christine Eyre-Walker against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01117/HOU, dated 11 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is to erect a pair of timber gates to entrance plus a side gate.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The site address as detailed on the application form has been amended in subsequent documents. I have used the address included in the appeal form, which is more precise.
3. The proposed development affects the setting of a listed building located in a conservation area, and I shall therefore have special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the significance of the Grade II* listed building known as Long Sutton Manor, as derived from its setting, and would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Long Sutton Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. Long Sutton Manor is an impressive Grade II* listed building, which displays successive phases of development dating from the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries. The property is set deeply back from the highway and lies within a spacious plot bordered by mature hedging to The Street frontage. The significance of listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, resides primarily in the verdant and generous grounds, which provide a pleasant setting to the property.
6. The Grade II* listed building is situated in the village of Long Sutton, which is designated as a Conservation Area. It draws its special interest from its rich collection of historic buildings, but also the form and layout of the settlement,

- which sits within a rural backdrop. Due to its architectural and historic interest and spacious grounds, as well as its position within the village, there is no doubt that the appeal property makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Long Sutton Conservation Area.
7. The proposed gates would replace a five bar timber gate, which was set 5 metres back from the highway. Although it was of no particular heritage significance, the gate, which is no longer in situ, made a positive contribution to the rural and historic character of the site and the locality. As per the proposal, double gates would be positioned a further 3 metres into the site. A separate pedestrian gate is also proposed to be installed, and a new laurel hedge would be planted to fill in the gap with the existing hedge.
 8. The proposed development would be built using untreated oak, a high quality and durable material, and it would not entirely screen existing views of the listed building or appear widely prominent within the street scene, particularly as it would be set back from the road frontage and would be partially screened by existing landscaping. Nevertheless, the replacement gates would remain visible within the public realm and would, due to their size and design, appear as an urbanising feature, which would detract from its sensitive historic context and fail to reflect the rural character of its surroundings.
 9. The proposed development would subsequently diminish the contribution that the building's setting presently makes to the special interest of Long Sutton Manor as a Grade II* listed building, to the detriment of its significance. As the building makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Long Sutton Conservation Area, it follows that the appeal scheme would also be harmful to this designated heritage asset.
 10. My attention has been drawn to other applications for new gates which have been approved elsewhere by the Council. Whilst copies of the plans and decision notices have been submitted as part of the appeal, I do not have full details of the circumstances that led to these particular schemes being accepted. I cannot therefore be certain that they represent a direct parallel to the proposal before me, notably in respect of the location of the gates in relation to the listed building in question and its setting.
 11. The proposed development would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, but also the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, to which I ascribe considerable importance and weight. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, I have not been presented with any public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm.
 12. For the foregoing reasons, the appeal scheme would fail to preserve the significance of Long Sutton Manor as derived from its setting, and the character and appearance of the Long Sutton Conservation Area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032¹ and Section 16 of the Framework. These notably seek to ensure that development proposals achieve a high quality design, whilst conserving or enhancing heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance.

¹ Adopted April 2020.

Conclusion

13. There are no considerations indicating that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan, which the proposal would conflict with. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR