The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 March 2021

by Mr Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/D/21/3268042
The Old Manor, Hadzor, DROITWICH WR9 7DR

- 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 G Bailey & D Rea against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
- The application Ref 19/02666/HP, dated 6 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2020.
- The development proposed is the erection of a detached oak framed home office replacing existing outbuildings.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a detached oak framed home office replacing existing outbuildings at The Old Manor, Hadzor, Droitwich WR9 7DR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/02666/HP, dated 6 December 2019, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed elevations and layout plan 41353-1 Rev B, Block Plan 41353 BP B 1:500, Location Plan 41353 LP B.

    3) No development shall commence until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the outbuilding hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

    4) No development shall take place until details of the design of doors and windows including plans/elevations/drawings at scale 1:50 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

    5) Prior to the first use/occupation of the outbuilding hereby permitted, the details set out in the submitted Water Management Statement shall be fully implemented and retained thereafter.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the Hadzor Conservation Area (HCA) and preserve the setting of The Old Manor, a grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. Hadzor is a small hamlet arranged in a scattered development pattern. Buildings are grouped loosely along Hadzor Lane. The appeal site consists of a large plot with The Old Manor located in its middle. To either side of the house are gardens, with a courtyard to the rear beyond the house. Two garage buildings are served from the courtyard. These are low profile wooden structures that are subservient to the main house, with the remaining area of the site being largely open. The site makes a positive contribution to the open and low-density character and appearance of the area.

4. The appeal site is within the HCA. This includes most buildings of the hamlet and the large areas of open spaces around them. The statutory requirements[1] entail that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. Furthermore, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to an asset's conservation when considering the impact of a proposal on its significance. The significance of the HCA derives from it being an attractive traditional village with interesting groupings of cottages and larger houses set within spacious grounds.

5. The Old Manor, a grade II listed building, originates from the late C16. It consists of a timber frame structure with brick infill segments. It contains a range of decorative features including a large central chimney, leaded casement windows, a timber framed porch and dormer windows. I am required to pay special attention and have regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings[2]. In my view the significance of this building derives from its origins, decorative architectural features and its setting within a rural context. The proposal would replace an existing building that is of poor construction and limited quality.

6. Although including rooflights, the proposed outbuilding would be single-storey in character. The porch would be a discrete feature with minimal impact on the wider context of the site. Furthermore, its domestic appearance would accord with the residential character of the appeal site. The structure would be read as a subservient feature to the main house. The rear return would be evident from views of the site from the east, but not the street or from the driveway. As a result, the design and mass of the proposed outbuilding would not appear out of place and would complement its garden setting.

7. The outbuilding would be set a considerable distance from the listed building, to the rear of the site. Local landform rises to the east creating a small depression around the site of the proposal. Furthermore, the proposal would be located adjacent to a wooded area. The proposal would also be only moderately larger than the existing building on site. These points in combination would reduce the overall visual impact of the structure from wider views. Moreover, the footprint, in comparison to the existing dwelling and plot, would be compatible with local outbuildings and would not result in over development of the site. Consequently, the replacement building would have a limited effect on the character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building.

[1] Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
[2] Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

8. The proposed outbuilding would replace a building that has a negative impact on the setting of the listed building. It would be of a subservient scale and offset by a distance that would result in a minimal impact on the setting of the listed building. Consequently, the proposal would maintain the area's sense of spaciousness, and would not result in harm to the identified heritage assets.

9. Accordingly, the proposal would preserve the HCA and the setting of The Old Manor. Consequently, the proposal would satisfy policies SWDP6, SWDP21 and SWDP24 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016)(DP). These seek, among other things, for development to conserve and enhance heritage assets and complement the character of the area. Furthermore, the proposal would accord with the Council's Design guide[3]. This requires outbuildings to be subordinate in scale. These policies are consistent with the Framework which seeks development to be sympathetic to local character and history.

Other Matters

10. Three Wells and its associated Wash House are two listed buildings to the immediate west of the site. The significance of Three Wells relates to its origins in the late C16, being timber framed and including three-square stacks. The significance of the Wash House derives from its blue brick dressing and group value linked with Three Wells and The Old Manor. Three Wells and the Wash House are located within an enclosed plot with mature landscape screening to the sides and rear. Due to the separation distance and intervening landscaping the proposal would preserve their settings.

11. The Council has concerns that the outbuilding could become a separate dwelling in the future. However, such a proposal would require planning permission from the Council. Moreover, the proposal could not be readily severed from the main dwelling and plot due to its proximity to the parking courtyard and its limited size. As such, whilst the plan shows a kitchen and WC, the proposal is described as an ancillary office use that would be supported by the existing dwelling.

Conditions

12. I have considered the use of conditions in line with the guidance set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). I have applied the standard timeframe and approved plans conditions in accordance with the PPG. I have also applied conditions requiring details with respect to materials, windows and doors in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. I have also imposed a condition to ensure that the scheme would comply with the Water Management statement to satisfy policy SWDP29 of the DP. I have not required details of hardstanding as the proposed works do not include the provision of this.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons the development would accord with the development plan and Framework. Therefore, the appeal is allowed, and planning permission is given subject to the attached conditions.

[3] Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document – Overarching Design Principles (2018)

Mr Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR