
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2021

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/W/20/3257752

Manor Bungalow, 41B High Street, Standlake OX29 7RH

- 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 Nicholas Blakemore against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01508/FUL, dated 12 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolish existing bungalow and build four dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Nicholas Blakemore against West Oxfordshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Background and Main Issue

3. This appeal follows a dismissal for a similar development in 2019. Additional information has subsequently been provided relating to the historic development of the nearby Grade II listed building presently known as Standlake Manor and its association with its surroundings, including the appeal site. I have had regard to my colleague Inspector's decision in determining this case, but considering the additional information provided I am not bound to come to the same conclusion.
4. The listed building dates originally from the fifteenth century, although substantially altered since that time. Notwithstanding the property's current name, the heritage statement confirms that the building was never the local manor house but is a former farmhouse from which the farming of local land, including the appeal site, was managed.
5. The main issue in determining this appeal is therefore the effect of the development on the setting of this listed building.

Reasons

6. The agricultural holdings associated with the farm comprised a significant part of the local land, including the appeal site as part of a paddock known as Home Close. The significance of the listed building therefore derives in part from its

relationship with the surrounding area, together with its age, appearance and architectural interest.

7. While any historic agricultural use of the appeal site ceased with its development for residential use, this does not stop it forming part of the setting of the listed building, that is, it is a place from which the listed building is experienced. While the setting of a heritage asset may change over time, there was a historic relationship between the listed building and the appeal site.
8. Even with the cessation of the agricultural use of the appeal site there remains a clear visual relationship between the two. The listed building is visible from within the appeal site, and the appeal site is likewise visible from the listed building and its grounds. The two sites presently share an access, although a separate access would be used for the proposed development. There is little formal separation between the appeal site and the grounds of the listed building, with the boundary treatment between the two sites intermittent and of limited height. While the sites may be separate curtilages their proximity and the absence of any formal separation means that the appeal site forms part of the setting of the listed building.
9. The development of the appeal site involving the construction of Manor Bungalow resulted in some dilution of its contribution to the setting of the listed building. However, the site remains largely undeveloped with the bungalow set away from the neighbouring fields, and it retains an open and rural character. The proposed development would result in harm to the significance of the listed building through the erosion of that character by introducing significant additional built form onto the site and creating four separate residential curtilages.
10. Given the size of the appeal site relative to the retained open land in the vicinity of the listed building the development would result in less than substantial harm to its significance. Nonetheless, the National Planning Policy Framework states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm.
11. The development would create three additional dwellings, supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The acceptability of the principle of residential development in Standlake is not in dispute, and the proposal would support the vitality of Standlake and local services and facilities. The public benefits arising from the development weigh in its favour but given the limited scale of the proposals the benefits would not outweigh the harm to the significance of the listed building.
12. The appeal proposal would consequently result in unacceptable harm to the setting of the listed building. It therefore conflicts with the requirements of Policies EH9 and EH11 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2018. These policies require, amongst other things, that development proposals affecting the setting of a listed building conserve or enhance its setting.

Other Matters

13. As a fallback position the property's Permitted Development rights could be used to significantly enlarge the existing bungalow. However, there is no indication that this is a likely alternative development, and no details of any such development have been submitted. Accordingly, this attracts very limited weight in my determination of this appeal.

Conclusion

14. There are no material considerations that indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR