The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 April 2021

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/D/20/3259270
Castle Farm, The Mill House, Collington, HR7 4NB

- 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 & Mrs M & L Mansell & Macgregor against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
- The application Ref 201333, dated 29 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 September 2020.
- The development proposed is described as *"erection of garden room to rear elevation"*.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal building should be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset, and if so, the effect of the proposed extension on its significance.

Reasons

3. Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications. It further states that in weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

4. The appeal building is an attractive former hop house that is constructed in brick, and dates to the 19th century. It sits within a complex of former agricultural buildings in a traditional courtyard arrangement, which have recently been converted to housing. It is significantly taller than the surrounding properties and has an imposing 3 storey front elevation. The building is a characterful feature in the area that contributes to its traditional rural character. It has both aesthetic and evidential value, and clearly constitutes a non-designated heritage asset in my view.

5. The development would introduce a single storey extension at the rear of the building at ground floor level. It would be of a flat roof design with a central lantern that would have the appearance of a modern domestic 'orangery' extension. This would contrast sharply with the building's traditional agricultural character and it would have an awkward visual relationship to it.

In this regard, it would project out significantly from the existing rear elevation of the building, disrupting its traditional L-shape, and would appear as a discordant addition to the host property. Whilst the extension would be partly screened by the existing boundary wall, it would be clearly visible above this from the adjacent property and the nearby bridleway.

6. My attention has been drawn to the use of modern materials on other converted agricultural buildings within the wider complex. However, the examples highlighted are sympathetic additions to much lower buildings. In my view, they do not lend support to the current proposal which is for an extension at odds with the character of the host property.

7. It is asserted that the Council has approved other, similar, extensions to converted agricultural buildings that have a traditional character. However, the full details of those cases, including the approved plans, are not before me and so it is unclear to what extent they are directly comparable to the current appeal proposal. In any case, I have come to my own view on this matter rather than relying on the approach taken by the Council elsewhere.

8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. It would therefore be contrary to Policies LD1, SD1, LD4, and SS6 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2015). These policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that new development is appropriately designed, maintains local distinctiveness, and protects and conserves heritage assets. It would also be at odds with the Framework in this regard.

Other Matters

9. The ground floor of the appeal property is relatively small and offers only limited internal living space. However, it is not clear that an extension of this design is the only means of addressing this matter or whether other less harmful options have been fully explored.

10. Both the Council and the appellant refer to a suggested alternative scheme for a glass extension with a 'frameless' appearance. However, that scheme is not before me and I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.

11. The concerns expressed regarding the Council's conduct during the processing of the planning application fall outside of the remit of this decision.

Conclusion

12. As set out above, the development would significantly harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset and would be contrary to the development plan in this regard. Whilst it would provide additional living accommodation and would generate some economic benefits during the construction phase, that does not alter my view that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR