



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2021

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/19/3239626

Brookfield Place, Low Street, Glemsford CO10 7QF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr P Whitney & Ms M Beere against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/19/03320, dated 11 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: "In respect of outline planning application for the erection of 2 no. detached dwellings and associated garages (with access)."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application was submitted in outline with only access, landscaping and layout to be determined at this stage. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the dwellings on the settings of Place Farmhouse (Grade II), Monks Hall (Grade II*), Monks Cottage (Grade II) and the Church of St Mary (Grade I), and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site falls within an area of designated countryside. The character of the immediate surrounding area to the appeal site is predominantly rural consisting of a scattering of dwellings and agricultural/equestrian buildings. The site itself is currently used for equestrian purposes.
5. To the south-east is Place Farmhouse which is Grade II listed. A little further to the south-west is Monks Hall, a Grade II* listed building, and Monks Cottage which is Grade II listed. Whilst sitting within their respective curtilages these historic buildings occupy a wider, rural setting. Historically they are also likely to have always had such a setting being clearly separate from the nearby village of Glemsford which is located further to the south.
6. The Grade I listed Church of St Mary sits on the edge of Glemsford and similarly much of its wider setting to the north is rural and includes the

aforementioned listed buildings and the appeal site. These can be seen from the churchyard which occupies an elevated position in the landscape. Again, historically, the setting of the church to the north would likely always have been predominantly rural.

7. The rural landscape around these listed buildings contributes to their significance insofar as it is the surroundings in which they would have historically been experienced in and continue to be today. The appeal site forms a part of this rural landscape. It follows therefore that the appeal site falls within the settings of these listed buildings.
8. The proposal is for the erection of two dwellings which would undoubtedly have an urbanising impact on the site and the wider area. Furthermore, the submitted layout shows an extensive area of driveway and parking/turning areas stretching the length of the site opposite the entrance which would add to this effect. The result would therefore be an urbanisation of the character and appearance of the surrounding area, harmful to the settings of Place Farmhouse, Monks Hall, Monks Cottage and the Church of St Mary.
9. Whilst the site is currently enclosed by mature hedgerow across the frontage and west side the new access would remove part of this opening up views into the site from Low Street. Furthermore, landscaping cannot be considered a permanent feature. It is also difficult to completely conceal buildings with landscaping, particularly where native trees and shrubs are concerned which are predominantly deciduous in nature. I take the appellant's point that the extensive close board fencing proposed along the north and east boundaries could be conditioned to be hedging for a less urban appearance. Similarly, the Council's concerns over species to be used in landscaping could also be conditioned. These matters, do not, however, overcome my concerns above.
10. There is new residential development taking place to the west of the appeal site. However, this was previously an agricultural building which was granted planning permission for three dwellings under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and is therefore materially different to this proposal. Similarly, an appeal in the village of Polstead¹ which concerned a different heritage asset would have been considered on its own planning merits and is not directly comparable to the appeal before me.
11. I note the presence of Brookfield Place, located to the east of the appeal site, which appears to have been constructed around 1972 according to historic maps. However, matters including planning policy, will have moved on significantly since then. Finally, whether or not Historic England were consulted does not displace my statutory duties under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
12. For the reasons given I therefore find harm to the settings of Place Farmhouse, Monks Hall, Monks Cottage and the Church of St Mary. For the same reasons I also find harm to the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area.
13. It follows that the development would also result in conflict with the relevant provisions of Policies CS15 of Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and CN01 and CN06 of the Babergh Local Plan (2006) which require new development to pay

¹ APP/D3505/W/18/3211126

particular attention to the environment surrounding a site and to respect heritage assets. In particular, Policy CN06 requires the retention of settings appropriate to the listed building and its relationship with its surroundings. I have also had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which sets out the desirability of sustaining and enhancing both the significance of heritage assets and the natural environment.

14. The harm I have found would be 'less than substantial' for the purposes of para 196 of the Framework and I would put this towards the medium end of the scale. As per para 196 any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. The appellant sites landscape benefits from additional planting. In addition to this, two dwellings would be provided which would add to local housing supply, and linked to this there would be economic benefits in terms of construction and use of local services. These benefits would, however, only carry modest weight which is not sufficient to outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' to the settings of Place Farmhouse, Monks Hall, Monks Cottage and the Church of St Mary, particularly given great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets as set out in the Framework.
16. I therefore find harm to the settings of the aforementioned listed buildings which is not outweighed by public benefits. I have also found harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, having regard to the development plan as a whole and all material considerations advanced in this case, the appeal is dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR