

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 May 2021

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 June 2021

Appeal A Ref: APP/B1740/W/21/3268735

Reads Farmhouse, Martin Road, Martin SP6 3LN

- 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 and Mrs Fernie against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/11087, dated 5 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey hardwood orangery to side elevation.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/B1740/Y/21/3268736

Reads Farmhouse, Martin Road, Martin SP6 3LN

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Fernie against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/11088, dated 5 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2020.
 - The works proposed are single storey hardwood orangery to side elevation.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed

Preliminary Matters

3. The proposed development and works affect a listed building located in a conservation area, and I have therefore had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
4. As both appeals relate to the same site and raise similar issues, I shall therefore consider them in a single document, in the interests of brevity.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development and works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building known as Reads Farmhouse, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Martin Conservation Area; and
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- In respect of Appeal A, the effect of the proposal on the dark night skies of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

Heritage Assets

6. The appeal relates to a large property dating from the mid-18th century, which is listed at Grade II. Whilst it has been subject to a number of alterations and extensions, the building retains much of its historic character as a simple and handsome farmhouse. The significance of this Grade II listed building is not solely derived from its architectural merit, but also its historic interest as an important component of a traditional farmstead comprising a farmhouse and separately listed agricultural buildings arranged around a central courtyard.
7. Reads Farmhouse lies in the village of Martin, which is designated as a Conservation Area. It draws its special interest from its rich collection of historic buildings set within an attractive landscape. By reason of its architectural and historic significance, but also its prominence within the village, there is no doubt that the appeal property makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Martin Conservation Area.
8. The proposed orangery would be added to the south-eastern elevation of a two-storey extension which was constructed during the 1980s and would provide a stark contrast to the historic building and its subsequent additions. The existing walls and fenestration details are proposed to be retained, and the appeal scheme would not lead to a loss of historic fabric. However, the classical approach of the design would detract from the simpler and plainer aesthetic which characterises the host building and, despite the materials and colour proposed, would appear as a boxy addition to the listed property.
9. Whilst it would be adjoining the 1980s extension, the proposed structure would nevertheless be perceived as an integral part of the listed building. The size of the orangery would be excessive in relation to the 18th century origins of the farmhouse and diminish its simple form, even though it would be attached to the later addition of the listed building. The proposed addition would consequently erode the significance of this designated heritage asset which, by reason of its listed status, is considered of national importance.
10. As the appeal building makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Martin Conservation Area, it follows that the appeal scheme would also be harmful to this designated heritage asset. The proposed orangery would only be partially screened by the boundary wall along the road frontage, and the roof structure and the lantern in particular would remain visible within the street scene, standing out as incongruous features.
11. The appellants have referred to a number of conservatories and orangeries, which are situated within the site's immediate vicinity. However, I do not have full details of the circumstances of these particular schemes, and cannot therefore be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal scheme, which I am required to assess on its individual merits.
12. The proposed development and works would cause less than substantial harm to the architectural and historic interest of the appeal property and the special interest of the Martin Conservation Area, to which I ascribe considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, paragraph 196 of the National

Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

13. The appellants' submissions indicate that the orangery could be used by the community for small gatherings in a similar way to the existing barn which has previously been made available for local community events. However, as the proposal would provide additional accommodation to a residential property, it would primarily be of use to its occupiers, and the benefits would therefore be largely private. Having regard to the available evidence, I have also no reasons to believe that the continued occupation of the listed property is dependent on the construction of the orangery. Overall, I have not been presented with public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm.
14. The appeal proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building, but also the character and appearance of the Martin Conservation Area. It would therefore conflict with Policy ENV3 of the Council's Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy¹ (LPP1), Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management Plan² (LPP2), as well as Sections 12 and 16 of the Framework. These notably require development proposals to be of a high quality and conserve or enhance the significance, character and appearance of heritage assets. I however find no conflict with Policy ENV4 of the LPP1, which seeks to protect the landscape character and quality of the District.

Dark night skies

15. The appeal site lies within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which has the darkest night skies in central southern England, and has been recently designated as an International Dark Skies Reserve (IDSR). The proposed structure would include extensive areas of glazing. In particular, the lantern, which would cover a large part of the roof, could increase the potential for greater levels of light spillage into the sky.
16. Other than its properties to reduce light transmission, I have been provided with limited information regarding the glass which the appellants are proposing to use to minimise any adverse effect on the IDSR. In particular, it is unclear whether this would affect the external appearance of the orangery, and could be incorporated without altering the design of the appeal scheme. To my mind, this is critical given the sensitive nature of the appeal property and its siting within a conservation area.
17. I have also had regard to other suggestions to reduce light transmission, but these would be very difficult for the Council to enforce. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the proposed orangery would only be used in daytime hours. In the absence of further detailed information to the contrary, I cannot be certain that this issue could be satisfactorily addressed by the imposition of a condition and a precautionary approach is therefore preferable in this instance.
18. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal does not demonstrate adequate mitigation in relation to light transmission and would potentially be harmful to the IDSR in the Cranborne Chase AONB. The appeal scheme would therefore be contrary to the design aims of Policies ENV3, ENV4 and STR2 of the LPP1, as

¹ Adopted 6 July 2020.

² Adopted 2014.

well as Sections 12 and 15 of the Framework which, amongst other things, seek to protect areas of intrinsically dark skies and the Cranborne Chase AONB.

Other Matters

19. No concerns have been raised by the Council regarding the effect of the proposal on nearby listed buildings, and there are no reasons for me to reach an alternative view. Having regard to the available evidence, I am satisfied that the appeal scheme would preserve the significance of nearby listed buildings.

Conclusion

20. There are no considerations which indicate that the appeals should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR