



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 29 June 2021

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Monday, 19 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/21/3269497

Westwood Farm, 118 Cromwell Lane, Coventry CV4 8AS

- 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 Hamilton Bland against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/2020/2131, dated 28 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached four bed house and remodelling former pond.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development upon the setting of the Listed Building, known as Westwood Farm House.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is near to the Grade II Listed Building of Westwood Farm House. For the purposes of this appeal, the significance of the Listed Building is, in part, derived from the presence of its relatively undeveloped surroundings. This is indicative of the previous use of the site and the surrounding areas as an historic farmstead. Therefore, the setting of the Listed Building contributes to its significance.
4. The proposed development would, by reason of its nature, increase the overall level of built form in proximity to the Listed Building. Therefore, the general open character of the surroundings of the Listed Building would be eroded. Whilst field patterns may have varied over time, the layout of the existing buildings allow for the retention of a more open character.
5. In addition, the appeal site is near to a footpath from which views of the Listed Building and its less developed surroundings are readily apparent. From this vantage point, the Listed Building appears spatially divorced from the linear form of development elsewhere in the vicinity. Therefore, the increase in built form would erode this characteristic.
6. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be of significant proportions owing to its height and footprint. This means that views of the Listed Building from Cromwell Lane would be eroded. Irrespective of site levels, it would not be possible to view key architectural details, such as the front door, of the Listed

Building. In consequence, the erection of the proposed dwelling would erode the Listed Building's setting.

7. A relatively small number of dwellings have been constructed near to the Listed Building. However, these dwellings are typically akin to ancillary structures. This differs from the appeal proposal, which utilises a different roof shape and has more projecting elements. This means that even accounting for their similar widths, the existing buildings allow for the maintenance of the Listed Building's predominance.
8. I note the presence of an existing bungalow to the front of the appeal site. However, its design means that the front elevation of the Listed Building is clearly visible from the site's entrance. Therefore, this does not have the same adverse effects as the appeal scheme.
9. Whilst I am not persuaded that the reduction in the size of the existing pond would not lead to an erosion of the Listed Building's significance, this does not outweigh the adverse effects.
10. My attention has been drawn to references to other residential developments considered by the Council. I do not have the full information regarding their planning circumstances, which lessens the weight that I can attribute to them. Nonetheless, I note that their siting differs from the proposal before me. Therefore, they would not have the same effects on the setting of the Listed Building as they would not create a greater amount of built form between the Listed Building and Cromwell Lane, or obscure key views. Therefore, other developments do not outweigh my previous concerns.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the setting of the Listed Building. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies DE1, H5 and HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan (2016). These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new developments protect the setting, integrity, and character of heritage assets; enhance the historic environment; and represent the principles of sustainable development.

Other Matters

12. I note that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, it would be possible to ensure that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect upon the natural environment. However, this is only one of all the issues that must be considered when assessing a development. It does not therefore outweigh, or overcome, my previous conclusion.
13. I acknowledge efforts made by the appellant in amending the proposed development. Whilst this a matter of note, it does not overcome my concerns.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. The harm that would occur to the setting of the Listed Building would not be severe and therefore it would be 'less than substantial' within the meaning of the Framework. Paragraph 196 of the Framework requires such harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. The proposed development would generate some economic benefits due to the construction process and support of businesses of occupiers of the dwelling. However, such benefits would be small scale and limited in impact. by reason

of the size of the development. In addition, any benefit to the local housing supply would be small owing to the scale of the development. In consequence, I can give only these benefits a limited amount of weight.

16. Therefore, when giving significant importance and weight to the special attention I must pay to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the setting of the Listed Building, I find that the harm that would arise from the proposal would not be outweighed by its limited public benefits. Accordingly, there would be a conflict with Paragraph 194 of the Framework as harm to designated heritage assets would not have clear and convincing justification.
17. The proposed development would harm the setting of the Listed Building. The scheme would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR