



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 July 2021

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/21/3267181

Ware House Barns, Warehouse Road, Stebbing CM6 3ST

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mark Harris against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref: UTT/20/2003/HHF, dated 27 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is the removal of hedge and erection of wooden picket fence at front of property (retrospective application).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of hedge and erection of wooden picket fence at front of property at Ware House Barns, Warehouse Road, Stebbing CM6 3ST in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 20/01758/HH, dated 23 October 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: RD342.2; RD342.20/01.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of proposed development and address in the banner heading and decision above are taken from the decision notice, in the interests of precision.
3. The scheme for which permission is sought has been carried out. As such, the application is made retrospectively.
4. Since the Council's decision, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2021. The new Framework echoes and reinforces policy relevant to the main issues in this case. I shall determine the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it preserves the setting of the Grade II listed buildings Warehouse Farm Barn to North of House' (Ref: 1112742) (LB1) and 'Warehouse Farm Barn and Attached Cartlodge 15 Metres North West of House' (Ref: 1168957) (LB2).

Reasons

6. The appeal property comprises the listed buildings, which are residential barn conversions, and their garden areas. Together the listed buildings form an approximately L-shaped barn mass, with thatched roofs and partly weatherboarded walls. LB2's ridge height steps down towards the Warehouse Road frontage.
7. As indicated by the listing, LB1 dates from the eighteenth century and LB2 dates from around the seventeenth to eighteenth century. Given their architecture and evolved use, the buildings have evidential, historical and aesthetic value. The special architectural and historic interest of the buildings, insofar as it relates to this appeal, lies in the historic legibility of their traditional barn architecture within the context of an evolved residential use.
8. The partly lower height and hipped thatched roof form of LB2, together with the evolved residential use of the buildings and character of the garden, give LB2 a cottage-like appearance, projecting forward from LB1's barn conversion.
9. As Watch House Road gives way to Warehouse Road, the street frontage character on the eastern side of the latter changes from more rural style hedging to an edge-of-village mix of low fencing, walling and garden hedging.
10. The appeal site's front garden area contributes spaciousness and verdancy in the form of lawn, plants and trees. This complements the evolved cottage-like appearance of LB2, and allows the listed buildings' historic architecture to be appreciated within the site and from Warehouse Road. As such, the front garden makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed buildings.
11. Given the buildings' past agricultural use, I appreciate the Council's preference for a more rustic hedge and post and rail style fence combination. However, within the context 'on the ground', the low, unpainted timber picket fence adjoining the pavement on Warehouse Road, reads as a relatively modest front garden boundary among a row of various residential boundary types. Furthermore, the mixed perennial and shrub planting strip alongside the inner face of the fence helps to visually soften it.
12. Consequently, the front boundary treatment blends in acceptably with the locality's evolved edge-of-village residential character. Furthermore, the low height of the fence helps reveal the buildings' architecture from the street.
13. For the above reasons I conclude that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the area. Moreover, it has a neutral effect on, and thus preserves the setting and significance of the listed buildings. Therefore, the proposal accords with Policies ENV2 and GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan, which together seek to ensure that development complements local character and conserves the historic environment. Furthermore, the proposal accords with the approach of the Framework, taking account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, with great weight given to the asset's conservation.

Conditions

14. A condition requiring that the development is in accordance with the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development adheres to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal succeeds.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR