The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2022

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/22/3296220
The Granary, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow CM6 1SG

- 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 Esse Farnsworth against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
- The application Ref: UTT/21/3068/HHF dated 8 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2022.
- The application is for Section 73A Retrospective application to replace existing boundary fencing.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice and differs from that used on the Appellant's original application. In Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development is the same as that used by the Council and as such I have used this description accordingly which I feel accurately represents the scope of the proposals.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the setting and significance of the Grade II Listed Building, The Granary.

Reasons

4. The appeal scheme is concerned with the retrospective erection of a close timber boarded fence that runs someway around the perimeter of the Grade II Listed The Granary. The Granary itself is part of a wider complex of Listed and other historic agricultural buildings associated with Folly Farm. Much of the significance of The Granary, and the Folly Farm complex, is due primarily to their importance as examples of vernacular and historic farm buildings dating from around the sixteenth century. The Granary itself appears as black weatherboarded agricultural building that would be typical of the local vernacular character with a low hipped roof and pantile roof covering.

5. The Granary is reached along a private gated driveway that is accessed from the nearby roundabout and runs to the south of Stortford Road which is a

primary route around Great Dunmow. The nearby roundabout serves a large Tesco supermarket as well as several new housing estates. There is also a field between the private driveway to The Granary and Stortford Road which currently has planning permission for the erection of six new houses[1].

6. The building is not readily visible from Stortford Road and is well shielded by planting and garden boundary foliage. There is an attractive flint and brick wall that demarks the field where the new housing is proposed to be located and this continues along Stortford Road running east. It is around this field, and along a short distance of Stortford Road behind the existing wall, where the fence that is the subject of this appeal runs. It marks the boundary between the curtilage of The Granary and the field determined for the new houses by running in front of the boundary planting. It then turns the corner, running close to the existing flint and brick wall before stopping a few metres on this return.

7. In considering whether to grant planning permission for any development Sections 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) also states that when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset, 'great weight' should be given to the asset's conservation.

8. The scheme is currently is situ and is visible from Stortford Road as the field behind the flint and brick wall rises slightly uphill towards the location of The Granary. The flint wall is an attractive feature but I consider that its dominance is not interfered with for the most part and that this attractive boundary wall would maintain much of its independence despite the presence of this fence farther into the field. The proposed housing development as shown on the approved plans in the Appellant's Appeal Statement would certainly obscure the vast majority of the fencing also.

9. Despite this however, there is one area where there would be potential for conflict between the proposed fence, the flint and brick wall and the wider setting of the Listed Building. This occurs as the route of the fence turns alongside Stortford Road and continues for a while along its length. In this location the fence is located immediately behind the existing wall and is clearly visible above it from Stortford Road.

10. This visibility is all the more noticeable when the wall reduces its height through an attractive curving solder course feature before continuing at a lower level. The fence, by contrast, continues its route at the full height behind the wall and as such this element continues to be very visible, dominant and represents a poor design execution adjacent to this sensitive site.

11. Although I give great weight therefore to the mitigating effect that the proposed housing would likely have upon the visibility of much of this fence, along with the potential for Public Benefits in terms of making the garden area of the Listed Building more useable, (through the shielding of noise from the

[1] Application reference: UTT/20/0121/FUL

main road), I am unconvinced that this development would be acceptable in its entirety due to this very awkward detail along this part of Stortford Road.

12. As a result this element of the fence would indeed undermine the importance and attractiveness of the existing wall and would also, as a result, cause a degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of The Granary itself through this.

13. In balancing this impact, I consider that the majority of the fence would be able to justify itself through the associated benefits that it would give to the enjoyment of the Listed Building and its separation from the flint wall. However, I am required to assess this scheme as a whole and cannot separate this element of the extant fence from that of the much more harmful impression it gives when running immediately alongside Stortford Road that outweighs any other benefits given.

14. As such, I consider that, on the whole, the scheme would be contrary to Local Plan Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) that seeks to preserve the historic environment and achieve good design. A degree of harm would therefore occur to the setting and significance of the Listed Building through this element of the scheme that would not be outweighed by the benefits I have identified above.

15. As such the appeal is not in accordance with Local Policy or The Framework and ultimately it must fail in its entirety because of this particular element of the scheme adjacent Stortford Road being as harmful and poorly executed as it is.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR