



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2022

by Helen O'Connor LLB MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/22/3304262

Inschdene, Atcombe Road, South Woodchester, Gloucestershire GL5 5EW

- 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 Ms Hollern and Mr Wakefield against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.22/0590/HHOLD, dated 16 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of outbuildings.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of outbuildings at Inschdene, Atcombe Road, South Woodchester, Gloucestershire GL5 5EW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref S.22/0590/HHOLD, dated 16 March 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site location plan; Site survey, drawing number 20059/01; Block plan entitled 'Garden design to Inschdene (rev 5C)', drawing number Hol-05; Elevations and roof plan for garden room and Elevations and roof plan for security shed.
 - 3) Prior to development above slab level, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the outbuildings hereby permitted shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular reference to the setting of Yewtree House and Cobbs, a Grade II listed building and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the South Woodchester Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The South Woodchester Conservation Area (CA) covers the compact village of South Woodchester, a settlement set within a Cotswold valley and close to surrounding pastoral countryside. The steep topography of the area has

informed the distinctive configuration of built form. There is a high concentration of attractive vernacular buildings constructed from limestone, many of which have historic connections with the woollen and cloth making industry, an important factor underpinning the social and economic development of the settlement. Hence, its significance lies primarily in the way the mix of buildings and spaces reflect the evolution of the settlement over time.

4. There are several listed buildings along Atcombe Road, the closest to the proposed outbuildings is Yewtree House and Cobbs. This Grade II listed building constructed from limestone lies adjacent to the north and comprises two houses dating from the early 18th century. Its significance principally derives from its form and architectural interest. It is set lower and closer to the road than the appeal property and as such, has a more immediate presence in the street scene. Amongst other things, the open aspect to its attractive principal elevation means that it can be readily appreciated from the road.
5. In making my determination, I am mindful of my statutory duties¹ to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA and to give special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting.
6. Other Grade II listed buildings² to the north and south of the appeal property, as well as on the other side of Atcombe Road, lie some distance from the proposed siting of the outbuildings, and in most cases, there are intervening structures and vegetation. The small area of the grounds of the appeal property relevant to this appeal does not play a notable part in the surroundings within which these heritage assets are experienced.
7. Inschdene is a large, detached house within generous grounds, set back and elevated relative to Atcombe Road. Constructed primarily of red brick, its appearance and scale add variety to the other vernacular buildings close by. It is an attractive, impressive house of a traditional form. Together with the high limestone wall running along most of its frontage, it makes a positive contribution towards the aesthetic qualities of the CA and enriches the setting of Yewtree House and Cobbs.
8. The appeal proposal would introduce two domestic outbuildings, namely a garden room and shed, into the north-eastern corner of the grounds close to the driveway and in a position where historically there had been a double garage serving the property.
9. The siting of the outbuildings would be closer to Atcombe Road than the main house and therefore, could potentially be visible in the street scene. However, there are factors that would counter a harmful effect in this case. Firstly, the proposed siting would be at a considerably lower level in comparison to Inschdene and would be unlikely to detrimentally interfere with views of its principal elevation. Secondly, both structures would be modestly sized, single storey, simple domestic buildings with a monopitch roof. Hence, their scale and form would be clearly subordinate to the principal house. In addition, the proposed materials including timber boarding for the walls and grey rubberised

¹ Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

² Including Atcombe Cottage, Barley Acre, Peppercorns and No 6; Mount Pleasant; Baptist Chapel and The Old Schoolhouse.

roofing would result in a subdued appearance once the timber had weathered. This would be consistent with their low-key status.

10. Furthermore, when viewed from the road, the outbuildings would be behind the limestone wall that abuts Atcombe Road along most of the frontage of the property. Notwithstanding the rising levels, the stone boundary wall would remain the most obvious feature in these views within the CA, thereby limiting the prominence of the outbuildings. Above the wall along the eastern boundary is a fairly recently planted evergreen hedgerow of approximately 1.4 metres in height. This would further obscure the outbuildings such that only limited glimpses would be likely to be possible. It would take some effort to discern the structures in the street scene, and as the hedgerow matures, this may conceal them entirely.
11. In addition, a mature laurel hedgerow exists at the north-eastern end of the site at the point closest to Yewtree House and Cobbs. The mature hedgerow would shield views of the outbuildings from the road when approaching from the north and would prevent their presence from detracting from views towards the principal elevation of the listed building.
12. The Council does not dispute that the hedgerows would mitigate the visual impact of the outbuildings but is concerned that vegetation is transient and cannot be relied upon to provide lasting screening. However, in this case the boundary hedgerows are within the control of the appellant and add privacy to the grounds and parking area. On the evidence before me, there is little reason to suppose that they will not remain a long term feature, especially given that the eastern boundary hedge has recently been replanted. Moreover, until fairly recently the appeal site accommodated a large garage building, which is understood to have been in situ for over 50 years. The photograph³ provided shows the height of the mature hedgerow adjacent to the listed building extending above the height of that structure.
13. Taking these factors together, the form, size and low-key detailing of the proposed outbuildings defer to the higher authority of both the host dwelling and the adjacent listed building. Set behind the attractive stone frontage wall with planting above, any glimpses of the outbuildings would avoid appearing unduly prominent in the street scene. As such, the impact would be a neutral one, which would not undermine the attractive characteristics of the CA or detract from the aesthetic qualities of the adjacent listed building.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be respectful of the qualities of the host building and would also preserve the character and appearance of the CA. Moreover, it would have a neutral impact upon the setting of Yewtree House and Cobbs. Hence, it would not result in harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets. It follows that as I have not found harm would be caused to the historic environment, the proposal would not conflict with the heritage policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. In these circumstances the heritage balance in paragraph 202 of the Framework is not invoked.
15. Accordingly, I find no conflict with policies HC8, CP14 and ES10 of the Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015. Amongst other matters, these policies

³ Page 4, Appellant's Appeal Statement

include provisions that when taken in combination, seek to ensure development is in keeping with the original dwelling and respectful of its wider setting, surroundings, and the historic environment.

Conditions

16. The three year period in which the planning permission may be implemented is a statutory requirement but I also consider that it is necessary to specify the plans that are approved and that the development shall be undertaken in accordance with these, as this provides certainty.
17. A condition to agree the specific details of the external materials of the outbuildings is necessary to ensure the overall quality of the design as the details provided on the application form are somewhat generic.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Helen O'Connor

Inspector