
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 May 2022

by S D Castle BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/21/3276745

17 Heydon Road, Great Chishill, Royston SG8 8SP

- 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 Richard Britain against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/05079/FUL, dated 10/12/2020, was refused by notice dated 02 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is construction of new house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed parking arrangement on access to the site.
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Great Chishill Conservation Area and on the setting of the Grade II listed granary and dovecote (the Duffus).

Reasons

Access

3. An area for parking is proposed to the south of the new dwelling, adjacent to the proposed private garden area. I note that the Council is concerned that it has not been demonstrated that there is a clear 6m from the rear of the parking spaces to the edge of the curtilage. This distance would allow for turning on the site to enable cars to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. The garden and parking area associated with the dwelling is of a sufficient area to ensure appropriate parking and good quality private amenity space could be provided. Such detail could be reasonably secured by condition. As such, I find the proposal would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requirement for safe and suitable access to be achieved for all users.

Heritage

4. The site is located within the Great Chishill Conservation Area (GCCA) and adjacent to a Grade II listed granary and dovecote building known as 'the Duffus'. Whilst the Duffus originally formed part of the agricultural

buildings associated with Rectory Farm, it has since been converted to residential use as part of the wider 1980's residential development of the farmstead. The residential development of the farmstead resulted in significant new build elements, including the linking of the Duffus on its western side to other converted buildings to form a single dwelling house at no 17 Heydon Road. The site is predominantly garden land associated with no 17, but also includes part of a shared driveway accessed off Heydon Road.

5. The listing description describes the Duffus as, 'Early C18. Red brick with corrugated iron roof and weather boarded gable. Two storeys; rectangular plan with two openings at each floor level facing south-east. Brick plinth and sawtooth and dentil brick eaves cornice'. The site forms part of the immediate setting of the Duffus. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Additionally, Section 72 of the LBCA requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
6. The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which such an asset is experienced. 'Significance' has a particular meaning in heritage policy terms and is defined as the value of a heritage asset because of its heritage interest which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The Framework's glossary confirms that significance can be derived from a setting as well as the asset's physical presence.
7. The appellant's Heritage Statement (HS) provides historic maps and an aerial photo showing the original linear and courtyard arrangement of the agricultural buildings within the farmstead. The Duffus originally stood detached within an open yard, separate from the other agricultural buildings of more utilitarian form, with no buildings between it and Heydon Road. The HS advises that the historic farmstead layout persisted well into the twentieth century, noting that the existing asbestos clad building (the workshop) attached to the north-eastern elevation of the Duffus was constructed as a combine harvester shed in the 1950's.
8. Whilst the 1980's new build elements are substantial, their predominantly linear form has largely resulted in courtyard style building layouts. Furthermore, the open space of the historic farmyard between the Duffus and Heydon Road, including the appeal site, has substantially been retained. I find that the agrarian architecture of the converted buildings, in combination with the courtyard style building layouts and the retained farmyard spaces, enables the agricultural origins of the wider farmstead to remain legible.
9. Notwithstanding the residential redevelopment of the farmstead, the Duffus has retained much of its original historic character and features of interest noted in the listing description. I find the significance of the Duffus as a heritage asset lies partly in the evidential value of its historic fabric, but also in the building's illustrative value with regard to the agrarian history of the locality, and its aesthetic value as a charming and characterful structure in its own right. Furthermore, the surrounding historic farmyard setting continues to

- be important in understanding the agrarian origins of the Duffus, contributing positively to its heritage significance.
10. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, the significance of the GCCA is largely derived from the number of high-quality buildings of traditional local rural vernacular, many of which are listed, and the siting of the buildings and their relationship to each other, including the spaces between. The historic buildings and spaces associated with Rectory Farm are important to the significance, character and appearance of the GCCA by virtue of their aesthetic quality and their role in reinforcing the rural origins of the settlement.
 11. The proposed dwelling would be located adjacent to the end of the workshop and set at right angles to it, parallel to the shared entrance drive to no 17 and no 19. I acknowledge that the orientation of the dwelling would mirror that of the new build element of no 19 and that it would frame the entrance driveway. I also note that careful attention has been paid to the overall design of the dwelling, with limited openings on 3 elevations to provide a more agricultural appearance. I am not persuaded, however, that this would result in an entrance in harmony with either the Duffus or the surrounding wider former farmstead. The significant glazing on the south-western elevation of the dwelling would give it a contemporary residential appearance, and the proposed zinc clad roof form would appear unduly dominant in its form and visual impact. I find, therefore, that the scale of the dwelling, combined with its contemporary and bold design, would harmfully compromise the original architectural dominance of the Duffus and its relationship with the historically open surrounding yard.
 12. I acknowledge that public views of the Duffus are very limited given the existing dense tree belt along Heydon Road. Listed buildings are, however, safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained. There is currently clear intervisibility and views between the Duffus and the site (and vice versa). I note that the dwelling would occupy the area previously used for farm loading, evidenced by the remains of a large concrete loading ramp. The limited bulk and agricultural origins of the ramp, however, limit its visual impact on the setting of the Duffus.
 13. I have also taken into account the existing single-storey zinc roofed extension to no 15. That extension has a far more limited effect on the setting of the Duffus given its smaller scale and the intervening built form. The proposed dwelling, in contrast, would harm the way in which the Duffus is experienced by disrupting the historic openness of the associated farmyard with a style and scale of architecture that would visually compete with the listed building. This would undermine the ability to appreciate the architectural integrity and heritage significance of the Duffus, causing harm to its setting.
 14. The primary public views of the dwelling would be from Heydon Road, through the gap in the mature boundary landscaping at the vehicular access to the site. Whilst the dwelling would be set into the ground of the sloping site, its bulk and dark grey reclaimed standing seam zinc roof would be prominent in those views. The dwelling's roof form would be at odds with the traditional local rural vernacular of the many historic buildings within the GCCA. Furthermore, the dwelling would disrupt the rhythm of built form and open space by introducing a building close to Heydon Road on an area of historically open farmyard.

These harms would be observed both from Heydon Road and nos 17 and 19. The development would harm, therefore, both the character and appearance of the GCCA, and the significance of the GCCA as a designated heritage asset.

15. The appellant refers to other examples of buildings with clerestory roof forms within a historic setting on the Ouse near Huntingdon. I have not been provided with the details of those buildings or their surroundings. I am not, therefore, aware of all the considerations that applied in those cases and cannot be sure the circumstances are directly comparable with the appeal proposal.
16. Taking into consideration the findings above, the harm to the significance of both designated assets (the GCCA and the Duffus) would be less than substantial. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The Heritage Balance

17. The Planning Practice Guidance¹ advises that, 'public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the Framework'.
18. The appellant advises that the sale of the dwelling would allow for the financing of the preservation of the Duffus, and for the sympathetic recladding of the workshop, to enhance the appearance and setting of the listed building. The appellant also advises that the workshop is clad in cement-asbestos panels and that upgrading the workshop would be in accordance with a part-implemented extant permission. I have not, however, been provided with either the full details of that extant permission, nor a detailed development appraisal that demonstrates securing the upgrading of the workshop by condition is justified.
19. It is not sufficient for a condition to relate to planning objectives, it must also be justified by the nature or impact of the proposed development. It would not, therefore, be reasonable to impose a condition to remedy the pre-existing issue of the workshop's asbestos cladding, given the issue was not created by, and would not be exacerbated by, the proposed development. As such, in the absence of substantive details regarding the proposed works to the workshop, and without an appropriate and justified legal mechanism to secure those works, only extremely limited weight can be attached to the potential benefits that would result from the proposed upgrading of the workshop.
20. The appellant advises that most houses in Great Chishill are too large or too old to meet current demand. I have, however, been provided with no substantive evidence regarding the required mix of houses within the local area. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the proposal would make a limited contribution to the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and that future residents would contribute to the vitality of the rural community. There would also be some employment benefit during the construction phase of the development. However, as the proposal is for only a single dwelling, these benefits attract limited weight.
21. I also note that it is intended for the dwelling to be sustainably constructed and to be highly energy efficient, with high levels of insulation, and heating

¹ Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723 - Revision date: 23 07 2019

provided by an air-source heat pump. In the absence of substantive evidence demonstrating the level of energy efficiency that would be achieved by the dwelling, I give only limited weight to these environmental benefits.

22. Framework paragraph 199 requires that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. I, therefore, attribute great weight to the conservation of the Duffus and the GCCA, understanding that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Accordingly, I also give great weight to the identified less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of The Duffus and to the GCCA. The public benefits of the scheme, even if taken together, are limited, and certainly do not outweigh the identified harm to the designated heritage assets.
23. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies HQ/1 and NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan² (LP) by virtue of the above identified harms, including to the setting and significance of the Duffus, and to the character, appearance and significance of the GCCA. These policies, taken together, amongst other things, require development to sustain and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the district's historic environment; and to preserve or enhance the character of the local rural area, creating a positive sense of place and identity. Furthermore, the proposal would also conflict with the Framework's aim to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conclusion

24. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations (including the Framework) indicate otherwise. The proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Whilst the public benefits listed above in the heritage balance are afforded limited weight, they would not outweigh the significant harms set out above.
25. Overall, there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, of sufficient weight to outweigh the identified conflicts with the development plan.
26. For the reasons above, the appeal is dismissed.

S D Castle

INSPECTOR

² Adopted 2018