



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th May 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/W2845/W/22/3308836

The Rectory Farmhouse, High Street, Scaldwell, Northamptonshire NN6 9JS

- 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 Peter Kane against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WND/2022/0511, dated 1 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as, 'Demolition of existing barn and construction of new double garage. Alterations to stone boundary wall, including reduction in height and widening vehicular access. The wall is to be taken down to the height of the rest of the boundary wall. One metre of wall is to be removed adjacent to the entrance.'
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Appeal B Ref: APP/W2845/Y/22/3308837

The Rectory Farmhouse, High Street, Scaldwell, Northamptonshire NN6 9JS

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Peter Kane against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WND/2022/0512, dated 1 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2022.
 - The works proposed are described as, 'Demolition of existing barn and construction of new double garage. Alterations to stone boundary wall, including reduction in height and widening vehicular access. The wall is to be taken down to the height of the rest of the boundary wall. One metre of wall is to be removed adjacent to the entrance.'
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to listed buildings I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

3. The main issues with both appeals are whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed buildings, Rectory Farmhouse and Wall attached to South of Rectory Farmhouse (Wall), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess, whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Scaldwell Conservation Area (SCA) and whether it would harm the significance of any of these designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. The SCA comprises tight, small-scale streets radiating from the central enclosed space of the village green. As set out in the Scaldwell Conservation Area Appraisal and Design Guide, High Street, on which the site lies, has a strong linear sense of enclosure created by a hard frontage of two and three storey buildings and high walls. It is also a main route running through the village to the village green and is characterised by stone houses mainly of 18th and 19th century origin. Given the above, I find that the significance of the SCA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the strong linear pattern of development and the way the buildings of varying ages and styles reflect the evolution of the village.
5. Rectory Farmhouse was listed in 1985 and dates from the mid-18th century. It lies opposite the Old Rectory and was once owned by the church serving as an ancillary site to the Rectory. The front part of the house, facing the street dates from the mid-18th century, while the rear part was built in the mid-19th century with much adornment and rich in architectural details, as set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment.
6. The Wall which lies along the western boundary of the site, is listed in its own right as well as being attached to Rectory Farmhouse and appears to date from the mid-18th century. It forms the western wall of the barn subject of the appeal.
7. Given the above, I find that the special interest of Rectory Farmhouse, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the legibility of its 18th and 19th century phasing. The special interest of the Wall lies in its ancillary function in connection with Rectory Farmhouse and its in keeping character.
8. The north and south walls of the Barn are constructed of brick whereas the east and west walls are of stone, the west wall being part of the Wall which runs along the boundary with the street. The evidence indicates that the brick walls of the building may date from the late 18th century or early 19th century. Under section 1(5)(a) of the Act, the listing includes any object or structure fixed to the building. As the Wall comprises one of the external walls of the barn, the barn is included in the listing.
9. The demolition of the barn would result in the loss of historic fabric and the contribution it would make to the understanding of the composition. This would result in the erosion of the legibility of the historic phasing of the listed buildings and would therefore adversely affect their special interest.
10. The proposal includes the erection of a garage with a square plan in a similar position as the existing structure but set away from the Wall. It would include a shallow pitched roof and wide gable. As the gable end would span across the full width of two garage doors, the resulting proportions of the elevation would appear squat and out of keeping with the surrounding buildings. The roof pitch would appear noticeably shallower than the south facing gable end of the front part of The Rectory.
11. Although the roof pitch would be similar to that of the existing building, since the proposed roof would have a gable end rather than being hipped and since it

would span over a double garage, the gable end of the proposal would appear more incongruous with its surroundings in comparison.

12. I acknowledge that the proposed materials would be inline with the materials of the existing and surrounding buildings. However, given the above, the wide gable end and shallow roof pitch of the proposal would not appear sympathetic to the traditional steeper roof pitches of the surrounding buildings which lie within the setting of the Wall. Therefore, it would appear incongruous in the street scene, resulting in substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would have an adverse effect on the setting of Rectory Farmhouse and would diminish the special interest and significance of the Wall.
13. Although the proposed garage would be set a short distance away from the Wall, it would nonetheless be visible from the street including through the access and would therefore erode the significance of the SCA.
14. The gable ends at the rear of Rectory Farmhouse do not appear to be as shallow as the proposal and are not readily visible from the street. The other surrounding buildings visible from the street also do not seem to have wide gables over double garages. While I note the other examples of wide gables provided by the Appellant, they do not appear to be in close proximity to the appeal site, or within the setting of the listed buildings and are therefore not directly comparable to these appeals.
15. The proposal also includes the removal of a portion of the Wall to widen the vehicular access into the site and a reduction in the height of the wall that forms part of the existing garage. This would result in the loss of historic fabric and the hard frontage created by the wall would be reduced as result of the proposal. As such, this particular aspect of the scheme would also diminish the significance of the SCA.
16. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve its special interest, would fail to preserve the setting of Rectory Farmhouse and would fail to preserve the significance of the SCA. Due to the limited scale of the proposal, I find the harm to the significance of each of these designated heritage assets to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
17. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings.
18. The Barn is in a state of disrepair and the structural report indicates that, due to movement of the walls, leaking through the roof and shrubs growing out of the walls, it is beyond repair. It also states that the Wall shows no signs of instability, and no strengthening works would be required to demolish the rest of the building. The structural report goes on to say that in its current state it presents more of a risk to the Wall than does its removal.
19. As such it appears that the demolition of the barn is necessary to preserve the Wall in the long term. The demolition is therefore also necessary to preserve the special interest of the Wall, and by retaining the wall, would preserve the setting of Rectory Farmhouse and the significance of SCA. On this basis the public benefit of preserving the Wall justifies the loss of the barn.

20. In addition, the heritage benefit to the Wall from the demolition of the barn would balance the harm to the special interest of the Wall that would result from the reduction in height of the wall and the removal of part of the Wall to widen the access. This is because the reduction in the height of the wall would bring the height in line with the adjacent parts of the wall and the removal of 1m of the length of the wall would be limited compared with the overall length of the wall along the street.
21. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial as the widening of the access would improve highway safety. Given the height and position of the existing wall at the back of the pavement, there is limited visibility for motorists exiting the site using the access. The proposed widening of the access by demolishing around 1m width of the wall would be likely to increase visibility from the access and reduce the likelihood of collision with pedestrians. However, given that the widening is around a metre, and the wall would still be tall, the improvement in visibility is likely to be limited.
22. I note the evidence regarding the proposed photovoltaic panels. However, there is little substantial evidence before me to indicate that the energy generated would be for public use. While the use of the panels may reduce the burden on local energy supply, any public benefit in this respect would be very limited given the size of the panels.
23. The public benefits to highway safety and the well-being of the Wall that would result from the proposal would be limited and would therefore not outweigh the considerable weight attached to the significance of the Grade II listed Wall, the significance of the Grade II listed Rectory Farmhouse and the significance of the SCA.
24. Given the above, and in the absence of any significant public benefit, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed buildings and the character and appearance of the SCA, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 199 of the Framework and the development plan.
25. In particular, the proposal would conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) Adopted December 2014 and Policies ENV7 and ENV10 of the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) for Daventry District 2011-2029 Adopted February 2020 which seek, among other things, to secure and enhance the significance of the area's heritage assets and their settings and high quality design that reflects and integrates with the surrounding area.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, the appeals are dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR