



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/23/3319795

The Manor House, The Street, Long Sutton, Hook, Hampshire, RG29 1ST

- 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 Mrs Christene Eyre Walker against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/02575/HOU, dated 20 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is new garden equipment shed clad in feather edge boarding left to weather naturally to silver/grey.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for new garden equipment shed clad in feather edge boarding left to weather naturally to silver/grey at The Manor House, The Street, Long Sutton, Hook, Hampshire, RG29 1ST, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. 22/02575/HOU dated 20 October 2022 and the plans submitted with it, and subject to the conditions listed below.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A003 Rev.A; A002; A001.
 - 3) The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes incidental to the residential use of the dwelling known as The Manor House, The Street, Long Sutton.
 - 4) Within 3 months of the completion of the construction of the shed hereby permitted, the existing shed shown on drawing No. A002, located to the south west of the approved building, shall be demolished and all the demolished materials shall be removed from the application site.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area with particular regard to the setting of the Listed Building and the appeal site's location within a designated Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Long Sutton Conservation Area (LSCA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires, therefore, that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Similar advice is to be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (Framework) and in policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 (April 2020) (Local Plan).
4. The appeal site also includes The Manor House which is a Grade II* Listed Building (Listed Building) and the appeal proposal falls within its setting. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 also requires, therefore, that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the setting of this heritage asset. Similar advice is again to be found in the Framework and in policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Local Plan.
5. I have been provided with a copy of the listing for The Manor House which states that it was added to the list on 26 June 1987. The listing continues by identifying the details of the large house built over several periods with the oldest dating from the 16th Century. There is no reference to the property's walled garden or other grounds reaffirming that the appeal proposal falls within the setting of the Listed Building. I have also been provided with a copy of the Long Sutton Conservation Area Proposal Statement (March 1999) (CAPS), which was produced as supplementary guidance.
6. The CAPS states that the special interest of the LSCA is largely centred on its collection of listed buildings as well as the focal points provided by the Big Meadow open space and the Pond, on The Street. The references to The Manor House state that it is one of the dominant residential buildings in the area due to its scale, massing and special design detailing, as well as its well treed and spacious grounds. The CAPS continues by stating that the LSCA's townscape and building design features need to be cared for and not harmed by inappropriate development.
7. The CAPS also acknowledges that trees and landscaping make an important contribution to the character of the area. As I observed on site, the appeal site contains a number of mature trees, particularly on its frontage to The Street, which combined with mature boundary hedging effectively screen the house from the road with only glimpsed views possible at the vehicular access into the site. The area of the appeal site that includes the proposed shed does not form part of an 'important view' and the CAPS highlights that some post war developments have not contributed to the special character of the area, which includes development on Woodhill Lane to the north of the appeal site.
8. All of the above factors contribute to the character and appearance of the LSCA as a whole.
9. The Council contend that the proposed shed would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the LSCA. I understand that the harm the Council allege would arise from the siting, scale and bulk of the proposal and not its overall design. I do not agree with the Council's objection in this respect. The proposed building is modest in terms of its scale and bulk and would incorporate a traditional timber design similar to that of other outbuildings on the appeal site. Of equal importance is that the proposed building would be

sited at the rear of the site, beyond the walled garden and adjoining a tennis court. It would occupy part of an area that is currently laid to lawn and would be viewed against the backdrop of the mature trees/hedging that characterise the north western boundary of the site.

10. As such, the proposed building would effectively be hidden from any public vantage points and it would not, therefore, impact on any key vistas within the LSCA or any views of The Manor House or on any features that contribute to the special importance of the LSCA. On the contrary, the Appellant's Grounds of Appeal (GOA) state that the proposal would replace an existing unsightly shed (located to the south west) and an area of open storage of gardening equipment adjoining this, and thus secure an improvement to the appearance of this part of the site. As I observed on site, the principal views of the proposal would be from the second floor windows of the modern houses in Woodhill Lane (Manor Farm development). The latter abuts the north western boundary of the appeal site and as they are two storey houses they physically dominate this part of the site.
11. For all of these reasons, the proposed traditional design of the new shed and its modest scale would sit comfortably on this part of the appeal site and it would not result in any harm to the LSCA.
12. I also disagree with the Council's contention that the proposal would harm the setting of the Listed Building. As I confirmed above, the new shed would not be visible from and would not be viewed in the context of The Manor House. It would be located behind the high wall that forms the boundary to the walled garden, where only a small door opening leads from the latter to the area where the new building would be sited. Apart from this, the only other view of the new shed would be from the south eastern end of the tennis court, but this would be through the chain link fence that surrounds the court and against the backdrop of the prominent two storey houses on Woodhill Lane. The Council's contention that this area of the site is open or undeveloped appears to ignore this context and their concern is not, therefore, one that I share.
13. The proposal would be physically and visually separated from the Listed Building and its walled garden. The latter and the gardens in front and either side of the host property provide, in my view, the setting to The Manor House. Even so, there are already a number of similar timber outbuildings adjacent to The Manor House whose presence have not harmed its setting. On the contrary, these are well designed and modest outbuildings that you would traditionally expect to see within the grounds of such a large house.
14. The evidence before me indicates that the Appellant has given careful attention to the siting and style of the proposed building, and chosen a location adjoining the tennis court that minimises the sprawl of development, is outside the walled garden, makes use of existing services and is located between the court and the visually prominent two storey houses to the north west. It is also apparent that other locations have been considered by the Appellant and dismissed as they would either impact on existing trees or obstruct access to and around the tennis court or would be more visible particularly from the existing swimming pool, which lies, in my view, within the setting of the Listed Building. The proposed location avoids, therefore, any harmful effect on the setting of this important heritage asset.

15. In terms of the requirement for the new shed, my attention has not been drawn to any development plan policy that requires such an assessment to be undertaken. Even so, as I observed on site the grounds to the appeal site are meticulously maintained to a very high standard and to do so no doubt requires a large amount of gardening equipment, some of which is stored in the existing shed or otherwise stored in the open. The Appellant indicates that storage is also required for equipment to service the tennis court. As I confirmed earlier, the Appellant's GOA state that the new building would replace the existing unsightly shed and open storage area. Consequently, the proposal would lead to a material improvement to the appearance of this part of the site and contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the heritage assets.
16. Reference has also been made to the ability to utilise another outbuilding on the site. However, the Appellant indicates that these outbuildings comprise a timber double garage in front of the Listed Building utilised to store classic cars, a timber building that sits by the swimming pool and is used for pool equipment and a covered but open sided BBQ area that is used for outside dining and cooking. Based on the evidence before me and my observations on site, all of the existing outbuilding's are, therefore, used for other purposes.
17. Accordingly, I find that the proposed shed would be acceptable and that it would preserve the setting of the Listed Building. I also find that the proposed shed would preserve the character and appearance of the LSCA as a whole in that it would leave it unharmed. The proposal would thus pass the statutory tests referred to earlier and would be in accord with policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Local Plan, as well as the corresponding policies of the Framework.

Conditions

18. The Council has suggested conditions which I have considered against the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on the use of planning conditions. A condition requiring compliance with the submitted plans is necessary in order to secure a high quality development. I have, however, added a list of approved plans for clarity. I also agree that a condition to control the purpose of the proposed shed is reasonable. However, I have amended the Council's suggested wording to reflect the fact that the proposal before me is for a shed to store equipment, which would be 'incidental' to the use of the host property and that planning permission was not sought for an ancillary use such as residential accommodation.
19. In addition, as the Appellants GOA confirm the proposed shed would replace the existing unsightly shed, as shown on drawing No. A002, which also appears to be unauthorised. I have, therefore, added a condition that requires the existing shed to be demolished and all materials removed from the application site within 3 months of the completion of the proposed shed.

Conclusions

20. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters raised into account I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR