



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 May 2023

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/H1705/W/22/3304000

Century House, Axford House, Farleigh Road, Axford, Hampshire RG25 2DX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Lady Gina Sopwith against Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00641/HSE is dated 28 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of an orangery to southern elevation.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/H1705/Y/22/3303996

Century House, Axford House, Farleigh Road, Axford, Hampshire RG25 2DX

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Lady Gina Sopwith against Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00683/LBC is dated 28 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of an orangery to southern elevation.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed and planning permission for the erection of an orangery to southern elevation is refused.
2. Appeal B is dismissed and listed building consent for the erection of an orangery to southern elevation is refused.

Procedural Matters

3. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and the same scheme. The remit of each regime is different, and the main issue relates to both appeals. To reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision letter.
4. These appeals are against the failure of the Council to issue decisions within prescribed periods. Had the Council had the opportunity to determine the applications before the lodging of the appeals against non-determination, it would have refused both the planning and listed building applications for the following reason:

“The proposed orangery, by virtue of its design and siting, would further domesticate and over-complicate the curtilage listed building which retains much of its simple agricultural character and form despite previous alterations. The proposal would further erode this agricultural character, which contributes positively to the significance of the principal listed building and the site as a whole. Altering the character of the curtilage listed building would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the curtilage listed building, and to the significance of the principal listed building Axford House, by virtue of works to an attractive building within its setting which contributes to its significance. There is no clear and convincing justification for the proposed orangery, and the less than substantial harm resulting from the proposal is not outweighed by public benefit. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029, and the Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (2019).”

5. Both main parties have agreed that the appeal property, Century House, is a curtilage listed building, given its age and association with the principal listed building, Axford House, at the time of its listing. Following the site visit, the appellant submitted further additional heritage assessment information (HAI)¹ following a request which has been considered in these decisions.

Main Issue -both appeals

6. The main issue is whether the development and works would preserve a curtilage listed building known as Century House, and the principal Grade II listed building, known as Axford House, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess.

Reasons

Heritage assets

7. Century House, comprises a residential unit within a two storey longitudinal section of a converted outbuilding which is located within the curtilage of Axford House, a substantial detached, Grade II listed dwellinghouse. Further additions spur off this longitudinal section and form a courtyard near to the principal listed building, Axford House. The outbuilding is constructed with brick and flint, with a low pitched slate roof, and adjacent to Century House, there is a high level open archway, positioned just below the roof eaves. The entrance to Century House is located under this covered archway.
8. Historic mapping evidence indicates that this longitudinal part of the outbuilding was in situ in 1896. Previous mapping evidence indicate between 1873 and 1896, that other parts of the outbuilding were present but not the part subject to the appeal. Historically, there were additions to the southern elevation of the building but these have disappeared over time.
9. Axford House, also formerly known as Lower Axford Farmhouse, and the curtilage listed building would have been part of a larger agricultural estate, although the full extent of this is unclear. The archway provided a link from a former entrance on the main road through to the courtyard and the farmhouse. The estate was sold off, such that it was reduced to just less than 1.5ha by the 1970s. Up to the early 1980s, the appeal curtilage building was agricultural in form and appearance, with a large space internally within the longitudinal

¹ Additional heritage assessment information, Bell Cornwell, ref 10571, dated 27 June 2022.

- section of the building. In early 1980s, this part of the outbuilding was converted into a residential accommodation and helicopter hanger, the latter involving the removal of a large part of an exterior facing wall. In late 1980s, the hangar part of the building was converted into residential accommodation.
10. Axford House, the principal Grade II listed building, is a timber-framed house dating back to the 16th century. The statutory list entry (List Entry 1092891) indicates that the building was altered in 17th century and significantly extended in 20th century, with a significant two storey extension to the side. To the side of this, there is a 21st century brick and timber orangery. The listed building has a massive old tile roof, half hipped at either end, and a sloping ridge towards one end. There is significant exposed timber-framing within an altered structure, with the north side having a moulded beam of a jetty, and below it, a bay window on brackets with moulded cornice. The gables are massive frames with arch-bracing, heavy horizontals, and closely arranged verticals. The long east elevation has old and new sections and there is a small section of 18th century framing between the old block and recent work. Fenestration comprises timber casements, and there is a six-panelled door in a solid frame beneath a hood on brackets.
 11. Despite more recent 20th and 21st century extensions and alterations, the 16th century timber house has legibility as a former farmhouse given its size and design. Such legibility, along with surviving historic fabric and traditional detailing underpins its historic and architectural interest and significance. Its spacious surroundings, with ancillary low key traditional buildings and rural context contribute to the understanding of it as a former farmhouse.
 12. Within the statutory list entry, there is no mention of the curtilage listed building, incorporating Century House, and it has less significance compared to the principal listed building. With the residential conversion, the previous agricultural use has been lost from the curtilage listed building. Within part of the outbuilding encompassing Century House, the previous internal vaulted ceiling space has been lost. The residential uses have introduced a first floor where there was previously none, and it has a domesticated appearance emphasised by white casement windows and french doors at the ground floor. The proposed orangery extension elevation lacks any significant historical fabric given it was removed for the helicopter hangar and then rebuilt for the residential conversion.
 13. Nevertheless, it still retains a simple traditional rural and subservient appearance and form compared to Axford House. As such, it still conveys the appearance of a former agricultural building and together, with its simple design and materials, a lower status and formality compared to the principal listed building. It provides evidence of the role and stature of Axford House in the development of the village. As such, although reduced, the historical and architectural qualities are of value and importance, and are of special interest and significance.

Proposals

14. The proposed single storey orangery would result in no harm to historic fabric and would cover an area where there is extensive french doors. It would be constructed with similar brick and flint to the curtilage listed building, and white painted timber and glazing.

15. However, it would have a moulded parapet, beyond which there would be a central roof light, extensive glazed windows and french doors, with partial columns either side. It would also extend out noticeably across the curtilage listed building by virtue of its significant depth and width. Such an ornate designed and significant sized extension would be dominating and formal, which would be markedly out of keeping with a traditional rural building that is simple in design, despite its domestication. In particular, this would significantly erode the remaining historical and architectural agrarian qualities and form of the building, and the link with the principal listed building, Axford House.
16. The site's vehicular access from the main road has now been closed which would reduce public views of the extended building. Nevertheless, public visibility is not the sole measure to consider the acceptability of listed building extensions. Listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained. In this regard, the architecture and design of the extension would be markedly out of kilter with the character and appearance of the curtilage listed building. Furthermore, over time, site circumstances may change, for instance, boundary vegetation may be removed or a new site access created.
17. The orangery extension would be similar to that on the principal listed building which itself has greater special interest and significance. There is no information before me on the how this structure gained planning permission and listed building consent. However, every proposal has to be considered on its own particular merits. From what I saw on my site visit, Axford House is clearly a different type of building to the curtilage building as has been commented upon. It has higher status and the orangery extension has been attached to a more recent 20th century part of the building. For these reasons, there are significant differences between the situation before me in these appeals and that relating to the principal dwelling. Accordingly, limited weight is attached to this development on Axford House.
18. In terms of the setting of Axford House, there would be no intervisibility between the extension and this listed building itself. Views of or from an asset will play an important part in the way in which we experience an asset in its setting but this is also influenced by the historic relationship between places. The curtilage buildings were historically agricultural buildings used in connection with a farm which Axford farmhouse was part of. The change to the curtilage listed building would be marked affecting peoples appreciation of the relationship between the two heritage assets. Although at the lower end of the spectrum of less substantial harm, the setting of a principal listed building would be harmed, through the extension's formal design and significant size.
19. The degree of harm to the significance of the listed buildings, as designated assets, would, in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), be less than substantial. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viable use.

Heritage and Planning Balance

20. The residential uses for the curtilage listed building have created a new chapter in the building, giving it a viable use which ultimately protects and ensures

maintenance of the building. The proposal would help sustain the building through maximising a viable use as a dwelling. However, the building is already in use as a dwelling and one in which appeared to be in sound overall condition and at no obvious risk.

21. In considering whether to grant planning permission or listed building consent, the s66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting. The proposed development and works would fail to preserve the curtilage listed building and the setting of the principal listed building in conflict with s66(1), S16(2) and s(20) of the Act. There are no public benefits sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that less than substantial harm carries for each of these designated heritage assets. Conflict therefore arises with historic environment protection policies of the Framework.
22. The proposed development would conflict with Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029, which notably seeks to ensure that all development proposals conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. There would be conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the planning appeal be determined other than in accordance with the development plan and planning permission refused.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that that Appeals A and B should be dismissed, and planning permission and listed building consent refused.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR