



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2024

by N Bromley BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/23/3320423

Onneley Hall Farm, Newcastle Road, Woore, Shropshire CW3 9QJ

- 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. Simon Roberts against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 22/04269/FUL, dated 17 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is Re-instatement of historical built form to create a new swimming pool and games room to augment the approved adjacent holiday let development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 19 December 2023 and updated on 20 December 2023. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended. As a result, I have not sought submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by taking this approach.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the non-designated heritage asset; and
 - whether the proposed development would provide appropriate tourism facilities in the countryside, having regard to relevant provisions of the development plan.

Reasons

Non-designated heritage asset

4. Onneley Hall Farm comprises a small cluster of residential dwellings and agricultural buildings located within the open countryside. The farmhouse and cluster of agricultural buildings represent a traditional nineteenth century farmstead. The Council highlight that the site is included on the Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project. Therefore, the parties agree that the farmstead, with its traditional farm buildings, is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

5. The proposed building would be located to the side of an existing single storey former farm building which has a traditional, simple, agricultural appearance, constructed with brick and a clay tile roof. The existing building is located to the front of the cluster of buildings and occupies a focal position on the approach to the site, via the long driveway, from Newcastle Road. The farmhouse, due to its size, also has a commanding appearance from the access drive. The brick-built buildings and the arrangement of buildings within the cluster of farm buildings are the main visual qualities of the farmstead as a NDHA.
6. The proposed building would have a large footprint which would project significantly forward of the existing building. A lean-to plant room would also be attached to the side elevation, which would exacerbate the size and mass of the proposed building, when viewed alongside the existing modest building.
7. The mass of the proposed building, and its forward projection would overwhelm the modest and simple appearance of the existing single storey farm building, to the extent that it would be overly dominant and incongruous within the setting of the attractive farmstead.
8. Additionally, the height and width of the proposed building is emphasised by the prominent gable end, which would have a large glazing feature, which would be a stark contrast to the well-proportioned windows of the existing modest farm building. The proposed development would therefore be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, as well as the cluster of buildings within the farmstead. I attach significant weight to the harm to the significance of the NDHA.
9. I acknowledge that the site historically had large agricultural buildings adjacent to the original farm building, but these have since been removed, some years ago. The site now has a wholly different context and appearance. Likewise, whilst the proposed building would be constructed with facing brickwork, with a pitched tile roof, and it would be screened from longer distance views from outside of the site, these factors have not eased my concerns that the proposed development would be harmful to the cluster of buildings within the farmstead.
10. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the non-designated heritage asset, such that it would negatively affect its significance. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies CS5, CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Core Strategy 2011 (CS), Policies MD2, MD11 and MD13 of the Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan 2015 (SAMDev) and Policies HOU3 and ECON1 of the Woore Neighbourhood Plan. Together, these require, amongst other things, that development proposals; protect, conserve, and enhance the historic context and character of heritage assets.

Appropriate tourism facilities

11. The single storey, traditional agricultural building has planning permission to be converted into two-bedroom holiday accommodation (Reference 21/04880/FUL). The proposal would be used in connection with the holiday let accommodation, and provide a swimming pool, games room and gym.

12. Policies CS5 and CS16 of the CS, and Policy MD11 of the SAMDev, support new tourist accommodation in the countryside, subject to a number of criteria. In particular, Policy MD11 sets out, amongst other things, that holiday let development, that does not conform to the legal definition of a caravan and is not related to the conversion of existing appropriate rural buildings, will be resisted in the countryside. There is also a requirement for proposals to complement the character and qualities of the immediate surrounding.
13. While the proposed building would be related to the existing building to be converted, it would be significantly larger. Furthermore, the existing building has not yet been converted. I acknowledge that additional facilities would likely increase the marketability of the holiday let accommodation. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to justify why a building of the size proposed is necessary to help to support the future holiday let accommodation.
14. In addition, I have already found that the proposed building would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, as well as the cluster of buildings within the farmstead. Therefore, it would not complement the character and quality of the surroundings.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would not provide appropriate tourism facilities in the countryside, having regard to relevant provisions of the development plan. It therefore conflicts with Policies CS5 and CS16 of the CS and Policy MD11 of the SAMDev.

Planning and Heritage Balance and Conclusion

16. The Framework states that the planning system should be genuinely plan led. The development plan is the starting point for decision making and I must make my decision in accordance with it unless other considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework, at paragraph 209, requires, in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
17. The proposed development would add additional facilities to the future accommodation at the site and to the mix of such uses in the locality. The nature of the proposed facilities could also assist in promoting health and wellbeing for future guests of the holiday let accommodation. A new building would also provide social and economic benefits to local services and businesses and the economy during the construction and occupancy phases without conflict with neighbouring land uses. I also note that the Parish Council supports the application. However, these factors do not override the harm identified to the NDHA.
18. The conflict with policies relating to heritage assets and tourism draws the proposal into conflict with the development plan as a whole. In conclusion, the other considerations before me do not indicate that I should make a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR