

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2024

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/24/3340107

The Corner House, Village Road, Weston Patrick, Hampshire RG25 2NX

- 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 and Mrs Andrew and Katie Smith Wildsmith against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01145/HSE, dated 3 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the side extension and chimney stack, new dormer window, replacement of existing single storey extensions, existing stables removed and new three bay garage and installation of oil tank and air source heat pumps.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Given that planning permission reference 23/03094/HSE was granted by Notice dated 8 February 2024 for all of the above, excepting the proposed new three bay garage, this appeal is effectively concerned with the garage only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is the extensive grounds of a large 'Arts and Crafts' style substantial detached dwelling on the inside curve of a narrow lane. Whilst varied housing is found locally the character and appearance of the pleasing local scene is in all regards semi-rural. The proposal is a 3 bay garage approximately 6.5 metres in depth, 9.15m width and 6m to the ridge and is shown with an external staircase to a first floor with two dormers and rooflights.
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5. The site lies within the Weston Corbett and Patrick Conservation Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected within Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 (LP) which takes the same approach and includes a range of elaborating criteria.
6. The Appellants have, seemingly logically, selected a part of their curtilage which is close to an existing access point and part accommodates smaller old stabling which is no longer in needed nor in reasonable condition. The existing low-key ancillary building is close to the lane, on somewhat higher land, and only partially visible via filtered views given the dominant landscape along this frontage. The road frontage here is 'green', and of an attractive bucolic and intimate nature. Any development or replacement building on this stretch needs, in my opinion, to be handled extremely carefully. Regrettably the proposed garage building given its form and bulk would be a challenge within these grounds but as planned is simply be too close to the lane, overly large and high, and too elevated. Even with well-selected materials it would bring disproportionate prominent built form relatively to the fore in the scene. To a material degree it would appear as undue urbanisation and the appearance and scale could well be taken for an inappropriately sited building reminiscent of a chalet bungalow.
7. Given all these circumstances and the nature of the scheme I conclude that the proposal would run contrary to the aims of S72(1) of the Act and conflict with LP Policy EM11. I also conclude that the scheme would conflict with LP Policy EM1 which is concerned with landscape and, amongst other matters, seeks to protect scenic quality and important views and ambiance within settlements. I would also deem there to be breaches of the over-arching objectives of the Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (2019) and the Weston Corbett and Patrick Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003) albeit this guidance cannot be expected to cover every detailed eventuality.

Other matters

8. I understand the Appellant's wish to provide garaging for this substantial property and I can see that thought has been given to tree protection, removal of redundant space, and selection of materials. I acknowledge that this lane and surrounds do include noticeable buildings close to highways but to my mind the stretch on this side is attractive because landscape prevails. I noted highlighted examples of newer development which had been allowed and found them not be to comparable due to location and nature and, in any event, I must consider this case on its own merits. I appreciate that Council Planning and Heritage Officers recommended the development for approval but, as the Appellants fairly acknowledge, Council Members may reach their own conclusion and, in this instance, I feel the approach taken was reasonable. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.

9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of landscape and the built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset however there are no public benefits which would outweigh this harm. Furthermore, there are no other benefits, including to the Appellants, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable effects on the character or appearance of the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR