



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 August 2024

by David Cliff BA Hons MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2024

Appeal A: APP/Q3115/W/24/3343681

Old Farm House, Cox's Lane, Stoke Row, Oxfordshire RG9 5QG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Julian Kingsbury against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application reference is P23/S2723/HH.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as 'Householder and Listed Building application for demolition of existing extension and erection of replacement 2 storey rear extension. Amendments to partially implemented permissions P89/S0167/LB AND P89/S0166.'
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Appeal B: APP/Q3115/Y/24/3343682

Old Farm House, Cox's Lane, Stoke Row, Oxfordshire RG9 5QG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Julian Kingsbury against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application reference is P23/S2724/LB.
 - The works proposed are described in the application form as 'Householder and Listed Building application for demolition of existing extension and erection of replacement 2 storey rear extension. Amendments to partially implemented permissions P89/S0167/LB AND P89/S0166'.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the appeals relate to a listed building I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act').

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, known as 'Old Farmhouse' (Ref:1059331), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. The appeal property, listed in 1951, is a two-storey brick fronted house, with accommodation in the attic, dating from the late 17th century. The original

building was largely rectangular in plan form with a projecting staircase tower at the rear. It has a largely unaltered, principal southeast elevation, overlooking the adjacent formal walled gardens. This is constructed of red brick with three pairs of 12 pane sash windows on each floor. The three two-light gabled dormers in the roof slope above replaced, around 1990, the previous dormer windows. This elevation also contains the historic main entrance to the house and there is an additional half glazed doorway on its left-hand side.

6. The evidence suggests it likely that the building was originally constructed as a gentleman's residence and subsequently used as a farmhouse before returning to an independent single dwelling in the 20th century.
7. The building has been previously extended through the addition of a catslide outshot to the rear elevation, likely to be of the 18th century origin, and a 19th century twin-gabled extension. Both these extensions are subservient in height and massing, and sympathetic to the original building. As such they enable an understanding of the building's hierarchy which remains clearly legible. The 19th century extension also has a single storey timber addition of 20th century origin. This is of negligible architectural quality and also contains an external doorway which is now used as the main entrance to the house, due to its proximity to the driveway and parking area. Other than the 20th century addition, a photograph of c.1920 demonstrates a good level of preservation since that time.
8. The 19th and 20th century extensions would be removed and replaced by the proposed extension. There is an extant consent and permission (dating from 1989) for the replacement of the 19th and 20th century extensions. The current proposals differ in design and form to the extant scheme, including a larger footprint.
9. Given the above, I find the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with its architectural and historic value as a noteworthy example of a 17th century rural dwelling, including the polite architectural form of its front elevation. Whilst the historic main range of the house contributes most to the special interest, the later 18th and 19th century extensions also contribute evidentially through the historic phasing they exemplify.
10. The proposed extension would be of a substantial size, extending significantly to the rear of the existing building, including a large two storey section. The extension would be only slightly lower in height than the main part of the house and would comprise a prominent gable fronted section of similar proportions to the existing gable end of the main dwelling. In combination with its overall size, the design of the extension would lead to the creation of an over dominant new northeast elevation that would compete with the primacy and plan form of the main dwelling and its architecturally principal elevation. Furthermore, the proposed extension would partly wrap around the rear of the existing building, obscuring the ability to appreciate the historic phasing and architectural qualities of this elevation. The proposals would significantly disrupt and erode the ability to appreciate the architectural evolution of the house, undermining the historic and architectural integrity of the building.
11. The proposed extension would be notably larger and more dominant than the extant scheme, leading to the harm to the integrity of the listed building as set out above. Therefore, whilst the extant scheme, containing a new entrance

similar to that now proposed, also includes the removal of the 19th century extension and appears capable of being implemented, the difference in size and design in comparison to the current proposal means that it carries only limited weight as a fallback position.

12. Whilst the applicant seeks to provide an accessible and recognisable entrance to the building at the northeast frontage facing the parking area and driveway, this does not provide justification for the extension of the size, footprint and design proposed.
13. Planning permission has been recently granted for ancillary buildings comprising an indoor swimming pool and new annex building, including landscaping proposals that are intended to tie in with the appeal proposal. However, the harm to the listed building as set out above would remain from the proposed extension, with or without those separate proposals. Furthermore, the overall landscaping proposals associated with that scheme appear capable of being revised to reflect the circumstances of any alternatively designed extension to the main building.
14. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight.
15. Paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 ('the Framework') advises that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 206 goes on to advise that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting, should require clear and convincing justification. Given that the proposals would not significantly affect the historic fabric of the main part of the house, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
16. Under such circumstances, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, which include the securing of the optimal viable use of listed buildings. The proposals would enhance the living accommodation within the building, including the provision of a new entrance adjacent to the existing parking area and an enhanced room layout including larger kitchen area. However, these are private benefits that do not fall to be considered in the balance. Furthermore, the continued viable use of the building as a residential dwelling is not dependent on this proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence, along with the extant scheme for extending the building.
17. Given the above, I find that no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the harm that would be caused. I conclude that the proposals would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building 'Old Farmhouse'. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and would be contrary to Policies ENV6 and ENV7 the relevant heritage aims of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 ('the Local Plan') and the Framework.
18. Whilst the Council has also referred to Policy H20 of the Local Plan in its planning reason for refusal, it is not clear from either the wording of the policy itself or the Council's appeal evidence how the proposal is in conflict it. This

does not, however, alter my overall conclusions in the determination of either appeal.

Other Matter

19. Whilst I have taken account of the comments of the Parish Council in support of the applicants, for the reasons set out above, the matters it has raised do not lead me to any other conclusion on the merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

David Cliff

INSPECTOR