



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 July 2024

by J P Longmuir BA(Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th December 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1760/W/23/3328537

Kingfisher Lodge, Longstock, Stockbridge, SO20 6DW

- 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 and Mrs Martin and Joy Cummings against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01083/FULLN.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension and alterations at Kingfisher Lodge to construct exercise pool with jacuzzi and associated plant room shed, together with workshop extension to existing single storey garage with art studio/annex over.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1760/Y/23/3328536

Kingfisher Lodge, Longstock, Stockbridge, SO20 6DW

- 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 and Mrs Martin and Joy Cummings against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01084/LBWN.
 - The works proposed are single storey extension and alterations at Kingfisher Lodge to construct exercise pool with jacuzzi and associated plant room shed, together with workshop extension to existing single storey garage with art studio/annex over.
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Decision

1. Appeal A: the appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: the appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeals concern works and development at the Grade II listed Kingfisher Lodge (List Entry Number: 1093158).
4. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) require special regard is given to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I am also mindful of the historic environment policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that relate to the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed works and development would preserve the Grade II Kingfisher Lodge listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is on the edge of Longstock village, where thatched roofs are prevalent, indeed the main roof of the house which is the subject of the appeal is thatched. It is just above the meandering River Test and overlooks adjoining verdant meadows.
7. The Heritage Assessment explains the appeal building was originally three houses but is now one. It has a long narrow form which appears largely unchanged from the historic footprint as evident in the above assessment. The list description suggests the building is likely to date from the eighteenth century.
8. I find that the special interest and significance of the listed building is derived firstly from its simple linear form and historic fabric, and secondly from its bucolic setting which emulates its rustic materials and simplicity. This setting includes its garden and riverside, where the proposal would be experienced.
9. The existing garage also forms part of the setting of the original building being within the grounds and close to its front elevation. Whilst it is slightly to the side, it nonetheless is fully evident, and the two are experienced together particularly from the entrance drive. It is small and simple in form and elevational design, so is neutral to the setting.
10. The proposal would outwardly extend the footprint of the main building to the side and in depth away from its original linear orientation. This would undermine the historic form and the eye would no longer be focused along the length of its thatched roofline. Whilst the rear elevation has a non-original extension and alterations, they are not so substantial to prevent the original form of the building being experienced. However, the proposal would obscure its simple linear form.
11. In addition, the extension would have a long flat roof which would appear abrupt against the wavering lines of the thatched roof and its eyebrow dormers. Accordingly, it would appear discordant.
12. The submitted amended design, except for a small glazed area, would use brick and flint in the walls, however, whilst appropriate for the locality, they would not alleviate the above effects. Similarly, the extension would still be seen with a flat roof even though, aside from rooflights, it is shown to be grass covered.
13. The proposed extension to the garage includes a wide and very tall, wholly glazed dormer, stretching from the eaves almost up to the ridge. Its overly large size would look disproportionate for the roof of the outbuilding. In addition, it would attract attention away from the main building and appear at odds with its modestly sized eyebrow dormers. I therefore find that the proposed changes to form the annex would be harmful.

14. The proposed plant room would be a separate building to the side, which together with its small size and muted materials means it would not compete with or detract from the original building.
15. I therefore find the proposed extension and art studio/annexe would both harm the listed building, which collectively would be less than substantial.
16. Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2016 (LP) requires proposals make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of the asset and any harm should be considered against the public benefit. The proposal being harmful to the listed building would be contrary to this first criterion of E9 and I consider the public benefits in the balance below.
17. Policy COM11 of the LP allows for extensions and ancillary buildings where the design is in keeping with the existing dwelling. Similarly, E1 requires new development to be of high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. For the reasons above I find that the proposal would be in conflict with these policies. COM2 of the LP allows development in principle outside settlements if appropriate, and cross references to other policies including COM11, so accordingly I find the proposal would conflict.

Heritage and Planning Balances

18. Whilst the harm arising would be less than substantial; however, Paragraph 205 of the Framework advocates great weight to the asset's conservation. I therefore give considerable importance and weight to the harm I have identified in my balancing judgment below. In addition, Paragraph 206 of the Framework emphasises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification.
19. The extension is intended as a hydrotherapy pool to help the well-being of the occupants, which is suggested would save use and pressure on NHS services and the necessary travelling. It is also suggested that the proposal would allow better use of the building for modern living.
20. Additionally, the grass part of the flat roof would contribute to ecological habitat. However, whilst the above would be desirable, I find they would be of limited public benefit.
21. Taking the public benefits together as a whole I conclude that they would not be of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm identified to the significance and special interest of the designated heritage asset.
22. I consider that the proposed works and development would fail to preserve either the setting or special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building. Consequently, the proposals would be contrary to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
23. As I have found above the proposal would harm the listed building which would contravene Policy E9. The policy also requires harm to be considered against the public benefits which I have found above would not outweigh the harm. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy E9 taken as a whole, as well as Policies COM2, COM11 and E1.

24. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 11(c) of the Framework states that decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. In respect of Appeal A, the proposal would be contrary to the Development Plan when taken as a whole and material considerations do not indicate the proposals should be approved.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR