



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by David Wallis BSc (HONS) PG DipEP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/19/3230264

Rose Farm, Codicote Road, Whitwell SG4 8AB

- 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 Marcus Powell against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03152/FP dated 30 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is Erection of Stables, loose box, tack room and food store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and on the setting of the farmhouse at Rose Farm which is a grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. Rose Farm contains a grade II listed building, which is the original farmhouse to the southeast of the appeal site. The farmhouse has been extended at various times, which limits the extent to which views of it can be obtained. Nonetheless, the setting of Rose Farmhouse is not limited simply to those areas from which it can be seen, but also to those areas which have a functional and historical relationship with the listed building, including the appeal site.
4. Rose Farmhouse is clearly separated from the settlement by virtue of verdant fields, which are generally devoid of development. This spatial characteristic provides the farmhouse with a rural context, reflective of its former agricultural use. The appeal site constitutes one of these open fields and has landscaped qualities that complement the spacious character and appearance of the area. The fields and paddocks surrounding the farmhouse clearly form part of its immediate historic setting, being important to the way in which the building is experienced. They also contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area in general, on account of their contribution to the historic context of the site but also on account of the fact that their attractive and verdant character which contributes to the intrinsic value of the countryside.
5. The proposal would introduce a building with proportions and architectural features that would make it clearly recognisable as a stable. The building would

be a sizeable structure of substantial stature. It would have a formal appearance, drawing the eye and exerting a commanding presence within the landscape.

6. The proposal would interrupt the spacious and open qualities of the area, urbanising this part of the landscape. Whilst stables are synonymous with the countryside, the proposal in this case would have a relatively formal design, including the cupola, and would introduce substantial built development into a generally open field that surrounds the designated heritage asset. The combination of the scale, formality and the reduction in the open character would erode the attractive qualities of the field. That reduction in openness and the presence of buildings in a previously undeveloped location would also cause harm to the setting of Rose Farm. Whilst attention has been paid to the building's design, the overall effect would be harmful to the setting of Rose Farm.
7. Notwithstanding that the harm would be less than substantial in the context of the listed building as a whole, paragraph 193 directs that great weight must be given to any harm to any harm to a heritage asset. I must therefore weigh that harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellant states the proposal would support the leisure and tourism facilities at the appeal site. In the absence of detail as to how significant the contribution would be to the rural economy, I apportion limited weight to these benefits. Consequently, no evidence has been put forward that would outweigh the great weight that the Framework requires to be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
8. I note that planning permission for a comparable building was granted on the site in 1989. However, this permission was granted 3 decades ago, during which time the local and national planning context has changed.
9. My attention is drawn to another building, a barn, that has been de-listed at the appeal site. This does not however have a bearing upon the assessment or definition of the setting or historic significance of Rose Farm.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal fails to preserve or enhance the setting of a designated heritage asset. It would also cause harm to the character and appearance of the local historic landscape. This would be contrary to Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031, which seeks to ensure proposals justify and detail the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset. It would also be contrary to Policy 6 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with alterations, which seeks to maintain the character of the existing countryside.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wallis

INSPECTOR