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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 March 2012

**by Chris Frost BSc(Hons) DipLD FLI CBiol MSB MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 23 March 2012**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/A3010/A/11/2164722**

**Woodfield House, Newington Road, Bawtry, Doncaster, Notts DN10 6DJ**

- 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 David Johnson against the decision of Bassetlaw District Council.
  - The application Ref: 32/11/00014, dated 10 June 2011, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2011.
  - The development proposed is the erection of a replacement dwelling.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Procedural Matters

2. Since the Council made its Decision in August 2011 the Bassetlaw Core Strategy was adopted in December 2011. This now forms part of the Development Plan for the area.
3. It is clear from the representations and refusal notice that the proposed dwelling is intended to replace Woodfield House and that this existing building is intended to be demolished. Accordingly, while the application form does not appear to refer specifically to demolition (other than confirming that there would be no net increase in the number of dwellings) and nor do the plans (save that the existing dwelling is not indicated on the proposals plan), it is reasonable to accept that the demolition of Woodfield House is intended.

## Main Issues

4. The main issues are: a) whether Woodfield House should be seen as a non-designated heritage asset and if so the acceptability or otherwise of its loss; b) the acceptability of providing a replacement dwelling on the site; and c) whether the long-term wellbeing of any protected trees on the site would be harmed.

## Reasons

5. There is no evidence to suggest that Woodfield House benefits from any designation as a Heritage Asset. However, it has been identified by the Council as having a degree of significance that merits consideration in a planning decision. This arises from its inclusion on the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record, its history in that it dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and its location alongside a road that is within an historic village core. The Council

- accepts that the building has been altered and extended but do not consider that this undermines its historical interest.
6. The appellant feels that additions and alternations and particularly later changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have significantly undermined any heritage value and that the loss contemporaneous buildings such as the brewery on the other side of the road have, in any event, severed important connections with the past.
  7. It is clear that the building belongs to the past in view of the appearance, the scale and details of its frontage, and its prominent position alongside the highway. It also remains among a group of buildings, some of which have existed around the site for much of the life of Woodfield House. The building is not spectacular in any way and it has suffered from the attention of builders who have made somewhat piecemeal additions to it over the years. However, its roadside position and general appearance do generate a sense of history and tradition and this suggests that it should be seen as a heritage asset that continues to form a valued component of the historic environment.
  8. As set out at policy HE8 of PPS 5, the effect of an application on the significance of such a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration in determining an application. Here the loss of Woodfield House would sever a link with the past and detract from a long standing association of development in the immediate locality. While PPS 5 does not set out a presumption in favour of conserving non-designated heritage assets, Policy DM8 of the Core Strategy does set out a presumption against, among other things, the demolition of heritage assets, whether or not they are designated. Furthermore Policy 26 of the East Midlands Regional Plan records that damage to historic assets or their setting should be avoided wherever and as far as possible, while Policy 27 encourages the refurbishment and re-use of historic assets and their settings. This background indicates that there would need to be good reason to accept the loss of Woodfield House.
  9. The proposals envisage the construction of a new dwelling on open ground away from the road frontage with a garage near to the access. This would be a 4-bedroom house of generous proportions that would be set among existing trees on the site. An existing boundary wall would be retained and altered near the site of Woodfield House and the open area that would be left behind this would be located behind the proposed garage. Essentially a building with an historical linkage would be lost and this would be replaced with modern and generous sized housing plot with little historical association with this rural location. This does not suggest that there is a convincing reason to accept the loss of the heritage asset that is represented by Woodfield House.
  10. Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy allows for the replacement rural buildings in certain circumstances. One of these is where the existing building is unviable to re-use or convert. Inspection of Woodfield House revealed it to be in need of modernisation and repair, but there is little to indicate that it would be unviable to re-use it as a dwelling or for some other purpose. Accordingly, the proposed replacement dwelling derives little support in terms of this aspect of Policy DM3, although other aspects of this policy would not appear to be breached.
  11. Points are made concerning the superior energy efficiency that could be attained with a new dwelling. However, the use of new materials for

construction would also create an entirely new carbon footprint, whereas the retention or alteration of Woodfield House would generate little in terms of the use of new building materials, their manufacture and their transportation. Also, some energy efficient changes could be made to this existing building. Accordingly, there is little to demonstrate that any significant gain in terms of carbon footprint would be achieved if Woodfield House were to be replaced.

12. The Council is further concerned that residents of the proposed replacement dwelling may find living conditions compromised by the retention of protected trees on the site. This is certainly possible as some are potentially large specimens, such as cedar. However, the proposed dwelling would be within an open area and while calls for a certain amount of pruning cannot be excluded, there is reason to accept that any conflict with living conditions would be unlikely to justify removal or pruning that would be likely to seriously diminish the contribution that trees make to the locality.
13. In conclusion, there is little to demonstrate that Woodfield House could not be re-used either as a dwelling or for some other purpose. Accordingly, its loss would not be in consistent with Core Strategy Policy DM3 or Regional Plan Policy 27. Furthermore, Woodfield House is part of, and represents a link with, the history of the site and its surroundings. As a heritage asset it thereby gains protection from Core Strategy Policy DM8. There appears to be no good reason to override this protection and accept that it should be removed and replaced with the proposed new dwelling.

*Chris Frost*

**Inspector**

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