
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2016

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

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

Decision date: 5 October 2016

Appeal Reference: APP/Z2830/D/16/3151125

'Grain Mill', 'Preston Deanery Grange', Preston Deanery Road, Preston Deanery, Northamptonshire NN7 2DT

- 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 K Howard against the decision of South Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application (reference S/2016/0398/FUL, dated 18 February 2016) was refused by notice dated 13 April 2016.
 - The proposed development is the construction of a single storey porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a single storey porch at 'Grain Mill', 'Preston Deanery Grange', Preston Deanery Road, Preston Deanery, Northamptonshire NN7 2DT, in accordance with the terms of the planning application (reference S/2016/0398/FUL, dated 18 February 2016), subject to the following conditions.
 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - A0450-001 (Location and Block Plan);
 - A0450-002 (Existing Plan and Elevations);
 - A0450-003 (Proposed Plan and Elevations).
 3. No development shall take place until samples (or specifications) of the materials and drawings (at appropriate scales) of the construction details to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the new development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, using the approved materials.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by the Appellant against South Northamptonshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main issues

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in the Northamptonshire countryside, near the ancient village of Preston Deanery. To the north of the small village, a group of buildings is sited in an agricultural landscape at 'Preston Deanery Grange', where outbuildings have been converted to form individual dwellings. The appeal building is one of those earlier outbuildings, now known as 'Grain Mill', in allusion to its previous function.
5. The building is old but it is not an especially historic building. It is functional in style, built of brickwork under steeply pitched roofs that rise to a high ridge, retaining its idiosyncratic architectural character, with some attractive details. It is symmetrical only in some respects. It has been significantly modified by relatively modern extensions and by extensive internal changes that have created an interesting modern house with an unusual character. 'Grain Mill' is not listed as a "building of special architectural or historic interest", nor does it lie within a Conservation Area.
6. The house stands in a generous plot and is approached from Preston Deanery Road (to the east) by way of a drive that circles the building group to approach 'Grain Mill' from the west. The west elevation of the existing building bears clear indications of substantial earlier outbuildings in this locality and the layout of this part of the garden seems also to reflect this.
7. It is now proposed to add a new small extension to the "front" (west) elevation of the house, in the form of a modest porch. This would be in the form of a single storey extension, under a pitched roof, designed to harmonise with the existing building in terms of its style and materials. The proposed porch would not have a significant visual impact outside its own site, however, because of its modest scale and the relatively secluded location of the proposal.
8. Among other things, the 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "requiring good design" in the broadest sense, notably at Section 7. Section 12 of the 'NPPF' emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, though it also points out the desirability of putting a heritage asset to its "optimum viable use", as does the 'Planning Practice Guidance', and it points out (at paragraph 135) that: "in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."
9. These principles are reflected by Policies in the Development Plan. Policy BN5 of the 'West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy' points out the importance of conserving and enhancing both designated and non-designated heritage assets. Policies G3, EV1 and H17 of the 'South Northamptonshire Local Plan' emphasise the importance of design considerations both generally and specifically in relation to the historic environment. The Development Plan Policies are underpinned by Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'Residential Extensions'.

10. The proposed new porch would provide a useful and convenient adjunct to the property, providing a suitable entrance at the "front" of the house. The design would be in harmony with the existing house in terms of materials, provided that the materials and detailing were to be carefully detailed and executed. Although the porch would be off-centre in relation to the main roof ridge and the dominant recessed gable, it would not be unduly intrusive and would not clash with the main elements of the existing gable feature.
11. The existing building is of modest significance as a non-designated heritage asset and the proposed porch would have only a limited effect on it. The porch would be appropriate in terms of its architecture and construction and it would provide an actual benefit for the house. Thus, the porch would not have a harmful effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the host building, or on its surroundings. It would accord with both national and local planning policies and would be acceptable in planning terms. In short, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions, and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
12. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal), subject to modifications necessary, in my opinion, in the interests of clarity and simplicity. For the avoidance of doubt, a more specific condition has been imposed to require the submission of details of the proposed construction and materials (since the submitted drawings themselves provide only limited information in this respect).

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR