

---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2017

**by Gareth W Thomas BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) PGDip MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/D/17/3169069**

**The Stables, Manor Road, Staverton NN11 6JD**

- 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 & Mrs Aston against the decision of Daventry District Council.
  - The application Ref DA/2016/0654, dated 4 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2016.
  - The development proposed is for part demolition of an existing brick wall to create a new vehicle access.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Staverton Conservation Area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey property of red brick and a mixture of limestone rubble and coursed ironstone to the road elevation. The main front aspect to the dwelling faces the garden to its side, which is enclosed by a continuous brick wall of some 1.8m in height that runs along the highway verge. A pedestrian gate within the wall between two pillars lies close to the southern boundary.
  4. The Staverton Conservation Area (CA) is characterised by traditional two storey terraced and detached dwellings many of 17th/early 18th century origin that are built close to the village streets and combine to form a tight urban grain. The buildings are often linked by boundary walling of stone and red brick and these features help give a continuous built form and feel; in turn, these features contribute to the character and significance of the CA. Often, these walls are punctuated by access drives but, where they are evident, accesses are generally simple openings devoid of visibility splays.
  5. The proposal would see the demolition of part of the existing wall to provide a splayed access. The wall would be re-built to incorporate a visibility splay with new timber gates hung at a distance of 5.5m from the back of the highway verge. The garden lawn area to the side of the property when viewed from the roadside would be hard surfaced to provide a gravel surface sufficient to accommodate two vehicles.
-

6. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty upon me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The demolition of a large section of the boundary wall and its replacement by modern splayed walls either side of the proposed access would appear as an incongruous feature in the street scene and significantly undermine the character and appearance of the CA in terms of its tightly knit street scene. However, as the walling would maintain some sense of enclosure, the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the special interest and significance of the CA that I have identified above.
7. In these circumstances paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') identifies that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The Framework provides advice on what is meant by the term public benefit in relation to heritage benefits which should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. I have been unable to identify that any public benefit would arise as a result of this proposal. As a consequence, I do not consider that there are public benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have found and for which I am required to attach considerable importance and weight.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed loss of a continuous roadside feature together with the somewhat over-engineered appearance of the splayed access would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Staverton Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to saved Daventry District Local Plan Policy GN2, EN2 and EN42 that sets out general design principles together with a requirement that in conservation areas, new developments should seek to preserve or enhance the character of such area whilst reinforcing local distinctiveness. Such policies are also largely repeated in West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy BN5. These policies are consistent with two objectives of the Framework which indicate that planning should always seek to ensure high quality design and that development should have regard to the significance of heritage assets.
9. I have considered all other matters raised including the appellants' efforts to satisfy highway concerns that were submitted against a previous design. I also note that there is already a limited break in the existing walling formed by the existing pedestrian access. However, these matters do not outweigh the considerable harm that I have found and the appeal is dismissed.

*Gareth W Thomas*

INSPECTOR