
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December, 2017

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

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

Decision date: 18th January, 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/17/3181307

82 High Street, Great Abington, CB21 6AE

- 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 Waters against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/1077/17/FL dated 20 March, 2017 was refused by notice dated 23 June, 2017.
 - The development proposed is new barn adjacent to existing thatched cottage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposal would preserve the special interest of the Grade II* listed building and the character and appearance of the Great and Little Abington Conservation area, and whether it would affect the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Reasons

3. No 82 High Street, "Gildencroft" is a two storey, fifteenth century cottage which is listed at Grade II*. The evidence before me indicates that its special interest and significance lie in its age and the degree of survival of its original fabric and of evidence of its early plan form. Its modest vernacular style and detailing complement other vernacular dwellings in the vicinity, also listed, and contribute towards the character and appearance of the Greater and Little Abington Conservation area as a historic rural village set in open countryside and with good survival of early buildings along the High Street.
 4. The appeal proposal is for a barn-like garage structure within the garden of No 82 and set back from street frontage. It would have a pitched and gabled tiled roof and would be timber-clad. The drawings in front of me suggest it would be for two cars accessed by two sets of timber doors, although the space appears tight, and there would be storage loft above, accessed by a spiral stair and lit with a small dormer window.
 5. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's
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conservation. It is also clear that significance can be harmed or lost through, among other things, development within the setting.

6. Although care has evidently been taken in the vernacular design of the dwelling and its siting away from the frontage, it has a large footprint, not significantly less than that of the host building. The storage space within the roof and consequent height of the building also create the impression of an extra half storey at least, exacerbated by the presence of the dormer window and high level gable window. Together these factors combine to create a structure of significant size located close to the listed building.
7. The proposed garage would as a result be overly visually dominant in views of the listed building from the front, where there is currently no screening hedgerow, and would crowd the otherwise relatively open setting within its curtilage. It would as a result compete visually with the host building as the primary structure, and diminish the sense of a rural dwelling in its generous plot. It would therefore fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building, and would harm its significance. As, due to its age and appearance, this is also a significant building within the conservation area, the development would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of that designated heritage asset, and would give rise to harm to its significance.
8. Although, due to its siting and the screening hedgerow to its south, the proposed barn would not be unduly prominent in views north-east along the High Street, it would intrude into the view from the High Street across the open field to the rear of No 82 to Great Abington Church in its pastoral setting. As this would interrupt the visual connection between the High Street and church, both key historical foci of the settlement, and would erode the sense of the settlement's countryside location, this would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and would harm its significance.
9. The development would therefore conflict with policy CH/4 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007 (the DPD), which seeks to resist development which would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building, and with policy CH/5 of the DPD, which seeks to ensure that development proposals comply with the relevant legislation and national policy affecting Conservation Areas.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

10. While I have identified harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, this is to a relatively small scale and is localised, and I conclude that for the purposes of Paragraph 132 of the Framework it would constitute less than substantial harm. Paragraph 134 of the Framework is clear that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
11. As the benefits of the proposal would be purely private, and no consideration of any potential public benefits has been put before me, I conclude that the proposed harm would not be outweighed and there would be no justification for it. For this reason therefore I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Buckingham INSPECTOR