
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2019

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/D/19/3227165

11 Knossington Road, Braunston, LE15 8QX

- 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 Mrs Emma Swain against the decision of Rutland County Council.
 - The application Ref 2018/1292/FUL, dated 10 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the creation of a driveway and parking area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Braunston Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling that sits above Knossington Road on top of a steeply sloping grassed bank. A relatively narrow pedestrian path cuts through the bank, which gives access to the appeal property and the neighbouring dwelling.
4. The site is within the CA, which encompasses the historic core of the village and covers a relatively wide and diverse area in terms of building styles, ages and landscape features. The grassed bank, which runs parallel to Knossington Road, is a visually prominent and significant feature, and I consider that it makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of the CA. I noted at my site visit that a number of properties have accesses and driveways leading off Knossington Road. These include accesses at either end of the grassed bank.
5. The proposal is to excavate part of the grassed bank to create a vehicular access and driveway adjacent to the existing pathway. In addition, a gravel surfaced parking and manoeuvring area would be created within the existing front garden. I consider that the works to create the access and drive would require some significant engineering works in order to retain the sides of the bank.
6. It is a statutory requirement that decision makers pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when considering proposals for new development.

Policy CS19 of the adopted Rutland Core Strategy 2011 (CS) requires new development to contribute positively to local distinctiveness and to make a positive contribution to the local area. In addition, Policy CS22 reaffirms the statutory duty referred to above by seeking to ensure that all developments preserve or where possible enhance heritage assets. These requirements are also contained in Policies SP15 and SP20 of the adopted Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document 2014 (SAPDPD).

7. Notwithstanding the existence of other access points within the CA along Knossington Road, I consider that the proposed development would significantly and unacceptably erode and visually harm this distinctive and important feature within the CA, because of the width of the access and the impact of the associated engineering works. Whilst some views of the access would be limited, because of the bend in the road, it would still appear as a prominent feature in the streetscene when viewed from points close to the property.
8. In addition, despite the fact that the proposed parking and manoeuvring area would be viewed against the backdrop of the existing dwelling, I consider that the development would be visually intrusive. In addition, the loss of a significant area of 'green space' would be harmful to the rural character of this part of Knossington Road. The provision of landscaping would not, in my opinion, be sufficient to mitigate the harm that I have identified.
9. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such, it would conflict with the provisions of the Development Plan, as referred to above.
10. In the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, I consider that the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Consequently, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The creation of an off-street parking area would be a benefit to the appellant, who currently parks in a public car park. However, I consider this to be a private rather than a public benefit.
11. The appellant also states that the proposal would eliminate the need for vehicles to park on this section of Knossington Road, which would improve highway safety. I accept that this would be a public benefit. I also note that the Parish Council has expressed concern over vehicle speeds on Knossington Road and that the Highway Authority has no objection to the development. However, in weighing up the evidence before me, I consider that the possible removal of on-street parking does not outweigh my findings above in respect of the harm to the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR