



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2019

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/18/3205474

Glatton House, High Haden Road, Glatton PE28 5RU

- 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 Lady Una Miller against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/01657/FUL, dated 2 August 2017, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2018.
 - The development proposed is detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Although the appeal form refers to Sir Robin and Lady Una Miller, Sir Robin Miller is not mentioned on the application form. The name of the person/s making the appeal must appear as an applicant on the application form, and so this decision refers to Lady Una Miller only.
3. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (HLP) was adopted in May 2019 and supersedes all of the policies referenced in the Council's decision notice. Thus, I have taken into account relevant policies from the HLP as highlighted by the Council and considered the points raised by the appellant on these policies.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - (a) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of Glatton Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas and 27 Grade II listed tombstones and chest tombs; and
 - (b) the effect of the development on onsite trees.

Reasons

Conservation area and listed buildings

5. The appeal site at Glatton House is situated in the centre of the village of Glatton. The existing house is an attractive historic property surrounded by a large garden with mature planting including tall boundary trees. The site lies within Glatton Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the village. Immediately to the north of the site is the Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas

- which contains 27 Grade II listed tombstones and chest tombs within its churchyard.
6. Although there is no conservation area appraisal for Glatton, the conservation area is characterised by a variety of detached historic buildings and large areas of public and private green space. A number of roads converge in the centre of the conservation area and create an island around the site and the church. The site makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as its significance due to its extensive greenery which can be seen in approaches on Sawtry Road, Infield Road and High Haden Road.
 7. The church is the focal point of the conservation area and can be seen in various viewpoints notwithstanding the screening provided by summer foliage. As a medieval building with later alterations and restorations, it has considerable architectural and historic interest which contributes greatly to its significance. The setting of the church extends beyond churchyard and includes surrounding historic properties and green spaces. Views between the church and the site are restricted by tall and dense boundary planting including several well-established yew trees. However, it is possible to see the site and church in the same view at the bottom of High Haden Road, while approaching from the south on Sawtry Road during winter months is likely to provide views across the site to the church. Thus, the site makes a positive contribution to the setting of the church and its significance.
 8. The 27 tombstones and chest tombs are largely located to the east of the chancel. Individually, they are modest structures but collectively have architectural and historic interest as funerary monuments from the 18th and 19th centuries. Their setting is informed to a large extent by the churchyard and the properties and spaces along this section of High Haden Road. They are otherwise screened in longer views. As with the church, views between the 27 structures and the site are restricted by planting, but they can be seen together along this section of High Haden Road. As such, the site makes a positive contribution to their setting and significance.
 9. The proposed dwelling would be located towards the eastern end of the site on an area of existing lawn surrounded by trees. Its design would be comparable to Glatton House and not out of keeping with the surrounding area. It would be sufficiently distant and screened from Glatton House to not compete negatively with it. However, although the dwelling would not be as large as Glatton House, it would still be a sizeable detached property located in an existing area of green space. Even with the retention/replacement of boundary trees and during summer months, it would be visible from Sawtry Road and Infield Road through gaps in planting. In the winter and/or with the loss of any trees, its visibility would increase. This would detract from the green spaces at the centre of the village and conservation area.
 10. The existing boundary planting between the church and site would screen views to and from the listed buildings in summer months but in the winter it would intrude on north-south views from Sawtry Road to High Haden Road and back. As a consequence, there would be intervisibility between the dwelling and the listed buildings. This would erode the setting of the church and the tombstones/chest tombs.
 11. There are a number of recently built detached dwellings around the village which I observed during my site visit. However, none are located as centrally

as the proposed dwelling in as sensitive a position in the conservation area and setting of the listed buildings. Thus, they do not justify the proposal. The appellant refers to a previous planning permission for a house in the same location, but this appears to date back around 30 years. I do not know the reasons why permission was given or the policy context that existed at the time. As a result, it does not alter my findings.

12. For the above reasons, the development would cause harm to the significance of the conservation area and the significance and setting of the listed church and tombstones/chest tombs. The harm would be less than substantial, but still of a reasonable magnitude given the contribution the site makes to these heritage assets.
13. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires less than substantial harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal. The development would result in economic and social benefits in terms of the provision of an additional house. However, as a single dwelling, such public benefits would be modest and insufficient to outweigh the harm to the heritage assets.
14. Concluding on this main issue, the development would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of Glatton Conservation Area and the setting of the listed church and tombstones/chest tombs where the harm to their significance would not be outweighed by the public benefits. Therefore, it would conflict with HLP Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 which seek development that responds well to its context and conserves heritage assets and their settings, including features that make a positive contribution to such assets.

Trees

15. As noted above, the site has a large number of trees, including several around the location of the proposed dwelling. They make a positive contribution to the greenery of the surrounding area and many are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The appellant's tree consultant has recommended the removal of several trees in the vicinity of the dwelling due to their general condition including decay and proximity to other trees. Assuming their removal, the dwelling would be unlikely to intrude into any root protection areas of any remaining trees based on the specifications provided by the tree consultant.
16. However, the proximity of remaining trees to the dwelling would restrict both daylight and sunlight and result in overshadowing and/or overbearing effects to future occupiers of the dwelling. As a result, this could lead to pressure to further remove trees. The removal of trees would lessen the greenery surrounding the dwelling and increase its visibility from adjoining roads. Replacement trees as indicated in the topographical survey and tree report would mitigate to some extent although may not provide the same screening effect as existing trees due to their proposed columnar form. Overall, the negative effect on trees and the surrounding area would not be outweighed by the modest benefits of a new dwelling.
17. In conclusion, the development would likely have a negative effect on trees and so be contrary to HLP Policy LP31. This policy seeks to conserve trees of value and only allow their loss where there are mitigation measures and the need for and benefits of development outweigh the loss.

Other Matters

18. I note the appellant's comments on the Council's handling of the application process and the length of time for a decision to be made. However, these are matters that have no bearing on the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

19. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR