



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: 12 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/19/3221554

Glatton Hall Residential Home, Glatton Ways, Glatton PE28 5RS

- 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 Halton of Berkley Care (Glatton) Ltd against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00400/FUL, dated 23 February 2018, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing care home and redevelopment of the site to form a 70-bed care home (Use Class C2) for residents requiring nursing, dementia and residential care, along with car parking, landscaped gardens and a separate refuse/recycling facility.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. 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

3. The main issues are:
 - (a) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of Glatton Conservation Area having regard to:
 - i) the significance of Glatton Hall and the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area,
 - ii) the design of the replacement building, and
 - iii) the heritage balance in terms of local and national policy;
 - (b) the effect of the development on the living conditions of occupiers of Mulberry Barn with particular regard to outlook; and
 - (c) the effect of the development on the provision of drainage.

Reasons

Character and appearance – significance

4. Glatton Conservation Area covers the historic core of Glatton and is characterised by a variety of detached historic buildings and large areas of public and private green space. The parish church is the focal point in the middle of the conservation area. The appeal site is located on the eastern edge of the conservation area and comprises Glatton Hall and a generous amount of landscaped grounds between the building and the road to the south.
5. Glatton Hall is a two storey property dating from the mid to late 19th century, replacing an earlier building on this site. Initially a residential dwelling, until recently it has been used as a care home for the elderly. There are some older features within the building in the form of a c.16th century timber entrance door and carved ceiling boss and a carved date plaque that reads '1593'. These may have come from the previous building on site or elsewhere.
6. Internally, some of the rooms have decorative features including cornices, skirting boards and fireplaces, with the sitting room providing one of the grander spaces and a large bay window. However, the internal spaces have a predominantly modern appearance with multiple bedrooms, bathrooms and communal rooms giving a largely institutionalised feel.
7. Externally, the side and rear elevations are rather plain, with modern doors, windows and render and little of architectural interest. The front elevation has also been rendered and a three bay wing to the right of the main entrance was replaced in the mid-20th century following fire damage. Nevertheless, the front elevation retains some grandeur when approaching the building along the driveway from the road, with its double height bay windows (19th and 20th century), some exposed gault brickwork and a slate roof with decorative chimneystacks.
8. An unimplemented planning permission from 2007 would have added a large two storey extension onto the side of the mid-20th century part of the building. However, it would have left most of the existing building untouched and would not have detracted greatly from the qualities mentioned above. While there have been extensive alterations to Glatton Hall, it has a degree of architectural and historic interest. As such, I give moderate weight to the significance of Glatton Hall as a non-designated heritage asset.
9. In terms of the contribution of Glatton Hall to the conservation area, public views of the building are restricted by intervening vegetation and buildings, although there were still glimpses even at the time of my summer site visit. There are clear views from Mill Hill of the plainer side and rear elevations, but the building does not dominate the lane. The extent of public visibility is not the only measure of a building's contribution. It is a large historic building set within landscaped grounds with an attractive setting, similar to other properties in the conservation area. As one gets closer to the front of the building along the drive and parking area, it is possible to see the tower of the parish church and a historic outbuilding at Mulberry House. Although not evidently a designed view, it provides a link between Glatton Hall and the historic core of the village.
10. The building's architectural and historic interest along with its landscape setting and visual links to the church and historic core make a positive contribution to

the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area. The proposed development would result in the demolition of Glatton Hall and some reduction in the landscaped grounds. As a consequence, the development would result in the total loss of significance of a non-designated heritage asset. The loss would also cause harm to the significance of the conservation area. This is discussed in more detail below.

Character and appearance – design of replacement building

11. The replacement building would be located in the same north-west corner of the site and so would avoid impacting on most of the trees within the grounds. The 19th century boundary wall on the north side would also remain. However, the replacement would occupy a greater footprint than the existing building and extend significantly further forward in terms of its south wing. It would be much bulkier with a crown roof to house accommodation at the second floor and a lower ground floor on the front elevation. This would result in a larger building than existing of up to three storeys plus roof in places including the south elevation at the front.
12. While there are examples of Georgian architecture in the village, such as The Grange and Glatton House, they have simple proportions and details, including the pale yellow gault brick, and are not overly large. In contrast, the replacement building would be more complex and exaggerated despite being planned as a single entity, with rusticated plinth and pilasters, large pediments, and multiple large flat roof dormers. The use of extensive areas of red brick would exacerbate the size and prominence of the building. As a result, it would not reflect or respect existing historic buildings within the conservation area.
13. Approaching along the driveway from the road, the replacement building would be overly dominant and would intrude on and block views of the parish church. While not especially visible in longer distance views from public locations, it would appear more dominant than the existing building from Mill Hill to the rear. As a consequence of its design and scale, the replacement building would result in harm to the significance of the conservation area.

Character and appearance – heritage balance

14. While the loss of a non-designated heritage asset is not unacceptable in principle, paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of loss and the significance of the heritage asset. NPPF paragraph 192 refers to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
15. As noted above, the significance of Glatton Hall as a non-designated heritage asset carries moderate weight, but it would be completely demolished. Therefore, I afford a reasonable amount of weight to the scale of the loss of such an asset. The ability to carry out a full building recording prior to demolition would provide some mitigation, but as NPPF paragraph 199 states, it should not be a factor in determining whether the loss of a heritage asset should be permitted. The proposed retention of the c.16th century entrance door and the display of the 1593 date plaque, timber ceiling boss and stone entablature would be a positive approach, but these features would be divorced from the rest of Glatton Hall and, apart from the stone entablature, at least

twice divorced from the building they originally occupied. Thus, the retention of historic features would do little to offset the scale of the loss.

16. In terms of the harm to the conservation area, the harm would be less than substantial, but still of a significant magnitude given the loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and the negative design and scale of the replacement building. NPPF paragraph 196 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. NPPF paragraph 193 places great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets irrespective of the level of harm, while NPPF paragraph 194 requires clear and convincing justification for any harm or loss.
17. In its officer report, the Council accepts that the development would make a significant contribution towards the undersupply of care home accommodation in the district. The appellant has provided evidence with their appeal which indicates that the level of undersupply is projected to be 68 beds by 2025 with little current or forthcoming provision in the local area. There is no dispute over the Council's ability to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, but the development would provide around 40 extra bedrooms, helping to free up some existing housing stock in the area, and make use of a previously developed site. As such, I afford significant weight to these public benefits.
18. The quality of the existing accommodation at Glatton Hall is evidently below standard and has resulted in the closure of the former care home. The appellant argues that the extent of restructuring required to bring the home up to current standards would be prohibitive on the grounds of cost, complexity and disruption. However, I have little evidence to demonstrate that it would be too costly, while the current unoccupied state of the building ought to mean that there would be little disruption whilst carrying out the works. Thus, I give limited weight to the benefit of replacing a currently substandard care home.
19. The development would have economic benefits in terms of both its construction and operation, with employment opportunities and support for local services. The appellant notes that facilities within the care home itself would be made publicly available with the intention to continue hosting the annual village fete. The development would also reduce costs to health and social services by providing on-site care. However, many of these economic and social benefits were provided by the former care home and could still be provided through a refurbished building. Therefore, while the development would be a larger operation, I can only afford modest weight to these benefits. The relocation of car parking to one side would have little visual effect on the conservation area and so carries little weight as a benefit.
20. Overall, significant weight can be afforded to the public benefits of the development. However, I have afforded significant weight to the less than substantial harm to the conservation area based on the loss of Glatton Hall and the effect of the replacement building. Thus, the public benefits would be insufficient to outweigh the harm or provide the clear and convincing justification required by NPPF paragraphs 194 and 196. The development would also not sustain heritage assets as required by NPPF paragraph 192. In terms of NPPF paragraph 197, the weight I have given to the loss of the non-designated heritage asset would not be enough on its own in the balance against the benefits of the development. However, this does not diminish my findings with regards to the impact on the conservation area.

21. Concluding on this main issue, the development would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of Glatton Conservation Area and result in the total loss of a non-designated heritage asset, where the public benefits would not outweigh the harm to the significance of the conservation area. Therefore, it would not accord with HLP Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34, which seek development that responds well to its context and conserves heritage assets. In particular, Policy LP34 seeks the preservation of features that contribute positively to conservation areas, and proposals that minimise negative impacts through the retention of buildings and retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, scale, materials and architectural details. The development would fail to accord with the NPPF and would not preserve the conservation area as required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Living conditions

22. Mulberry Barn is a residential property located immediately to the south-west of the existing building at Glatton Hall. It is a relatively short two storey property positioned at a slightly lower level, with first floor windows along the boundary with Glatton Hall that look directly at the building. The current outlook from these windows is of the two storey side elevation of Glatton Hall set across a courtyard and a single storey extension labelled as the dry store on the existing floor plans with minimal set back from the windows. The private garden for Mulberry Barn is located to the south and west of the property and extends up to the shared boundary.
23. The rear wing of the replacement building would be in direct view from the first floor windows at Mulberry Barn and would be taller than the side elevation of the existing building at this point. However, it would be set further back than the existing side elevation by a courtyard garden. Moreover, there would be no built form immediately in front of any window unlike the current dry store. Thus, the overall effect on outlook and light to the property would be acceptable. The side wing of the replacement building would only be seen in oblique views from the property and the end elevation windows of the wing could be obscure glazed to address privacy issues.
24. However, the side wing would be taller than the existing side elevation at this point and would also be nearer to the shared boundary with Mulberry Barn and its garden. This is indicated in one of the photomontages in Appendix 6c of the appellant's statement of case. For users of the garden, the orientation of the side wing would prevent negative effects on light based on the solar study provided by the appellant, but the height and proximity of the wing would be more overbearing than existing and have a greater negative effect on outlook.
25. Concluding on this main issue, the development would have a negative effect on the living conditions of occupiers of Mulberry Barn in terms of outlook from their garden. Therefore, it would not accord with HLP Policy LP14 which seeks a high standard of amenity and the avoidance of oppressive or overbearing effects. The development would also not accord with NPPF paragraph 127(f) which similarly seeks a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of places. The Council also refers to conflict with NPPF paragraph 182, but this relates to the effective integration of new development with existing businesses and community facilities, which is not relevant here.

Drainage

26. At the application stage, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) objected to the lack of information as to whether the storage volume required to attenuate surface water run-off from the critical 1% annual exceedance probability critical storm event, including an appropriate allowance for climate change, can be provided on site. The LLFA requested a fully labelled network diagram and calculations of the drainage system. There was also a request to provide proof that Anglian Water (AW) will accept the levels of surface water discharge from the site.
27. At the appeal stage, the appellant has submitted an updated drainage strategy that purports to show the proposed drainage systems can fully accommodate the 1 in 100 year flood event to address the LLFA's concerns. Further information has been provided at final comments stage in response to concerns raised by neighbouring residents. The appellant has also engaged with AW and has produced camera survey evidence to show that the existing surface water combines with the foul drainage network.
28. Although the appellant has received verbal confirmation that the additional details are satisfactory, nothing has been provided in writing from either the LLFA or AW to my knowledge. There is also no update from the Council as it missed the deadline for submitting its statement of case. Therefore, I cannot be certain that the additional details address the Council's reason for refusal on drainage. A surface water management strategy is included in one of the Council's suggested conditions, but it is not clear whether this would make the development acceptable in drainage terms.
29. In the absence of clarity on the additional details, I am unable to reach a conclusion on this main issue and any compliance with HLP Policy LP15. However, even if I had found that there were no unacceptable effects in terms of drainage, given my findings on the other main issues, it would not have led to a different decision.

Conclusion

30. 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