
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019 by John Gunn DipTP Dip DBE MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/19/3229692

2 Church Lane, Barton, CB23 7BE

- 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 Tristan Hughes against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/0326/19/FL, dated 8 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as an application to replace the external weatherboard cladding on 3 sides of the property to match attached property and replacement of ground floor window frame on the south-west side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barton Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal property is a 2 storey semi-detached property located in the centre of the Barton Conservation Area (Conservation Area). The Heritage Statement accompanying the application suggests that the village originated to the west of St. Peters Church in the 17th century with growth continuing into the 19th century. The village contains a wide range of building designs and ages. The earliest reference to the appeal property is from the middle of the 19th century. Its timber clad design, which can be clearly seen from the public footpath which runs in front of the property, is not a common feature of buildings within the locality.

5. The use of artificial cladding on elevations of the host property that can be clearly seen from the public footpath, without subtle variations that are found in timber, including graining, would result in an unsympathetic modern addition to the host property. The resultant smooth finish would have a pristine polished appearance that would not benefit from weathering, and consequently would appear out of character with the property. Moreover, the replacement window would be constructed of a timber effect material, which would be unlikely to respect the existing window, in terms of proportions and texture. Although this window would be screened to a degree by existing vegetation within the property's garden, it would be unlikely that it would respect the appearance of other windows within the property. The proposals would contrast poorly with the neighbouring property, which is clad in timber, and has wooden window frames.
6. In light of the foregoing, I find that the proposals would introduce discordant features that would be out of keeping with and harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and its attached neighbour. Consequently, the contribution the host property, and the pair of semi-detached properties of which it forms part, make to the character and appearance of the area would be diminished. Harm to the character and appearance of the area would occur as a result.
7. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. In this respect national policy on heritage assets, which includes conservation areas, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). At paragraph 192, it sets out matters which should be taken into account including sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
8. Given my findings above, the proposal would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Whilst the harm that would be caused to this designated heritage asset would be less than substantial the Framework makes it clear that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
9. I note the assertion that the proposal would provide better long-term protection from the elements and would be likely to reduce energy usage through better thermal insulation. However, such benefits would also be likely to be achieved using traditional materials. The matters advanced in support of the proposal do not amount to public benefits which outweigh the great weight that I am required to give to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset.
10. In light of the foregoing, I conclude that the proposal would not respect the character and appearance of the host property or the area and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barton Conservation Area and its significance as a heritage asset. Accordingly, there would be conflict with Policies HQ/1 and NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan,

which jointly set out to secure high quality design which conserves or enhances local character and historic assets.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

J Gunn

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR