



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2021

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/D/20/3263195

50 High Street, Little Paxton, St Neots PE19 6EY

- 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 Katie Davies against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01505/HHFUL, dated 8 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is double and single storey extension, carport with storage above, garden building and change of material finish.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the carport with storage above on:
 - (i) the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St James; and
 - (ii) the living conditions of occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling at No 52 High Street with particular regard to levels of outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance including the setting of the Grade II listed church*

3. No 50 High Street is a two-storey detached dwelling located within the village of Little Paxton. This dwelling and the others which directly face the Grade II* listed church and its associated grounds would not have existed as part of the historical surroundings of the church. Even so, these dwellings are set back further into their plots than the dwellings further along High Street. In combination with the planting within their front gardens this provides a prevailing spacious and soft landscaped character to this section of High Street which makes a positive contribution to setting of this important heritage asset.
4. The position of the carport set forward of the dwelling at No 50 would introduce an outbuilding of considerable scale into the generally open foreground of the row of dwellings facing the listed church. The substantial pitched roof of the building would appear top heavy and would be particularly striking for those approaching the site from the east along High Street. The bulk and height of the building and the large window to the first-floor gable end would emphasise the encroachment of domestic built form towards the listed church when

viewed from within the church grounds. I am not persuaded that the materials that would be incorporated would be sufficient to assimilate the development into its surroundings. Consequently, the development would intrude upon the spacious character of this section of High Street and would not preserve or enhance the setting of the listed church.

5. My attention has been drawn to other outbuildings in the area. The outbuilding at St James Cottage is situated on the opposite side of the road and relates to a dwelling which fronts the pavement. Therefore, the pattern of development is different in that instance to the specific spacious context of the appeal site. With regards to the outbuilding at No 54 High Street, this building is of more modest height, is situated within a larger plot and sits within a staggered building line between the dwellings at Nos 54 and 56 High Street. Consequently, this building has a more discreet relationship with the streetscene when compared with the proposed carport at No 50.
6. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states 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 conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Paragraph 194 of the Framework states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
7. The development would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II* listed church. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
8. I attach some positive weight to the benefits to the street scene that would result from the other elements of the proposals relating to the renovation works to the dwelling itself. There would also be a private benefit to the occupiers of No 50 through the provision of a carport and storage space to serve the property. However, I must attach great importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the Grade II* listed church. There are therefore no public benefits of sufficient weight to outweigh the less than substantial harm that would arise from the carport on the setting of this heritage asset. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the Framework's policies concerning heritage assets, most particularly paragraphs 193, 194 and 196.
9. For the foregoing reasons, the carport with storage above would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St James. Consequently, in that regard, the proposals would be contrary to the aims for development to respond positively to its context, avoid the introduction of incongruous and/or intrusive elements into key views and vistas and to avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment in Policies LP11 (Design Context), LP12 (Design Implementation) and LP34 (Heritage Assets and their Settings) of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (adopted 2019) (the LP) and the Framework.

Living conditions for occupiers of No 52 High Street

10. The neighbouring dwelling at No 52 is a detached bungalow. It has a habitable room window to its front elevation, set in from, but in relatively close proximity to the boundary with the appeal site. There is a substantial hedge to the boundary, the top of which sits at a similar level to the eaves of this neighbouring bungalow. An open forecourt and driveway are positioned just forward of this neighbouring window. There would be a gap between the rear elevation of the carport and the front elevation of No 52. The roof of the carport would also reduce in height towards the shared boundary. Overall, these factors would combine to ensure that the carport would not be oppressive or overbearing for occupiers of No 52 and that suitable levels of outlook would be retained.
11. To conclude, the development would have an acceptable relationship with the living conditions of occupiers of No 52 with particular regard to outlook. In that particular regard the development would comply with the aims to maintain a high standard of amenity for occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings in Policy LP14 (Amenity) of the LP.

Other Matters

12. The planning application was refused specifically in respect of the potential impacts of the proposed carport. From what I have seen, I find no reason to disagree with the Council that the other elements of the proposals, relating to the extension and rendering of the house and provision of a garden building to the rear of the property, raise no material planning concerns. Even so, this does not overcome the harm that would result from the carport identified under the first main issue.

Conclusion

13. I have found that the development would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring living conditions. However, the carport would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St James. In those regards it would conflict with the aims of the development plan and the Framework. Therefore, for the reasons set out, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR