



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by Helen Heward BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 24 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/W/20/3254573

1 Frosts Court, Wootton, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN4 6EU

- 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 John McPhee against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2020/0099, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a garden room extension.
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Appeal B : Ref: APP/V2825/Y/20/3254574

1 Frosts Court, Wootton, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN4 6EU

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by John McPhee against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2020/0100, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as garden room extension.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. Initially it was intended that the appeal site visit would be conducted by an access arranged site visit. Having reviewed the plans and digital mapping information I concluded that an unaccompanied site visit would be both possible and more appropriate in the light of the Covid-19 Pandemic. I undertook an unaccompanied site visit on 28 September.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:-
 - i. Whether the proposed works and development would preserve the curtilage listed building known as No 1 Frost Court or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses;
 - ii. Whether the proposed works and development would preserve the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building known as No 3 High Street and
 - iii. Whether they would preserve the character or appearance of the Wootton Conservation Area (WCA).

Reasons

4. The residential development of Frosts Court, including the appeal property No 1 Frosts Court (No 1), has been formed within a group of former barns historically associated with No 3 High Street (No 3), formerly the farmhouse.
5. No 3 High Street (No 3) is a stone building that appears to date from 1736 but has been altered over time. It is a handsome three storey dwelling and Grade II listed. It has a main façade to the street. A side elevation faces into a courtyard surrounded by an imposing former barn group. The significance of No 3 is partly derived from the distinctive sense of place created by the configuration of the barns and No 3 which helps reveal and enforce the legibility of its agricultural origins.
6. The barns form part of the setting of No 3 and are curtilage listed. They are an imposing group and a good example of 18th century agricultural barns. The main historic architectural features include regular coursed ironstone/limestone rubble walls, pantile and slate roofing and a traditional "banded" limestone/ironstone feature on part of the High Street frontage. Large stone walls turn their back to the street and their functional elevations face an internal courtyard. These internal elevations have a number of ground and first floor openings and a few sets of external stairs. Nonetheless, they retain an imposing scale and simplicity.
7. The significance of the group of barns, including No 1, is derived from the legibility of their agricultural origins, the scale and simplicity of the building form that encloses the yard, a general absence of extensions or projections, and their close physical and functional relationship to the former farmhouse.
8. The special interest of the CA is set out in the Wootton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan February 2010. The village scale and layout of buildings and boundary walls, use of local stone complemented by trees and open space, create a strong sense of place. The significance of the CA relates in part to the distinctive sense of place created by the configuration and inter-relationship of the various historic buildings and structures, and the consistently clear historic and architectural legibility of the built fabric.
9. The proposed garden room extension would replace one set of external steps at No 1 constructed of timber. From my observations of the construction I find the Appellant's submission that this is a modern addition quite plausible. Even so, the design reflects the former use of the barns and is in keeping with the character and appearance of the barns.
10. The single storey form of the proposed garden room with uncharacteristic domestic proportions, a contrived roof construction and overtly residential fenestration. It would create an incongruous extension and detract from the character and appearance of the farm building group. Located adjacent to an access to the courtyard it would be prominent in views from the communal parking area. It would be the only extension of this nature on the inner courtyard walls of the barns. The modest domestic scale would add to the incongruousness. In these ways it would not be subservient.
11. The extension would be constructed with natural facing and slate roofing materials. A tall ironstone wall to one side would reflect local stone walling details. Nonetheless the incongruent extension would fail to preserve the

special architectural and historic interest of the configuration and architectural legibility of No 1 and the curtilage listed barn group.

12. Located directly adjacent to a traditional access to the courtyard between the barns and No 3, the extension would occupy part of the traditional courtyard quite close to a side elevation of the former farmhouse. Extending out from the rear wall of the barn into the courtyard space, the overtly domestic extension would detract from the relationship between the barns and No 3 and fail to preserve the setting of No 3.
13. Views from High Street would be restricted to glimpses of this wall where the effect would be neutral. However, the rear courtyard is a secondary public space where the incongruent extension would detract from the distinctive sense of place created by the configuration and inter-relationship of the barns and No 3, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA.
14. The proposal would fail to satisfy a requirement of Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, 2014, that proposals should sustain and enhance the features which contribute to the character of the area, including conservation areas and locally and nationally significant buildings. It would also fail to satisfy requirements of Saved Policies E20, E26 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan, 1997, that development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area and the design of an extension should adequately reflect the original dwelling and the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form and scale.
15. Although dated these aims of the Policies are consistent with advice at paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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.
16. NPPF paragraph 196 also 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.

Other Matters

17. The details of a previous proposal are not before me and I have judged these appeals on their own merits; not in comparison to any other.
18. I find insufficient evidence to say that the proposal is contrary to Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy which relates to sustainable design and construction.

Planning balance

19. In this case the harm to the setting of No 3, the harm to the significance of the curtilage listed buildings and the harm to the character and appearance of the CA would all be less than substantial.
20. The Appellant submits that the existing kitchen has limited space for a family-sized table and the extension would provide a dining room. But from the drawings submitted I am not persuaded that the ground floor is very small. Nor is there evidence to demonstrate that the dwelling is not functionally

viable. Similarly there is scant evidence regarding threats to the upkeep of the building.

21. Overall the considerable harms to the special interest of the curtilage listed barns, setting of No 3 and the character and appearance of the CA significantly outweigh the scant public benefits and I find that the proposal is contrary to the Development Plan when read as whole.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given and having had regard to all matters raised, I conclude that that the appeals should be dismissed.

Helen Heward

INSPECTOR