



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 6 April 2021

by Martin Small BA(Hons) BPI DipCM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/20/3261635

Bramble Cottage, Church Hill, Godshill, Ventnor, PO38 3HY

- 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 Kate Fleming against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01162/HOU, dated 20 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is an orangery / porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, with particular regard to the location of the property within the Godshill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located within the Godshill Conservation Area (the Area). In assessing the effect of the proposal, I have a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Area. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and any harm to or loss of significance of such an asset requires clear and convincing justification.
4. The Area primarily comprises properties around the Grade I listed Church of All Saints on top of Church Hill and properties along High Street to the south-east of the church, of varying architectural styles but predominantly of Island stone. I have no Character Appraisal for the Area before me, but from my observations during my site visit the significance of the Area appears to derive from the numerous historic buildings, both listed and non-designated, representing the historic core of the village. The Area has an attractive and verdant character due to its buildings, the woodland surrounding the church and other vegetation along High Street.
5. The appeal property is a quaint, unlisted semi-detached cottage located on a generous corner plot at the junction of Church Hill with School Road. The cottage is of stone, painted white, and 2-storey with the first floor within the roof, lit by dormer windows and a window in the half-hipped side elevation. Both the front and side elevations have an attractive, traditional appearance.

6. The front elevation of the cottage is visible from Church Hill and from School Road approaching the junction from the west, from where it is seen in an elevated position against a backdrop of mature trees. The side elevation is hidden in views when approaching Church Hill from the east by existing vegetation to the northern boundary of the plot but can be glimpsed when passing. The property is hidden when approaching down Church Hill by existing vegetation and the neighbouring attached cottage.
7. Although not visible in wider views, the appeal property is attractive and makes a positive contribution to the character and the appearance of the Area. Whilst new development is not precluded from conservation areas and has taken place within the Area, including new dwellings on the other side of Church Hill to the appeal property, any new development should still preserve or enhance the character and the appearance of the Area.
8. The proposed orangery / porch would be single-storey with a flat roof and a substantial footprint relative to the original cottage at 4.4 m both deep and wide. It would be set back only very slightly from the front elevation of the dwelling and, although single-storey, the orangery / porch would dominate the side elevation of the original cottage. Whilst the flat roof would allow the existing form of the cottage to be appreciable, it would be at odds with the traditional pitched roof of the dwelling. This, and the depth of the proposed orangery / porch, would result in an awkward and unsatisfactory relationship between the proposal and the existing cottage.
9. The proposal would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. Whilst the orangery / porch would be largely hidden from the public realm by the existing boundary vegetation to the cottage's plot, I cannot be certain that this would be retained for the lifetime of the proposed development. A planning condition requiring the retention of the vegetation in perpetuity would be unreasonable.
10. Given the positive contribution of the cottage to the Area, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Area, notwithstanding the lack of objection to the proposal from the occupiers of neighbouring properties. In terms of the Framework, this harm would be less than substantial and therefore must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I understand the appellant's desire to provide additional space for herself and her family but this benefit of the proposal would accrue to the appellant rather than to the public. Consequently, the benefit of additional accommodation does not outweigh the harm I have found to the Area in the heritage balance.
11. Furthermore, I have no evidence that the existing accommodation is substandard. It has not been demonstrated that additional accommodation could not be provided through a development more in keeping with the character and appearance of the appeal property and the Area. The proposed development would remain long after the appellant's personal circumstances ceased to be material. There is thus no clear and convincing justification for the harm to the Area.
12. The proposal would conflict in this respect with Policy DM2 of the Island Plan Isle of Wight Core Strategy (2012) (the Island Plan) which sets out the Council's support for high quality design. Whilst the policy allows for change to take place, proposals are expected to complement the character of the surrounding area, particularly in conservation areas.

13. The proposal would also conflict with Policy SP5 of the Island Plan which, whilst not cited in the reason for refusal, is referenced in the Planning Officer's report. This policy sets out that development that has an adverse effect on the Island's historic environment should be avoided. It would also fail to conform with the thrust of Policy DM11 of the Island Plan which seeks to protect heritage assets. These 3 policies are generally consistent with the Framework's policies on design and the historic environment.

Other Matters

14. The appeal property can be seen in the context of the Grade II listed Godshill County Primary School and is therefore within its setting. The original School building dates from 1826 and its significance lies principally in its social and historic interest. The appeal property makes a limited contribution to that significance due to its age. The proposed orangery / porch would not detract from that contribution nor would it diminish the ability to appreciate the significance of the School. Accordingly, the proposal would preserve the setting of this listed building.
15. The property is also within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB Partnership objected to the application on the basis of the effect of upward light spillage on dark skies from a roof lantern originally proposed in the orangery / porch. However, the proposal was revised during the course of the application and the roof lantern removed. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the AONB.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the proposed development conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
17. For this reason, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Small

INSPECTOR