
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2021

by Baljit K Muston BA(Hons) PGDip MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1245/D/20/3264418

Dingle Dell, Godmanstone, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7AH

- 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 & Mrs Paul Loveday against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref WD/D/20/001601, dated 11 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is a double garage and linking porch.
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by Mr & Mrs Paul Loveday against Dorset Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

3. The appellants submitted revised plans prior to the determination of the application. These plans altered the proposed external materials from tiles over white rendered blockwork to slate over timber, and introduced small, hipped ends to the gables at front and rear of the proposed building. It is not clear whether the Council took these revised plans into account when reaching a decision, although it did send an email to the appellants stating that the main issue with the proposal was its size, which was not addressed in the revised plans. For the avoidance of doubt, I have considered both sets of plans in reaching my decision on this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Godmanstone Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within the Godmanstone Conservation Area. The Conservation Area (CA) consists of a significant part of a village set within a chalk valley. Its significance stems from its strong linear form, on either side of the A352 that runs through the village, the considerable number of intact historical buildings it contains, and a number of surviving groups of those

- historical buildings. The relationships between buildings and the road passing through the village, as well as with each other, are also important.
6. The appeal site contains a modern bungalow, set back from the road. The appeal proposal is to construct a substantial double garage in front of that bungalow, which would be the same height as the bungalow. It would be located with its side elevation adjacent to the highway, and would include a large roller shutter style door on its front elevation, facing south.
 7. The CA includes a number of buildings adjacent to the roadway, on both sides of the road. The location of the proposed garage would not in itself make it appear out of keeping with the character of the CA. However, it would be of considerable height and, in whichever materials it was constructed, appear as a substantial utilitarian structure, including a large single garage door, in a prominent position within the CA. These factors would lead to it appearing at odds with the row of traditional cottages on the opposite side of the A352.
 8. There are other ancillary buildings of utilitarian appearance on nearby sites to the north of the appeal site. However, none include the combination of being of significant size and in a particularly prominent position, as would be the case with the appeal proposal. The proposed garage, whether constructed as shown on the original or revised plans, would appear as out of character with the pattern of development in the CA as a whole, as well as with the row of cottages on the western side of the road, opposite the appeal site.
 9. I consider that the proposed garage, for the reasons set out above, would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework says 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 that *"this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."*
 10. The Framework goes on to say in paragraph 196 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"*. In this case, no public benefit has been put forward by the appellants.
 11. I consider that the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the CA. In the absence of any public benefits that outweigh that harm, I conclude that the proposal neither preserves nor enhances the character or appearance of the Godmanstone Conservation Area, contrary to saved Policies ENV4 and ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015). These policies seek, amongst other things, development that does not harm the significance of heritage assets and that respects the character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

12. Some occupiers of the cottages opposite the appeal site have objected to the proposal on the basis that it would cause loss of daylight into their front windows. However, I agree with the Council that, given the distance between the proposed garage and the cottages, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of nearby residents.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Baljit K Muston

INSPECTOR