
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2021

by J P Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/G1630/W/21/3269517

Myrtle Cottage, Gretton Road, Gretton, Cheltenham, GL54 5EP

- 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 Martin Brookes against the decision of Tewkesbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00773/FUL, dated 19 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a dropped kerb for creation of a new access. Erection of a garage following the demolition of the existing shed buildings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The above description of development is taken from the appeal form which tallies with the decision notice.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area including, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

4. The site and its surroundings are wholly within the Cotswolds AONB. This is characterised by traditional villages, often in stone materials, nestling sensitively in the landscape. The village is on the foot of a hillside with woodland above.
5. The village is initially partially obscured on its eastern approach by a rise and the curving alignment of the road. Soon after, there is a notable view of grass verges, hedges and trees amongst traditional buildings along the through road. The appeal site is at the eastern edge of the village and is part of the view.
6. The appeal site includes a swarth of rough grass which borders an open grass field, only being separated by a wire fence, so that the two merge together. The remainder of the appeal site includes a garden which extends behind its associated house as well as that of the adjacent neighbour. There are various outbuildings in the well cultivated garden.

7. The proposal includes a new access which is annotated as 3.7m wide but would be significantly wider at its bell mouth junction with the village road.
8. The access would cut across the roadside grass verge and necessitate substantial hard standing around its entrance. This hard surfacing would spoil the continuity of the grass verge and rurality of the approach to the village, eroding the impression of landscape dominance in the view.
9. Furthermore, the eye would be drawn to the hard surface which would contrast to the adjacent grass field. They would cease to appear to merge and the expanse of verdant pasture would be undermined, spoiling the discernible countryside edge to the village.
10. I note the appellant's offer of only hard surfacing the first 5m of the access but, that would not mitigate the impact across the frontage, which is the most prominent part from public view.
11. The proposal shows new planting around the appeal site which would be beneficial. However, this would not obscure the access.
12. The proposed garage would be to the rear of the appeal site and would be obscured from public view. Moreover, it would replace some existing sheds and be placed alongside an existing outbuilding, so that it would not appear out of place.
13. I therefore conclude that the access would harm the character and appearance of the area, including the AONB.
14. Policy SD7 of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy, requires all development to conserve and where appropriate enhance the landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and other special qualities of the AONB. Similarly, paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework places great weight on conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Policies CE1 and CE3 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan seek to reinforce landscape character of that locality and protect local distinctiveness. The proposal would be contrary to the above.

Conclusion

15. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR