



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2021

by S Edwards BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/21/3273787

Oak Cottage, High Street, Compton Abbas SP7 0NH

- 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 Trevor Clements against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref 2/2020/1231/HOUSE, dated 3 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of extension to garage to form open oak framed carport.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for erection of extension to garage to form open oak framed carport at Oak Cottage, High Street, Compton Abbas SP7 0NH, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2/2020/1231/HOUSE, dated 3 September 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2226/2 Location Plan (received 03/09/2020), 2226/3 Block Plan, Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations (received 03/09/2020).

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development included on the application form has been altered in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description included on the appeal form, which reflects accurately and precisely the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (1) whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Compton Abbas Conservation Area, and (2) the effect of the development on protected trees.

Reasons

Conservation Area

4. The appeal site lies within the small hamlet of West Compton, which forms part of the parish of Compton Abbas and is designated as a Conservation Area. It draws its special interest from its strong character as a small rural settlement

comprising attractive vernacular buildings, which are set in a pastoral landscape bordered by mature hedgerows and trees. Additionally, the abundant vegetation, narrow lanes and enclosure provided by the surrounding hillsides give the Conservation Area a pleasant and intimate feel, which also makes an important contribution to its special interest.

5. The appeal site comprises a thatched property and a modest timber garage, which are set within a spacious plot. The prominence of Oak Cottage within the street scene contrasts with the position of the garage, which lies at a lower level, and is separated from the host dwelling by the intervening vegetation.
6. The proposed development would be slightly taller than the existing garage. However, the simple open-framed design of the car port and the use of timber for the frame and gable would ensure that it successfully integrates into its rural and verdant surroundings. Although the appeal scheme would bring the structure closer to the road frontage and make it more visible within the street scene, a degree of setback would be maintained. These considerations, as well as the topography and softening provided by the surrounding vegetation, would ensure that the car port does not appear unduly prominent within the street scene or detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
7. Given the above, the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Compton Abbas Conservation Area. Accordingly, I find no conflict with Policies 5 and 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Amongst other things, these require development to be designed to improve the character and quality of the surrounding area. They also seek to ensure that great weight is given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when considering proposals that would have an impact on their significance.

Trees

8. Landscaping is identified by the West Compton Conservation Area Appraisal as one of the key features contributing to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The appeal site is no exception in that regard, as the mature trees and vegetation situated within the garden, which include a Lebanese Cedar and a Common Ash, make an important and positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area.
9. The car port would be erected to the front of the existing garage, and no trees or hedging are proposed to be removed as part of the development. The protected trees are at reasonable distance away from the area where the car port would be constructed, and at a higher level. The posts supporting the structure are proposed to be installed within the existing hardstanding area. Even if some of the roots extend into this area, I find it unlikely that the level of excavation required as part of the development would have a significant adverse effect on the long-term health of the protected trees and hedging.
10. For these reasons, and despite the absence of detailed arboricultural information, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the long term longevity and wellbeing of protected trees and hedging. The character of the Conservation Area would be preserved, and the appeal scheme would therefore accord with Policy 5 of the LPP1.

Other Matters

11. The appeal site lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As the proposal relates to a site located within the village of Compton Abbas, I am satisfied that the proposal would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

Conditions

12. I have considered the various conditions suggested by the Council. Where necessary, their wording has been amended, for clarity and accuracy, to ensure compliance with the tests as set within the Framework and the national Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard time limit, I have imposed a condition specifying the approved plans, as this provides certainty. Given my findings regarding the effect of the proposal on trees, a condition requiring the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement is however considered unnecessary.

Conclusion

13. There are no material considerations which indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR