
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 September 2021

by Martin Chandler BSc, MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/D/21/3275671

Langdale, Back Lane, Holywell PE27 4TQ

- 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 and Mrs Engelbrecht against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02561/HHFUL, dated 20 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is Front and rear extensions and alterations to an existing dwelling including a new car port.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for front and rear extensions and alterations to existing dwelling including a new car port, at Langdale, Back Lane, Holywell PE27 4TQ, in accordance with the details in application Ref: 20/02561/HHFUL, dated 20 December 2020, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings: 110.P01; 110.P02b; 110.P03a; 110.P04a; 110.P05b; 110.P06b; 110.P07a; 110.P09a; 1110.P10a; and 110.P11a.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Holywell Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Based on the evidence before me, the significance of the Holywell Conservation Area (CA) derives from the attractiveness of the local vernacular architecture, typified by rendered, thatched cottages, but also in the distinctive historic road layout which creates a roughly circular route.
4. The appeal site is currently occupied by a generously sized detached house set in space, and which is set substantially back from the main road, behind another property which fronts Back Lane. Due to its location, the siting of the existing dwelling is at odds with the historic plan form of the village. In addition, the architecture is not consistent with the local vernacular. However,

despite this, the existing dwelling is very difficult to perceive from the public realm and it is also one of a number of properties within the CA to present a relatively bland architectural appearance. Accordingly, due to the presence of other similar buildings, as well as the discreet location of the site, in my judgement, the appeal site has a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the CA.

5. The proposal would introduce extensions to the front and back of the building and would also comprehensively alter its external appearance through the introduction of different facing materials. External elevations would be clad in weatherboarding and standing seam zinc, with coloured render, brick, and timber cladding also being utilised. Despite this mix of materials, in my judgement, the design and appearance would be well-considered, and the resultant building would have a greater degree of architectural interest. In addition, the location of the site would remain unobtrusive in the context of the broader CA, and the use of weatherboarding would be consistent with other examples close to the site. Accordingly, despite taking on a more contemporary appearance, the scale, massing, proportions and design of the proposal would not harm the significance of the CA. Due to the lack of harm, there is no need to weigh the proposal against any public benefits as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
6. For the reasons identified above therefore, I conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. In doing this, it would satisfy the requirements of the Act, and would accord with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2035 (2019), as well as the requirements of the Framework, the National Design Guide, and guidance set out within the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017). Taken together, these seek amongst other things, high quality design that is respectful to heritage assets.

Conditions and Conclusion

7. In light of my findings, conditions are necessary to establish the time limit for commencing development, as well as to specify the approved drawing numbers.
8. Subject to these, and for the reasons identified above, the appeal is allowed.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR