



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2021 by Darren Ellis MPlan

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L2820/D/21/3277001

1 Grafton Road, Geddington NN14 1AJ

- 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 Adrian Foulke against the decision of North Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref NK/2021/0079, dated 29 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is the installation of two field gates within the Wood Street boundary wall to provide access for two small off road parking areas.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the first part of the description of development on the application form which adequately describes the development proposed.
4. The Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (LP) was adopted on 1st December 2021 and has superseded the saved policies of the Local Plan for Kettering Borough (1995). The policies of the LP will therefore be taken into consideration in this appeal. Both parties have been given the opportunity to comment on the new policies and therefore I feel that no party would be prejudiced by this approach.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Geddington Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site comprises of a semi-detached property set in a generous corner plot at the junction of Grafton Road and Wood Street. The site lies within the historic core of the Geddington Conservation Area (CA) and is opposite three Grade II listed buildings; the Old School, No 1 Wood Street and
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Stoneleigh. The Grade I listed Mary Magdalene Church lies to the rear of the Old School and No 1 Wood Street

7. The historic buildings and traditional limestone walls all contribute positively to the significance of the CA. In this section of the village buildings cluster around the church and the central square at the junction between West Street, Grafton Road and Bridge Street. There is a clear overlap between the setting of various listed buildings and the commonality in building materials and boundary walls associated with the various historic buildings, both listed and unlisted, is integral to the character of the area.
8. Limestone boundary walls tend to front directly onto the street which makes them prominent and also provides a visual link from one building to the next. The wall surrounding the Old School is specifically referred to in the listing description which gives an indication of the importance of boundary treatments in the historic character of the area. The wall at the appeal site is extremely prominent as it turns the corner between Wood Street and Grafton Road. It provides an attractive boundary in its own right due to the use of vernacular building material and positively contributes to the setting of the listed buildings opposite and the character of the CA due to the consistency with other boundary treatments in the area.
9. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Section 16 (2) of the Act requires that special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.
10. The proposal would see the removal of a section of the stone wall that fronts onto Wood Street and the installation of two wooden gates. Accesses breaking through boundary walls are not uncommon in the local area, however these are mostly small in scale and where gates have been installed these are also limited in size. The proposal would result in the loss of a significant section of the existing traditional boundary wall in an extremely prominent location at the junction of Grafton Road and Wood Street. The proposed gates would be wider than other gates in the immediate area and would disrupt the pleasing continuity of the existing wall. In addition, the splayed entrance would appear as a highway engineered solution, designed around visibility splays for the motorist. This would not reflect the traditional pattern of boundary walls, as described above, which tend to back directly onto the pavement. Overall, the proposal would be an incongruous alteration that would harmfully alter this prominent stone wall and detract from its contribution to the CA and the setting of the listed buildings.
11. The harm would be localised and therefore, in the context of the approach in National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm to the CA as a whole would be less than substantial. Nevertheless, it is a matter of considerable weight and importance. In such circumstances, the Framework provides that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
12. The proposal would provide off-street parking in an area where limited opportunities for off-street parking results in considerable on-street parking. However, given the prevalence of on-street parking in the area, the proposed

driveways would only have a very limited effect on the parking situation. Furthermore, although the proposal may prevent vehicles from parking on the existing wide pavement on Wood Street adjacent to the appeal property, this could result in more vehicles parking on the street instead. For these reasons I attach limited weight to the benefit of additional off-street parking. Overall, the public benefits of the appeal scheme would not outweigh the harm identified to the CA, to which I afford considerable weight.

13. For these reasons, the proposal would conflict with Policy 2 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (July 2016), which seeks to protect, preserve or enhance the historic environment and requires proposals to conserve or enhance the heritage significance of a heritage asset. The proposal would also fail to comply with the heritage policies of the Framework. Having regard to the requirements of Sections 72(1) and 16(2) the harm in that respect is a matter that attracts significant weight.

Other matters

14. My attention has been drawn to extensions to the village school and housing at Chase Farm, however these developments are of a significantly different nature to the appeal proposal and as such they are not comparable to the scheme before me.
15. I understand that the proposal would see the installation of electric charging points at the appeal property. As the use of these points would be restricted only to the appellant and occupiers of the appeal property I attach limited weight to this private benefit, and as such it would not outweigh the considerable weight of the harm identified above.
16. In their response to the new policies, the appellant refers to concerns of local residents that the part of the appeal site that contains the appellant's allotment would be subject to a future residential development should the appeal proposal be allowed. However, the appeal proposal is solely for the installation of two gates and the Council's objections and reasons for refusal do not refer to any potential future development. Moreover, any future residential development would require a separate planning application that would be subject to the appropriate assessment by the Council.

Conclusion and recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed because of the conflict with the development plan and there being no material considerations which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR