



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2022

by S Edwards BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/21/3289428

Stoke Cottage, North Road, Chideock, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6LE

- 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 Alan Saunder against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref P/HOU/2021/00805, dated 16 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is Erection of a garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade I listed building known as Parish Church of St Giles and the Grade II* listed building known as Mortuary Chapel, as derived from their respective settings, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Chideock and Seatown Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Located within the Chideock and Seatown Conservation Area, the appeal site comprises a parking area for Stoke Cottage. This hardstanding area is partly enclosed to the rear by a stone wall but is otherwise largely open, and is situated to the North of a group of three attached cottages (including Stoke Cottage), which are listed at Grade II.
4. The site lies immediately opposite the Grade II* listed Mortuary Chapel characterised by its richly detailed elevations, and its associated boundary walls and gates, which are included within the listing. Moreover, it is located near the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Giles, which stands out within the street scene, especially by reason of its impressive tower and higher octagonal stair-turret. The Table Tombs and the Churchyard Wall are also separately listed.
5. There is no doubt that the appeal site forms part of a highly sensitive area, due to its proximity to a high number of designated heritage assets of national importance. The significance of these listed buildings does not solely derive from their intrinsic historic and architectural special interest, but also from the contribution which they make to the townscape of the village and the Chideock and Seatown Conservation Area as a whole. This designated heritage asset owes much of its special interest to its picturesque village character comprising a rich collection of historic buildings, set within an attractive wider landscape

setting. By virtue of its location within the settings of the Parish Church of St Giles and the Mortuary Chapel, the appeal site itself also contributes to the significance of these listed buildings, as an integral part of the surroundings in which these heritage assets are experienced. As such, it forms part of a key view from North Road looking towards the Parish Church and the Main Road beyond.

6. The construction of the garage with timber cladding, use of artificial slate and automated 'wood effect' garage door, would give the structure a utilitarian and overtly modern appearance which, combined with its siting and scale, would unduly stand out within the public realm as an incongruous addition to the street scene. It would fail to reflect the historic character of its surroundings and cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would also harmfully intrude into the settings of the Mortuary Chapel and Parish Church of St Giles, to the detriment of their significance as highly important heritage assets.
7. Additional planting would take a considerable amount of time to mature, and would not in any event provide sufficient screening for the development which would remain visible within the public realm. I am also concerned that there is no certainty that such landscaping would remain in place for the lifetime of the development, as planting could disappear for a number of reasons, such as disease, weather or accidental damage.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to numerous examples of garages located within the Conservation Area, some of which, I understand, are sited within the curtilage of a Listed Building. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to these developments being accepted and there is therefore no certainty that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal before me, notably in respect of context, relationship with nearby listed buildings and development plan policy.
9. Given the above, the proposed garage would fail to preserve the settings of the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Giles and the Grade II* listed Mortuary Chapel. It would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Chideock and Seatown Conservation Area. Whilst the harm to each individual heritage asset would be less than substantial, it nevertheless carries considerable importance and weight.
10. In such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposed garage would enable the appellant to securely park his car, and provide storage space, but these benefits would be largely private. Overall, I have been presented with no public benefits, which would outweigh the identified harm.
11. For the foregoing reasons, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed Parish Church of St Giles and Mortuary Chapel, as derived from their setting, as well as the character and appearance of the Chideock and Seatown Conservation Area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies ENV4 and ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (Adopted October 2015), Policies H, I and the Guidance contained within the Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted October 2009). These require development proposals to achieve a high quality of sustainable and inclusive design, whilst conserving

and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets.

12. The Council's Reason for Refusal makes reference to other designated and non-designated heritage assets, but limited information has been presented in that respect. Having regard to the available evidence, I have identified no further harm, other than in respect of the assets which I have referred to above.

Other Matters

13. No concerns have been raised by the Council regarding the effect of the proposal on the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and there are no reasons for me to reach an alternative view. The appeal site lies within the built envelope of the village of Chideock and as such, I am satisfied that the proposal would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty in the Dorset AONB.

Conclusion

14. I note that interested parties and Historic England did not object to the proposal. However, in view of the harm I have identified, they do not persuade me to reach a different conclusion. 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 dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR