
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2022

by C Coyne BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/22/3292374
33 Church Street, Great Shelford CB22 5EL

- 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 Vanessa and Henry Nash against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03503/FUL, dated 29 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension to main house and conversion of cart shed to residential annexe (with extension).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

2. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('The Act') I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Great Shelford Conservation Area (CA).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA) having regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is located within Great Shelford, a semi-rural village which has many agricultural buildings and other buildings of a similar style within it. The appeal property no. 33 is a two-storey detached dwelling with a single storey extension with a traditional style and material finish. There is a detached cart shed/outbuilding situated within its garden. There are several dwellings nearby many of which have traditional rural vernacular architectural styles and external material finishes. The cart shed is a non-designated heritage asset of a modest scale relative to the size of the main dwelling. Its timber frame and weather boarded construction and materials reflect the characteristics of some of the other agricultural type buildings in the CA.

5. According to the evidence, the host property and the cart shed are not listed, and these buildings and the appeal site contribute to the significance of the CA due to their context and relationship with nearby buildings and for having an interesting cart shed which is a good example of a historic apple loft. The construction of the cart shed, and the use of traditional vernacular materials contribute to the semi-rural setting of the village and CA as a whole.
6. The evidence also highlights that the vernacular style and materials of the existing rear single storey extension reflect those of the host property and other similar buildings in the CA with the view of the host property, its extension and the cart shed along Kings Mill Lane making a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
7. The Council's officer report states that the current footprint of cart shed is approximately 39.7 square metres (sqm) with that of the proposed cart shed extension/conversion being approximately 86 sqm. Based on these figures, which the appellant has not disputed, this would represent an increase of approximately 43 sqm which would in effect more than double its spatial footprint.
8. Furthermore, far from resembling a square oast house which has a relatively uniform roof style the proposed box extension to the cart shed has an irregular, bulky and visually jarring roof form which detracts from the rural character of the existing building. This bulky and irregular roof form would also be visible from Kings Mill Lane with this roof slope also having a metal external material finish that would appear discordant alongside the clay pantiles on those of the other nearby buildings.
9. Moreover, while it may well represent an innovative design, given the form, bulk and scale of the proposed extensions to the cart shed, particularly the box-like extension at one end, it would not be subservient to the host building either in terms of its footprint, scale, or design. These extensions would, in my view, also give the annexe an unbalanced and clunky visual appearance. As a result, I consider that this element of the proposal would not represent high-quality design overall when set within its local and historic context.
10. As a result, the proposal would have a significant adverse visual impact in this regard thereby also detracting from the character and significance of the CA. Consequently, even though no objection was raised to the proposal by the Council's conservation officer, I consider that due to its scale, bulk, and massing that the cart shed extension and conversion element of the proposal would have significant adverse visual impact.
11. As a result, I find that the proposed development would negatively affect the historic interpretation of this part of the CA. For this reason, it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA as a whole thereby having a negative effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset resulting in less than substantial harm.
12. Having regard to paragraph 202 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework), the proposal would provide several benefits including: securing the viable re-use of the cart shed; and the provision of additional residential accommodation for the appellant's family to which I afford moderate weight given the scale of the proposal. However, even so, these benefits are not of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm to the CA to which I must attach great weight.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As a result, it would conflict with paragraph 199 of the Framework, which anticipates that great weight be afforded

to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including their setting. It would also conflict with paragraphs 200 and 202 of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposal would also fail to meet the requirements of policies NH/14 and HQ/1 of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (SCLP).

Protected Village Amenity Area

14. According to the evidence, part of the appeal site lies within the PVAA. The Council have raised a concern in that in its view, the proposed two-bedroomed residential annexe extension to the cart shed would give rise to unacceptable levels of noise that would disturb the tranquillity of the PVAA. However, I have no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the proposal would cause such levels of noise and disturbance or that these would be above existing noise levels generated by the main dwelling, its existing extension, and nearby dwellings. Furthermore, the Council's Environmental Health Practitioner did not raise a concern in this regard.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm the PVAA having regard to noise and disturbance. As a result, it would not conflict with the relevant requirements of policy NH/11 of the SCLP.

Other Matters

16. I note that several interested parties submitted comments in support of the proposal. However, given the small number of such comments I afford this matter limited weight and as such it does not overcome or outweigh the substantial harm I have identified above.

Conclusion

17. Having regard to paragraph 202 of the Framework, the proposal would provide economic and social benefits to which I have attached limited weight. However, these benefits are not of sufficient weight to overcome the harm to the character and appearance of the CA to which I must attach great weight. Accordingly, a clear and convincing justification for the identified harm has not been given or demonstrated in accordance with paragraph 200 of the Framework. The proposal would, therefore, fail to sustain or enhance the setting, and thereby the significance of, the CA.
18. As a result, notwithstanding its compliance with policy NH/11 of the SCLP, the proposed development would be contrary to the adopted Development Plan when read as a whole and there are no material considerations indicating a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coyne

INSPECTOR