

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2022

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/22/3303952

The Old Village Hall, Ibthorpe Road, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hants SP11 0BD

- 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 Mrs A Du Toit against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00634/FULLN, dated 7 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached garden building.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hurstbourne Tarrant Conservation Area and its effect upon the setting of a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the village of Hurstbourne Tarrant and comprises a former village hall in a rural setting. The architecture is varied within the locality, but in the main it is traditional in nature. The host building itself has been identified within the Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) which refers to the appeal site as a former church hall and as being a building of local interest because of its significant contribution to the historic character of the Conservation Area. The CACA also highlights that there are many fine examples of buildings constructed of brick which includes red bricks with blue brick headers such as on the host dwelling.
4. Consequently I consider that The Old Village Hall is of a unique character with a prominent facade that is very apparent within the street scene. Due to its high level of conservation, I consider it only right to afford it the category of a non-designated heritage asset.
5. I acknowledge that the Hurstbourne Tarrant Village Design Statement (2021) (VDS) does not form part of the statutory development plan, nonetheless it is a material consideration; and within that there are a number of policies which are of relevance to the case in hand. The proposed building would be substantially

smaller than the adjacent dwelling, but that only satisfies the first limb of VDS Policy LV10. Whilst I accept that The Old Village Hall is not included within one of the important views as set out within the VDS or CACA, nonetheless this does not reduce the importance that the host building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6. I have not been made aware that the Council object to contemporary design within Conservation Areas per se, but specifically the siting of the proposed building is the primary issue in this case. I fully understand the reasoning behind the use of red cedar cladding, but nonetheless the proposal would appear completely at odds with the brick Dutch gable frontage. I am not in a position to doubt that there is a variety of window frame colours within the village; that the use of the subject building would be ancillary to the host dwelling; or that the land where the building would be sited is underused outdoor amenity space. Clearly the scheme would enable the provision of a home working space and a reduction in work related travel, however these benefits must be weighed against the harms stemming from it.
7. The proposed outbuilding would be located in very close proximity to the host dwelling and would be visible from the road, albeit partially screened by vegetation on approaching from the north; and from the front by timber boundary treatment. Its design, form and materials would jar considerably and cause harm to the setting of The Old Village Hall and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
8. In respect to the Conservation Area being a designated heritage asset, I consider pursuant to paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') that less than substantial harm would be caused to its significance and no public benefits have been advanced that outweigh this harm. I therefore find the proposal contrary to Policies E1 and E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) which together permit development if it is of a high quality, in terms of design and local distinctiveness through, amongst other things, requiring proposals to integrate, respect and complement the character of the area in which the development is located; and would not detract from key landmark buildings or features, specifically with regard to designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings.

Conclusion

9. Having regard to the above and all other matters raised by the appellant, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR