The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2023

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/21/3282529
7 High Street, Pampisford, Cambridgeshire CB22 3ES

- 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 Dr and Mrs Owen and Josephine Edwards against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- The application Ref 21/01175/FUL, dated 14 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2021.
- The development proposed is the construction of a car canopy with clear polycarbonate roof over an existing parking area.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The car canopy has already been erected.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:

   - the effect of the canopy on the character and appearance of the area, including the Pampisford Conservation Area (CA) and the setting of adjacent listed buildings; and
   - the effect of the canopy on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The car canopy, an open sided grey steel structure supported by two uprights and with polycarbonate roof, about 4.9 x 2.9 m in size and about 2.73 m high, covers two previously existing parking spaces in one corner of the grounds surrounding 7 High Street, a Grade II listed building. The spaces and structure are separated from the grounds, and the attractive late 16th/early 17th century half-timbered and thatched building within, by a thick hedge about 1.5 m tall and several large trees within the grounds.

5. Whilst this screening reduces the visual impact on No 7, the structure lies immediately adjacent to the High Street at the heart of Pampisford CA, a sensitive, high quality historic environment comprising numerous listed buildings, most timber framed and plastered with thatched roofs. These

include No 5 adjacent and Nos 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 opposite, a fine row of historic buildings with exceptional group value which line the road. The canopy lies in the immediate setting of these buildings.

6. The canopy is an unattractive, utilitarian, bus shelter type structure made of modern materials that may be suitable for some undistinguished urban settings. However, in the historic village setting of Pampisford High Street amongst numerous listed buildings it looks completely out of place, an alien, unsympathetic, modern intrusion in the otherwise attractive street scene. The poor-quality design is incompatible with its sensitive location.

7. For these reasons the canopy adversely affects the character and appearance of the area, including the Pampisford CA and the setting of adjacent listed buildings, contrary to Policies HQ/1 and NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 (SCLP). These require high quality design that makes a positive contribution to its local context and proposals that sustain and enhance the district's historic environment and the significance of heritage assets and their settings. Permission for the canopy would also conflict with the legislative duty[1] to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA and the setting of listed buildings.

Highway safety

8. The canopy has been erected over an existing parking area which is used to park two cars off the road. Whilst the parking area does not meet modern standards, being too small to accommodate many types of car and requiring reversing into the highway with minimal pedestrian visibility, this has been the case for many years without incident. However, the canopy formalises this substandard arrangement and the two upright supports act to reduce the area for parking slightly, increasing the likelihood of cars overhanging the footway in future which would be a danger to passing pedestrians.

9. The canopy therefore adversely affects highway safety and conflicts with SCLP Policies HQ1 and TI/3 which seek to ensure car parking does not cause safety issues and takes into consideration the site location and highway safety issues.

Conclusion

10. The canopy was erected without realising that planning permission was needed in order to tackle a persistent problem of bird droppings. Whilst this problem is appreciated, it does not justify the erection of an unattractive metal bus shelter type structure in the sensitive location concerned.

11. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

[1] Sections 72(1) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990