



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2023

by K Allen MEng (Hons) MArch PGCert ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/22/3304594

4 Frosts Court, High Street, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6EU

- 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 Eric Stanford-Jones against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNN/2022/0384, dated 29 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'new garden shed (retrospective)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for new garden shed (retrospective) at 4 Frosts Court, High Street, Wootton, West Northamptonshire, Northampton NN4 6EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WNN/2022/0384, dated 29 March 2022.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of the development from the Council's decision notice. This adequately and simply describes the development in lieu of the much longer and detailed description given on the application form.
3. The Council has referenced policies of the emerging local plan, Northampton Borough Council: Northampton Local Plan Part 2011-2029, Submission Version December 2020 (NLP). Having regard to paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I have insufficient information to determine the stage of preparation of the NLP or whether the referenced policies are the subject of any unresolved objections. As such, I afford the policies of the emerging plan limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
4. The development has already been constructed. Detailed plans have not been provided therefore I have considered the shed as constructed on site.
5. I have had regard to the statutory duties set out in Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wootton Conservation Area and whether it would

preserve the setting of the appeal property as a curtilage listed building and adjacent Grade II listed buildings.

- the living conditions of the residents of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property is a two-storey dwelling which forms part of a larger barn conversion scheme. The barn is one element of the historical farm complex, Home Farm, comprising of two Grade II listed buildings No 1 and No 3 High Street. Nos 9, 11 and 15 Green Lane are also Grade II listed and are adjacent the appeal site. The primary elevations of the barn face inwards towards a quadrangle with minimal openings on the outward facing elevations. This protected space has been divided into a large communal parking area as well as private garden spaces with timber post and rail fences and mature hedging of various heights. The space is further divided by changes in ground material. Other similarly sized garden structures are in place within the quadrangle area.
8. The property lies within the Wootton Conservation Area, which derives significance from its rural, small village atmosphere comprising of clusters of compact buildings lining narrow and winding streets. The area is characterised by a mixture of colour washed and stone properties topped with natural slate or pantile roofs; mature planting is a prominent feature against the robust materials. Interrupted vistas and changing perspectives contribute significantly to how the area is experienced.
9. The farm complex derives its significance from its connection to the area's agricultural history, the scale and simplicity of the building form, and the spatial and functional relationship between the various elements of the farm complex including the quadrangle.
10. Nos 9, 11 and 15 Green Lane are two storey stone cottages. Their significance is derived from their connection to the historical growth and development of the village and their architectural character.
11. Despite the original design concept that the openness of the quadrangle be retained the barn conversion scheme allowed for fencing and planting to subdivide the space, resulting in a much more domestic atmosphere. The approved landscaping scheme including the open garden building has contributed to the formation of separate spaces within the quadrangle and increased domesticity, such that the shed is not out of place. The proposal when seen in combination with other changes does not harmfully diminish the openness of the quadrangle and consequently does not detract from the significance of the Grade II listed buildings which make up the farm complex. Similarly, the architectural character of Nos 9, 11 and 15 Green Lane has not been affected by the shed. The setting of the Grade II listed buildings and the host property as a curtilage listed building is preserved.
12. The simple timber form with felt roof is in keeping with other similar structures in the area and due to its position and the presence of mature hedging within the quadrangle, views of the shed are limited from both inside Frosts Court and from the street, therefore preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

13. Given the above, I conclude that the shed does not harm the character and appearance of the area and preserves the character of the Wootton Conservation Area as well as the setting of the appeal property as a curtilage listed building and adjacent Grade II listed buildings. Consequently, I find no conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (December 2014), Saved Policy E26 of the Northampton Borough Council: Northampton Local Plan 1993-2006 (June 1997) or Policy 31 of the NLP which together seek to ensure that the character and appearance of conservation areas and the significance of heritage assets are preserved. Similarly, there is no conflict with the Framework which seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and history.

Living conditions

14. While changes to the mature planting are possible, due to the sheds position set back from the neighbouring properties and the existing fencing and garden structures, the shed is not detrimental to the outlook from neighbouring properties.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposed development does not harm the living conditions of the residents of neighbouring properties, and I find no conflict with Policy 3 of the NLP which seeks to ensure residents' amenity is maintained. I also find no conflict with the Framework which seeks to ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given I conclude that the development accords with the development plan as a whole and the Framework. Therefore, the appeal should succeed. Since the appeal is retrospective and, according to the application form, the development is complete, no conditions are necessary.

K Allen

INSPECTOR