



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2023

by N Perrins BSc (hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/22/3299920

21 Priorygate Court, Castle Cary, Somerset, BA7 7HT

- 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 Burford against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref: 22/00677/HOU, dated 8 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is addition of a single storey glass room located on the rear elevation of the property in the private garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the addition of a single storey glass room located on the rear elevation of the property in the private garden at 21 Priorygate Court, Castle Cary, Somerset, BA7 7HT subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - i. Location Plan
 - ii. Site Plan – proposed
 - iii. Roof and Floor Plans – As proposed drawing no. 33731-03
 - iv. Elevations – As proposed drawing no. 33731-04
 3. The external surface of the development shall be of materials as indicated in the application form and no other materials shall be used without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Preliminary Matters

2. I note that the planning application was refused by South Somerset District Council, which was replaced by Somerset Council on 1 April 2023. Somerset Council have confirmed that the change in local authority administrative arrangements does not change any of the development plan considerations relevant to this appeal, all of which remain in place and effective from 1 April 2023.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area bearing in mind the special attention that should be paid to the desirability of preserving the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building, St Johns Priory, and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Castle Cary Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached house located within the grounds of a Grade II Listed Building known as St John's Priory, which is near to the centre of Castle Cary. The appeal site, St John's Priory and other surrounding buildings are accessed from Priorygate Court, which connects to the urban area from Victoria Road. At the entrance to Priorygate Court from Victoria Road is a pair of Grade II listed gate piers. The appeal site and surrounds are within the Castle Cary Conservation Area.
5. The Council's reasons for refusal highlight that the appellant did not provide a Heritage Statement in support of the application and concluded that negligible attention to the setting and significance of the St John's Priory listed building had been given in the design of the proposal. I note that the appellant in their grounds of appeal has now provided further information regarding the significance of heritage assets and their view on how the appeal proposal affects them, information which I have considered in this appeal.
6. St John's Priory is a Grade II listed building built in 1877. The listing describes in detail the key features of the building such as use of doulting and bath stone ashlar, plain clay tile roof between coped gables, ashlar chimney stacks with ornamental caps and decorative features relating to windows. The listing notes that later extensions to the north and east are not of special interest. I note that the listing only refers to the features of the building and does not mention anything specific about the building's setting.
7. It is evident that St John's Priory is a high quality, impressive and imposing building that dominates its plot, and is the overriding feature of interest within its site and immediate surrounds. The surrounding development in my view all exist as subservient features that do not challenge St John's Priory as the pre-eminent feature within Priorygate. The significance of St John's Priory in my view is therefore grounded in the architecture and presence of the building itself.
8. The significance of the Conservation Area is derived from a number of factors including local topography, views out to the surrounding countryside and views over the town centre from higher ground, individual groups of trees and distinctive landscape and townscape features. St John's Priory is identified by the Council as an important listed building within the Conservation Area.
9. The appeal proposal would be single storey with a floor area of 6 square metres located on the existing patio area of the property. The height of the proposed glass room would be 2.7m at its highest point and project just over 2m from the existing dwelling's rear elevation. The design of the glass room would comprise a structure of aluminium powder coated posts coloured metallic grey with glazed walls and roof.

10. The appellant has provided photographs of examples of similar glass rooms built on traditional buildings. It is evident that there would be a contrast between the style of the existing dwelling and the proposed glass room but as evidenced in the submissions this does not mean that a successful extension cannot be achieved. I also note that a similar structure has been constructed nearby at 1 Priorygate Court, highlighting that a modern design can be incorporated with a traditional building in this location without resulting in harm to the historic character of the area. In this case, and in view of the small scale of the proposal and subtle design approach used, I consider that the appeal proposal would not detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
11. I agree with the Council that the appeal proposal would be visible from certain viewpoints on the entrance road and from within the St John Priory site. However, planting exists that will partially screen the appeal scheme from some views from St John's Priory, which along with the small scale of the structure would mean in practice the appeal proposal would not be unduly prominent or incongruous when seen from outside of the appeal site. It is evident also that residential development of varying styles is already visible from all sides of St John's Priory, a characteristic which would not materially change by the addition of the appeal scheme.
12. Overall, I consider that the design would successfully integrate with the existing dwelling given its small scale, subtle and minimal use of the aluminium posts and use of clear glass. St John's Priory will remain the dominant and highly impressive feature within the site and surrounds with or without the appeal scheme being built. I therefore do not find that the appeal scheme would lead to harm to the special historic significance or setting of John's Priory or the Conservation Area.
13. The appellant in their appeal submission also refers to the Grade II listed entrance gateway to St Johns Priory. The Council has not objected to the appeal scheme on the grounds of any harm to the significance of the listed entrance gateway. I agree. The significance of the entrance gateway appears to be derived from historic interest, architectural detailing and association with the Priory. This would not be diminished by the appeal scheme.
14. In terms of development plan policy, Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (SSLP) 2006-2008 requires development to achieve a high quality, which promotes local distinctiveness and preserves the character and appearance of the district. Policy EQ3 of the SSLP requires heritage assets to be conserved and where appropriate enhanced including high standards of design and use of appropriate materials. I find that the design and scale of the appeal proposal is acceptable and would not result in harm to the identified heritage assets or their settings. Therefore, the appeal scheme would preserve the historic landscape in this location in accordance with Policies EQ2 and EQ3 of SSLP and be consistent with the provisions of Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Conditions

15. I have considered the use of conditions in line with the guidance set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). I attach conditions in respect of timescale and detailing the approved plans for certainty. I also attach a condition regarding construction materials to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

16. I note that the Council officer's report refers to Policy EQ4 of the SSLP that requires development to pay consideration to the impact of development on wildlife and to provide mitigation measures where appropriate. However, in this case there is not the evidence before me that a planning condition would be necessary in this regard.

Conclusion

17. I conclude that the works will not result in harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, Grade II listed gate or the Castle Cary Conservation area. The appeal is therefore allowed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR