



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2023

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/22/3305675

Plot adjacent to 1 Catherines Well, Milton Abbas, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0AT

- 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 P Kellaway-Moore of Acorn Builders (Dorset) Limited against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref P/FUL/2022/02294, dated 14 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is erect garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application was submitted in relation to a plot formed by subdivision of the garden of 1 Catherines Well. Since then, a dwelling has been built on the new plot, which the proposed garage would serve. I have not been supplied with the address of this new dwelling. However, in order to differentiate it from No 1 I have modified the address in the banner heading above.
3. The submissions indicate that the concrete plinth for the proposed garage has already been laid. At the time of my visit a shed of similar form to the proposed garage, but of smaller size, and featuring different materials, had also been erected in the location within which the garage is proposed. I have been provided with no indication of whether these works were authorised. I have therefore proceeded to assess the appeal proposal on the basis of the submitted plans, taking the shed into account only insofar as it provides a broad impression of the likely physical and visual presence of the garage within the streetscene.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed garage on the character and appearance of the area, including nearby designated heritage assets.

Reasons

5. The north side of Catherines Well features a generally symmetrical arrangement of dwellings. This comprises a broad crescent of matching semi-detached dwellings which face onto a green, with 2 further semi-detached dwellings at either end which are again of matching design. No 1 is one of the semi-detached pair located at the west end of the crescent. Despite modifications to some of the dwellings, and the construction of the new

dwelling alongside No 1, the original layout remains both apparent and distinctive. One notable feature of this layout is the set back of dwellings from the frontage. Though many of the original front gardens have been turned over to parking, the frontages otherwise remain open, and none features a garage or similar structure forward of the front elevation.

6. The design and positioning of the new dwelling generally complement that of the adjacent semi-detached pair. Indeed, this new dwelling and the proposed garage both are and would be directly viewed with primary reference to the adjacent semi-detached dwelling, and to the broader layout described above.
7. Within this context, the proposed location of the garage would be immediately at odds with the existing pattern. This is clearly demonstrated by the shed currently erected on site. The garage would thus be a highly conspicuous and incongruous feature. The adverse effects would be accentuated by the fact that the garage would form a visual end stop of sorts within the streetscene, with no further development beyond.
8. The appellant has made reference to the positioning of garages in relation to dwellings on the south side of Catherines Well. However, development on the south side of the street is distinctly different in character and layout to that on the north, featuring a broad mix of dwellings set at much lower level. As perception of the distinctive character and layout of dwellings on the north side of Catherines Well is not informed by that on the south side, the examples cited by the appellant do not alter my findings above.
9. The appellant has also made reference to various outbuildings related to No 1 that were previously present, albeit all of which appear to have been removed before the application was submitted. The context for assessment both had and has clearly moved on. I therefore attach little weight to the past presence of outbuildings.
10. The Council partly objected to the scheme on the basis of its adverse effect on the setting of the registered park and garden of Milton Abbey, and on Milton Abbas Conservation Area (the Conservation Area). The partly overlapping boundaries of each run adjacent to the site. However, the Council did not explain why the development would have an adverse effect, nor identify what this would be.
11. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal the significance of the registered park and garden lies in the role that it plays in providing the designed setting of Milton Abbey. Aside from simple proximity of the site to a peripheral part of the designated area, there is no obvious relationship between the site and the registered park and garden. As such, whilst I have found that the garage would harmfully disrupt the streetscene on the north side of Catherines Well, this would not have any bearing on the ability to appreciate the significance of the registered park and garden.
12. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal the significance of the Conservation Area resides both in the designed landscape and buildings of Milton Abbey, and in the distinctive layout and character of the historic core of the village. The latter lies some distance to the south of the site and is not visible from it. Though housing immediately to the south may itself be contained within the designated area, it is modern, and thus holds no heritage value. To the extent that the Conservation Area contains land which otherwise falls within the registered

park and garden, my findings above are similarly applicable. Again therefore, the harm that I have identified in relation to Catherines Well would have no adverse effect on the ability to appreciate the significance of the Conservation Area.

13. Reference has additionally been made to a view identified within the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2031 (the NP). However, the relevant map within the NP marks and describes this westward view as originating towards the west of the site. As such, the garage would have no bearing on the view.
14. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that whilst the effects of the development in relation to nearby designated heritage assets would be neutral, the development would nonetheless harm the character and appearance of the streetscene. The development would consequently conflict with Policy 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 2016, which states that development should be designed to improve the character and quality of the area within which it is located.

Other Matters

15. The site is also located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), within which there is a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. In this regard the garage would be constructed and viewed in close association with existing residential development, within the context of which it would not give rise to any adverse effect on the surrounding landscape of the AONB.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above the effects of the development would be unacceptable, giving rise to conflict with the development plan. There are no other considerations which alter or outweigh these findings. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR