



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2023

by Sian Griffiths BSc(Hons) DipTP MScRealEst MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/23/3329523

5 Stockerson Lane, Great Easton, Market Harborough LE16 8TD

- 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 Jordan Connachie against the decision of Harborough District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00797/FUL, dated 30 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of a replacement garage/open fronted carport (variation of design as approved under 19/01699/FUL).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Great Easton Conservation Area.
3. No 5 Stockerson Lane is a residential dwelling located to the northern edge of the small, rural village of Great Easton. It is set behind a fence and partial hedgerow fronting Stockerson Lane. The wider area is predominantly residential and rural in character.
4. The appeal site is located within the Great Easton Conservation Area which is protected under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('The Act'). I have a statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. This is also reinforced by Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
5. The proposals would result in the creation of a new 3 bay car port with storage above in the loft space, which would be independently accessed via an external staircase. This would replace an existing garage building.
6. Policy GD8 (Good design in new development) and HC1 (Built heritage) of the Harborough Local Plan (2019) (LP) seek to secure good quality development that does not undermine local character, and where it would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and/or its setting that harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
7. Policy DBE1 (Design) of the Great Easton Neighbourhood Plan (2017) (NP) also sets out that new development should reinforce local distinctiveness.

8. The Conservation Area character is mixed but includes scattered of farmsteads along the main routes through the village which provide a more organic feel to the area.
9. In this context, I consider that the appeal property which appears to complement this settlement pattern within the Conservation Area, makes a positive contribution to its character. I consider that the existing garage outbuilding (which would be replaced by the appeal proposal) does not positively contribute to the Conservation Area. However, it is not a substantial building and it is not particularly visible from other parts of the Conservation Area.
10. The appellant argues that the proposals will have a lower eaves height, but a higher ridge than that of the permitted scheme (LPA Ref 19/01699/FUL, which was subject to a Non-Material Amendment Ref 20/00244/NMA) for a two bay car port with no storage area or external staircase. However, it is clear to me that these appeal proposals would be of a more substantial nature and be more noticeable within the street scene.
11. The appeal proposal includes an external staircase which would secure a separate means of entry to the first floor 'storage area' above the car ports. This would, in my view, represent a conspicuous addition to the proposed building.
12. While I acknowledge that there would be some screening effect by the trees on the frontage some of which may be afforded protection by virtue of their location within a Conservation Area, this screening would only be achieved in a limited number of public views and would be seasonal.
13. The prominence of the increase height and overall bulk of the proposed building together with the external staircase would therefore not be effectively screened to any great degree.
14. The Framework states that harm to a heritage asset might be defined as 'substantial' or 'less than substantial.' Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that in general terms, substantial harm is a high test and that works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all.
15. In finding harm to the Conservation Area, due to the small-scale nature of the proposal, and the character and the significance of the Conservation Area, I would quantify the extent of harm to be 'less than substantial'.
16. I must attach great weight to the significance of the Conservation Area and in applying the test set out in paragraph 199 of the Framework, I note that the benefits of the proposed development are private, relating to the desire by the appellant to create an additional car port bay (above and beyond the two bay car port which has planning permission) with an additional storage area above, accessed by the proposed external staircase.
17. Accordingly, I find that there would be little public benefit to offset the harm I have identified. As a result, the proposals would not accord with the policies of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment nor policies GD8 and HC1 of the LP, nor DBE1 of the NP.

Conclusions

18. For the reasons given and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Sian Griffiths

INSPECTOR