



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2024

by D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F1610/W/23/3325658

Ranbury Plot (Land north of A417), London Road, Poulton GL7 5HN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr K Mustow on behalf of Priory Estate against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref is 21/04097/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and garage together with associated ancillary development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the extent to which the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Poulton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Poulton Conservation Area (CA) covers an area encompassing the centre of the village as well as the main routes into the centre. Its significance is derived from a dense grain of development within the centre of the village which gradually loosens towards the edges of the CA before reaching the wider countryside setting beyond. Drystone walls are a prevalent feature throughout and provide the boundary to most of the properties and spaces within the CA. Given the above, I find that the significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to the appeal before me, to be primarily associated with the open space that forms the appeal site that contributes positively to the loose knit grain of the edge of the CA.
4. The site is bordered by a drystone wall which is proposed to remain with some enhancements, which will maintain the prevalent boundary treatment within the CA.
5. I note the appellant's consideration that the appeal site only provides an incidental gap and that the larger gap that is closer to the village provides more of a distinction. However, even if the gap is incidental, I find that its contribution to the loose knit grain is still positive. While the open space close to the village is large, it is still broken up by houses and other built form. As such, pockets of open space and large open grounds of houses appear in a patchwork pattern as you move towards the edge of the village, which contributes to the overall distinction between the two different grains.

6. The provision of built form within the site would erode the openness that is currently experienced. I note that the proposal is designed to follow a looser knit grain, similar to those properties nearby as well as use local materials. However, the provision of the detached garage towards the front of the site will stand out in particular and draw attention to the built form within the site, creating a denser form of development when combined with the houses either side of the appeal site.
7. I note that a small section of the appeal site is outside of the defined boundary of the CA and that the site is enclosed on all sides. However, the small section outside of the CA boundary is still open and therefore contributes to the wider countryside setting of the village. While the site is enclosed on all side, the front is a low drystone wall, so the lack of built form is still clear from the sites frontage and views are still possible to the open countryside beyond, and a general sense of openness remains.
8. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.
9. Paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 206 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
10. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would provide an additional dwelling and have the potential to support the local economy during the build and through future occupiers spending. However, these public benefits would be tempered by the fact the proposal is only for a single dwelling. The limited public benefits would therefore not outweigh the harm in relation to the CA.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would be contrary to Policies EN10 and EN11 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 3 August 2018) and Paragraph 208 of the Framework. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that in considering proposals that affect a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the assets conservation proposed preserve and where appropriate enhance the special character and appearance of the CA.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site falls within the zone of influence for the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation. As the competent decision-making authority, if I had been minded to allow the appeal it would have been necessary for me to complete an Appropriate Assessment for this scheme and consider the submitted unilateral undertaking. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not taken the matter further.

13. The proposed development would be in a location that has access by a short walking distance to services as well as good public transport links to larger settlements. In this regard the Council have found the proposed development would be appropriately located for which I have no reason to conclude otherwise. However, this is a neutral matter that does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR