



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2024

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/D/24/3350578

Anchor House, Wicor Path, Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 9QT

- 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 Richard Lundbech against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is P/24/0585/FP.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey outbuilding for use as a self-contained annexe for family relative in association with existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area, including the Portchester (Castle Street) Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a rectangular parcel of former paddock but which is now domestic garden associated with Anchor House following a grant of planning permission for a change of use in April 2023 (Ref P/23/0479/CU). The site lies partially within the designated settlement boundary of Portchester, as defined within the Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development and Sites Policies, adopted in 2015 (LP Part 2), and partially within the countryside. It also sits towards the western end of the Portchester (Castle Street) Conservation Area (CA), an area designated as such to protect the character and appearance of Portchester Village and its Castle according to the CA's Appraisal and Management Strategy, adopted in 2014 (CAAMS).
4. The significance of the CA lies in its charm and character as a contained historic village of largely C18 houses, together with the dominant Portchester Castle and its attractive coastal setting. The CAAMS places the site within character area A – *Castle Street and its rear garden land* and describes Wicor Path as a narrow historic path through the frontage and rear gardens of houses on Castle Street linking the CA with more modern suburban development to the west and notes the old outbuildings, walls and planting which are important to its character along part of its length.
5. The proposal is to erect a single-storey, detached outbuilding to the east end of the new domestic garden extension nearest to Anchor House. It would sit

beyond an approximate 2m high brick wall which currently encloses the frontage to the host dwelling, and adjacent to, but set forward of, an existing detached double garage belonging to the same. The building is proposed as a self-contained annexe for a family relative and would be equipped with a kitchen bathroom, living space and one bedroom.

6. At the time of my visit the appeal site was grassed and occupied by a range of child's play equipment that was spread across its area. Its boundary to the south side of Wicor Path was marked by a post and rail fence and hedge planting of mixed height, maturity, and density. Despite these factors, the absence of any significant built form was clearly evident to me in views from the public domain in both directions along Wicor Path. Because of this, and notwithstanding the tight enclosure to both sides of Wicor Path from buildings east of Anchor House nearer to Castle Street, the site's open and verdant qualities within a semi-rural setting beyond Anchor House plays a valuable part of a larger buffer area within this part of the CA. This is recognised within the CAAMS as important for separating the historic village from the later modern housing.
7. I recognise that the proposed building would be subordinate in size and scale to Anchor House. Additionally, I accept that it would be positioned within the curtilage of the principal dwelling and I have also taken note of the appellant's assertion that the existing wall in front of Anchor House, which is shown as retained on the proposed plans, could be removed in order to create a more functional link with the host dwelling. Nevertheless, the outbuilding would occupy land that is currently undeveloped. As a consequence, the area's open and spacious qualities would be eroded. When taken with the building's obvious domestic form and function, along with likely external associated paraphernalia, I find that the proposal would fail to respect the character and key role of its immediate surroundings. This would be detrimental to the area's spatial qualities and harmful to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. Having regard to paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm arising from the proposed annexe to the significance of the conservation area would be less than substantial. However, this does not equate to a less than substantial objection and any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification in line with paragraph 206. Furthermore, in line with the Framework's paragraph 208, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
9. Given the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, I have attached significant weight to the harm that I have identified to the historic environment. I am unable to identify any public benefits in this instance that would outweigh the harm.
10. For the reasons given, due to the building's proposed siting, I find that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. As a consequence, it would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such, there would be conflict with LP Part 2 Policies HP10, D1, HE1 and HE2 as far as between them they seek to ensure that new development, including specifically ancillary accommodation, displays a quality of design that responds positively to local character and the context of its

surroundings, and which conserves and enhances the historic environment, including conservation areas.

11. Accordingly, having regard to the conflict with local and national policy, and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR