



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2025

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/24/3347749

Winsford, Main Street, Beckley, East Sussex TN31 6RN

- 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 Robert Sothcott against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref is RR/2024/272/P.
 - The development proposed is the construction of timber framed 2 bay garage, timber clad with tiled roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the setting of a listed building.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises an extended single storey dwelling. It is one of a number of dwellings along this part of Main Street which are set back in their plots, and this contributes positively to the spacious character of the area.
4. The proposed garage would be positioned forward of the dwelling, close to the site's front boundary. It would be a single-storey structure with a ridge height of some 3.995m. It would have a hipped roof with side and rear catslides. The garage would be constructed on a low brick plinth, with softwood feather edge weatherboard and clay roof tiles.
5. To the west of the site is Slipshoe, a Grade II listed building. It is an early 19th century two storey building that is particularly notable for its weatherboarding and architectural detailing. Despite some more modern additions on and around the building, its significance, in so far as it relates to this appeal, includes the evidential and aesthetic value of a vernacular domestic building.
6. The listed building is notably larger than the dwellings on either side. It is also positioned forward of these neighbouring dwellings, neither of which currently have any outbuildings or structures within their front garden areas. Thus, the listed building has a prominence within the street scene which can be appreciated from both an easterly and westly direction. This prominence and the space around the front of the listed building contributes positively to its significance.
7. Section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) sets out a general duty that special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving

listed buildings or their setting. It is therefore a matter of considerable importance and weight in my decision.

8. Although the garage is designed to exhibit a rural style, its position, height and overall size mean that it would be a prominent structure within the street scene. It would appear as a significant interruption to the existing spacious, open aspect and views along this part of Main Street. This would cause harm to both the character and appearance of the area generally and to the setting and significance of Slipshoe in particular.
9. These harmful impacts would be contrary to Policies OSS4, RA1, EN1, EN2, EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Policies DHG9, DEN1, DEN2 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan 2019. Collectively, amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that development respects and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and street scene; and that the built and historic character, including statutory heritage assets, are protected.
10. Owing to the scale and nature of the proposals, the degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial. Nevertheless, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, irrespective of whether the harm to its significance is less than substantial. The Framework also requires that the less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.
11. I have not been presented with any public benefits of the scheme although there may be some benefits to the local economy at the construction stage. However, this would not be sufficient to outweigh the importance and weight that I attribute to the erosion of the setting of the heritage asset and the resulting harm to its significance. The identified heritage harm is therefore unjustified in terms of the approach to heritage set out in the Framework.

Other Matter

12. It is suggested that the existing hedges which boarder the site's front and side boundaries would mitigate the effect of the development. However, it would not be possible to control the height or retention of the hedges. In any event, the purpose of landscaping is generally to help integrate a development into its surroundings, not to hide something which is otherwise unacceptable.

Conclusion

13. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the heritage asset in particular, conflicts with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations in support of the proposal to indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR