



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 May 2025

by **J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/D/25/3361434

48A Church Street, Great Gransden, Cambridgeshire SG19 3AF

- 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 Emma Parkes against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00893/HHFUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage structure. Erection of new garden studio building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed building would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Gransden Conservation Area, and the effect on the settings of Nos 1 and 5 Mill Road, both Grade II listed buildings. Given that the effects on these designated heritage assets is a single reason for refusal, I have considered them together rather than as separate issues.

Reasons

3. The Great Gransden Conservation Area covers a large part of the village and extends into the adjoining countryside. The village includes a significant number of statutorily listed buildings and this built heritage, particularly within the village centre and conservation area, makes an important contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
4. These characteristics are reflected in the immediate surroundings of the appeal property, a two storey dwelling located on a corner plot next to the junction of Church Street and Mill Road. The site of the existing garage and the proposed replacement building has a frontage on Church Street. Consequently, views of the building approaching from the south-west are framed by the terrace of historic cottages on the same side of the road and No 1 Mill Road across the road junction. Together with No 48A itself and the detached dwelling, 'Brinkley', on the opposite side of Church Street, these buildings form an attractive group of historic dwellings, which make a positive contribution to the conservation area.
5. No 1 Mill Road is an attractive timber-framed eighteenth century cottage with a thatched roof and casement windows, which has Grade II listed status, as does No 5 next to it. The list description for No 5 refers to an early nineteenth century brick-built house now divided into two dwellings, Nos 3 and 5. Given the proximity of the

- garage's location to these listed buildings and the visual relationship with No 1, the site is within their settings.
6. The existing garage is not in keeping with the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area due to its design and materials. It is, however, of limited size with a flat roof and, therefore, it is not prominent within the street scene. Moreover, despite its position along the Church Street frontage, forward of No 48A, due to its limited height it appears subordinate to the host dwelling.
 7. The proposed replacement building would utilize materials that would be more appropriate for the village setting within the conservation area than the existing concrete structure. However, it would be materially larger than the existing garage with a wider frontage presented to Church Street and substantive additional height resulting from the accommodation in the roof space. Moreover, it would include uncharacteristic design features in the form of the row of high level windows on the elevation facing the street and the rooflights above these.
 8. Given its prominent position along Church Street and in relation to the nearby historic buildings, its size, design and appearance would give it an undue presence and prominence that would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings, most notably No 1 Mill Road due to the more direct visual relationship than with No 5. Furthermore, in views approaching along Church Street from the south-west, due to its overall size and height it would obscure views of No 48A and, therefore, would not appear subordinate to the host dwelling but would compete visually with it as well as with the neighbouring cottages.
 9. Reference is made by way of comparison to a number of other outbuildings within the surrounding area. However, most of these are set much further back on their plots, behind the host dwelling in each case. The most similar examples are the timber-clad outbuildings to the side of 'Brinkley' and at No 18 Middle Street, which are also positioned close to the road frontage. However, these buildings are of traditional design and appearance and, therefore, their effects are not comparable to those of the appeal proposal.
 10. Therefore, for the above reasons, I find that the proposed building would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Great Gransden Conservation Area and the setting of No 1 Mill Road. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation¹. Based on the above findings, I consider the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
 11. Under such circumstances, the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal². I acknowledge that the building is intended to create ancillary family accommodation and, more specifically, is required to support a family member's special educational needs. I have, therefore, had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is unclear, however, that the form of the proposed building is the only way in which this matter can be addressed and the

¹ Paragraph 212.

² Paragraph 215.

harm to the designated assets is of considerable weight. As such, the proposal would not provide sufficient public benefits that would outweigh the harm that has been found.

12. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed building would not preserve the character and appearance of the Great Gransden Conservation Area or the setting of No 1 Mill Road. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to the following policies from Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019): LP11 and LP12 concerning good design, which require development to respond positively to its context and draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including the historic and built environment, and contribute positively to the area's character and identity; and LP34, which concerns the effect of development on designated heritage assets and their settings.
13. In reaching this conclusion I am particularly mindful of the statutory requirements for decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building³; and that in exercising planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area⁴.
14. I have had regard to the representations both in support of and objecting to the proposal. These do not, however, raise any additional matters in relation to the main issue in this appeal that would lead me to reach a different overall conclusion.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given it is concluded that the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR

³ Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁴ Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.