



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 May 2025

by **Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th June 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/W9500/W/25/3360062

St Aidans, Carlton Road, Helmsley, North Yorkshire YO62 5HQ

- 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 Mike Stainsby of Rock Hopper Rentals against the decision of North York Moors National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NYM/2024/0414.
 - The development proposed is creation of single parking bay with electric re-charging point and recladding of modern extension in vertical, timber boarding.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/W9500/Y/25/3360276

St Aidans, Carlton Road, Helmsley, North Yorkshire YO62 5HQ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mike Stainsby of Rock Hopper Rentals against the decision of North York Moors National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NYM/2024/0415.
 - The works proposed are Listed Building consent for creation of single parking bay with electric charging point and recladding of modern extension in vertical timber boarding.
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Decision

1. Appeal A: the appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: the appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

3. An application for an award of costs was made by Mr Mike Stainsby of Rock Hopper Rentals against North York Moors National Park Authority. That application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

4. As the appeals relate to a listed building, I have had special regard to section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II* listed building “St Aidan’s Church” (Ref: 1392849) (the LB), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

6. The LB dates from 1884-7 and it is a daughter to Helmsley Parish Church, having been commissioned by the vicar of Helmsley, Rev. Charles Gray. It is an early design by Temple Moore, who built around 38 new churches in England and is regarded as the country's leading church architect of the Edwardian period. The LB also has historic interest as part of a group of ecclesiastical buildings, including the Grade II* church at East Moors, that were designed by Temple Moore and George Gilbert Scott junior, Moore's mentor and partner, and commissioned by Charles Gray and Lord Feversham.
7. Externally, the LB has a simple plan form with a square west tower facing the road, and the nave and chancel as a single body. It is finished in irregularly coursed sandstone rubble, with darker ashlar quoins and copings, and a plain tile roof. The tower is particularly striking in design with paired, double chamfered lancet bell-openings at the bell-cote stage with circular openings with quatrefoil plate tracery above, and string courses. The openings repeat to all four faces, although with lancets omitted from the east face. The west face additionally features a single narrow lancet below. The roof of the tower is pyramidal, finished in plain tiles to match the main roof, and topped with a metal cross finial.
8. St Aidan's has been previously extended. However, the lightweight glazed link allows the north elevation to remain legible. Moreover, while a new doorway opening was created into the extension, the LB is otherwise well preserved and it remains of particular interest due to its demonstration of many architectural features and stylistic approaches characteristic of Moore's later work.
9. The LB is prominently sited close to the village street, set in a narrow churchyard enclosed by low dry stone walls punctuated by a pedestrian gateway from the street in the south west corner. The gate opens onto a gravelled pathway that leads to the round arched doorway, in a projecting ashlar gabled door surround, in the south elevation. Away from the gravel pathways, the frontage comprises amenity mown grassland, which reflects the wide grass verges that characterise the village street. Given the above, and insofar as relevant to the appeals, I find that the unassuming setting of the enclosed rural churchyard contributes to the special interest of the LB as a well preserved and simple country church, the earliest surviving example of Temple Moore's design and forerunner to his later work.
10. The extension, allowed on appeal in 2011, facilitates the conversion of the church to a holiday let. Although substantially large, it enabled the main body of the church to be preserved without internal subdivision and it secures the conservation and future use of the LB. Contrary to the Council's concerns in relation to the use of non-vernacular external materials, the Inspector found the simple design and likely variation in colour of the pre-weathered zinc would contrast and complement the grey stone walls of the church.
11. However, the zinc has not mellowed as anticipated. By virtue of its large scale, modular form and uniformly dark standing seam zinc finish, the contemporary extension is an uncompromising and dominant feature that does not preserve the special interest of the LB. As part of the proposal, the zinc would be replaced with Siberian larch cladding with alternating raised and recessed vertical boards.
12. In contrast to the zinc, timber is a traditional material that would be more sympathetic to the historic church and its rural setting, which includes Yorkshire

boarded agricultural sheds. In this regard, the timber clad extension would have a functional and utilitarian appearance that would be more subservient to the church than the existing. The wood would be less strident than the zinc and the alternating boards would add visual interest, but the cladding would not disguise the scale and dimensions of the extension which the evidence indicates is known locally as 'the shipping container'. Moreover, the contemporary cladding would not obviously reflect the architectural or decorative timber that characterises Temple Moore's interiors. As such, it would not better reveal the historic significance of the LB.

13. The LB is a humble church and not a high status ecclesiastical building, such that lower status materials may be appropriate. Nevertheless, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. In this regard, while the existing extension has not achieved the aim of preserving the special interest of the LB, I am not persuaded that retrofitting timber cladding to the structure as a remedial measure would constitute high quality design. However, on the basis that the timber would be less visually obtrusive and discordant than the zinc, it would reduce the harm to the significance of the LB caused by the zinc cladding.
14. The proposed off road parking space would be to the north side of the LB. It would extend from the roadside boundary to finish close to the modern extension and it would span nearly the full width from the side boundary to the north elevation of the LB. It would comprise a large extent of loose surfaced, permeable hardstanding. A gravel path would lead across the front of the tower to connect to the existing gravelled area to the south side. As such, there would be a significant increase in hardstanding to the front and side of the LB, at the expense of the grassland that softens and integrates the building into its surroundings.
15. Part of the roadside boundary wall would be removed to create the vehicle access. This dry stone wall is in a poor state of repair, likely exacerbated by the removal of the ivy that had been allowed to overrun it and which would have destabilised the unconsolidated construction. It is not an architecturally significant nor high quality feature typical of Temple Moore's work. Even so, there is little evidence that Temple Moore intended the churchyard to be open to the road and the wall has served to enclose the churchyard since the church was constructed. The wall is a vernacular feature, characteristic of the street scene and wider countryside and it defines the public road and private space. The loss of part of the wall would diminish the sense of enclosure to the church yard and render the parking area and parked vehicles prominent in views, thereby detracting from the setting of the LB.
16. To facilitate vehicle movements from the highway, a large and splayed extent of the verge would be replaced with granite sets with granite edging. This would result in a regimented and urban driveway entrance that would be poorly related to the irregular, soft and weathered stone of the LB and the typically more informal, rural highway access points that characterise the area. While concrete could be used instead, as is used elsewhere in the settlement, it would still be an inauthentic intervention that would fail to respect and respond positively to St Aidan's.
17. The plans indicate some landscape planting to the front of the tower, but there appears to be little opportunity for any meaningful screen planting along the side boundary. On the approach travelling northwards, the Yew and the LB would initially screen parked vehicles from view, although the breach in the wall and verge would be visible. However, on the closer approach, in passing, and when viewed

from the north, the parking provision with parked vehicles would be clearly visible against the backdrop of the church and the tower. Taking into account the height of the boundary walls and the absence of effective landscape screening to the north, the parking of a vehicle immediately adjacent to the church walls would be visually obtrusive, adversely affecting the character and appearance of the churchyard and detracting from an appreciation of the LB. This harm would be compounded by the visual juxtaposition of the parking area and the modern extension.

18. The parking area would have a similar footprint and it would be surfaced in keeping with the gravelled area to the south side of the LB. This area links the pedestrian gate from the highway with the door in the south elevation of the church and it illustrates the historic use and the function of this area in terms of the congregation. Conversely, there is little evidence that the churchyard was used in the past for the parking of vehicles or that it was extensively hard surfaced to the north. There are numerous private driveways and field gateways locally, with resultant gaps in boundary walls and verges. However, these serve farmsteads, dwellings and agricultural land and they do not provide a justification for parking in the churchyard alongside the walls of the Grade II* listed church.
19. Cars parked on the roadside will feature in existing views of the LB, but they are outside of the curtilage. The proposal would in any case only remove one car from the roadside, whereas the evidence indicates that there is frequently more than one car parked in this location. Moreover, unlike temporary and intermittent roadside parking, the proposal would be permanent. In contrast to the existing situation whereby there is little outward sign that St Aidan's is in use as a holiday let, the parking provision would have a modernising and domesticating effect that would emphasize a residential use. The creation and use of the car parking space within the curtilage and the setting of the LB would erode its well-preserved ecclesiastical character and appearance.
20. I understand that the previous Inspector considered that the provision of parking within the grounds of the church, with associated breach of roadside boundary wall and formation of hardstanding immediately next to the church, would detract from the setting of the LB. Based on the evidence before me, I see no reason to reach a different conclusion in relation to the proposed parking space.
21. Taking all this into account, the timber cladding would be a modest improvement in the appearance of the extension but the parking provision would fail to make a positive contribution and it would significantly harm the setting of the LB. Therefore, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of these appeals.
22. Paragraph 212 of 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 213 advises 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. Given the nature and scale of the proposal, I find the harm to be at the lower end of less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.

23. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the optimal viable use of listed buildings.
24. The timber cladding would be more sympathetic to the character of the church than is the existing zinc. This would be a modest public benefit. The electric vehicle charging point would support the government's objectives in relation to meeting the challenge of climate change and energy efficiency. However, there is little compelling evidence this could not be otherwise achieved and a single charging point in the context of a small holiday let would be a limited public benefit.
25. At the time of my visit, there were no cars parked on the roadside and the road was not heavily trafficked. However, I accept that one or more vehicles frequently parks along the road and the road is well used at times, including by vehicles travelling fast due to the 60mph speed limit through the village. I note the photographs illustrating tractors and trailers navigating the farm entrance opposite while cars are parked outside the LB. I also note concerns that the manoeuvring of large vehicles around parked vehicles compromises highway safety and causes congestion.
26. I do not dispute that inconsiderate parking outside St Aidan's may requires large agricultural vehicles to take particular care around the farm entrance. However, no plans have been provided to illustrate vehicle turning paths at the farm access and there is little evidence that the holiday let compromises farming operations or viability. There is also little evidence that the holiday let parking results in traffic congestion through Carlton, which in any case might be beneficial in terms of slowing otherwise fast moving through traffic.
27. I have taken into account the third party representations. Nevertheless, the appeal is not supported by information about traffic flows, speeds or parking and I am not aware that there have been any road traffic incidents or accidents in this location attributable to holiday let parking. While the Highway Authority does not object, this is on the basis that off road parking is preferable to parking on the verge and it makes no comment in relation to any tangible highway safety benefit.
28. The parking space would be a benefit to visitors to the LB, particularly those who are less able-bodied, as they would not need to park or walk on the roadside or verge. However, the holiday let has apparently been operating successfully for many years and there is little evidence that the roadside parking compromises the viability of the business.
29. The appellant suggests that there are no alternative solutions. However, it is not clear that alternative parking arrangements have been fully explored with the Helmsley Estate and reasonably discounted, or that more considerate parking offset from the farm entrance opposite would not be possible. Even if holiday let parking was compromising the safe operation of the highway, it seems unlikely that the provision of one space would resolve this issue taking into account that the holiday let has 2 bedrooms, more than one car is frequently parked on the roadside, and the proposal would not achieve a reduction in vehicle speeds. The purported highway safety benefits carry limited weight in favour of the scheme.
30. I note the suggestion that there would be visual amenity benefits as a result of the removal of parked cars from the roadside and the eroded verge. Undoubtedly, the wide grass verges to either side of the road contribute to the rural character and appearance of the settlement. However, Carlton is not a Conservation Area. The

proposal would in any case remove a large extent of the locally distinctive verge and replace it with granite sets. On the basis that more than one car parks on the verge, the proposal would not prevent roadside parking nor erosion of the verge.

31. Taking all this into account, the benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. Furthermore, the continued viable use of the LB, and therefore its conservation, is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing use that would not cease in its absence.
32. Given the above, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II* listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 210 of the Framework and conflict with Strategic Policy C, Strategic Policy I and Policy ENV11 of the North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan July 2020. These seek, among other things, to ensure high quality design that makes a positive contribution to cultural heritage and local distinctiveness, conserving heritage assets and their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance, having regard to the architectural character, vernacular building styles, form and layout of listed buildings. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matters

33. The parties appear to differ in their interpretation of the advice of Historic England. In this regard, the statutory consultee has no objection to the recladding of the extension, but it considers the partial demolition of the wall and creation of the vehicle parking bay adjacent to the tower would harm the significance of the LB and should be omitted from the scheme. It advises the Council to seek amendments, safeguards or further information in order for the application to meet the requirements of the Framework. While Historic England acknowledges the appellant's position in relation to the harm to the heritage asset and the public benefits, it seems reasonably clear that it did not in fact consider the scheme accords with the design and heritage protection aims of the Framework. The statutory consultee's response does not weigh in favour of the scheme.
34. There is however local support including the Town Council, the Helmsley Estate, the High Farm tenants and the neighbours at West View. I am sympathetic to the inconvenience caused by the roadside parking and concerns in relation to the speed limit through the village. However, for reasons explained above, the third party support does not outweigh the harm that I have found.
35. The appellant has received comments from customers about the roadside parking and 2 emails have been submitted in this regard. One notes that parking on the verge was fine, although muddy and slippery. The other states that the parking is not ideal for the same reason and would be a deterrent to returning with relatives. Even so, both commented on how much they enjoyed their stays. I understand the appellant's desire to improve the experience for visitors. However, taking into account the established business and apparently high occupancy rates, the customer feedback does not evidence a significant highway safety issue nor that roadside parking compromises the financial viability of the holiday let.
36. The appellant raises concerns about the conduct of Council officers at the planning committee meeting and he considers that the members were ill-informed to reach an objective decision. However, this is not a matter that weighs in favour of the

appeal and it should be progressed independently through the Council's complaints procedure and the Local Government Ombudsmen.

37. The refurbishment of the extension and the provision of parking would be clearly severable. It would therefore be possible to allow the cladding but not the parking. However, the evidence indicates that the timber cladding is proposed to justify the parking and it would not be implemented in the absence of the parking. Consequently, I have not issued a split decision.

Conclusion

38. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR