



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2025

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/25/3368549

Elms Farm House, 42 High Street, Roade, Northamptonshire NN7 2NW

- 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 David Gould against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0806/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of a compact triple classic car garage 6m x 12m x 2.8m to eaves, with a 10 degrees pitch roof constructed in steel; and situated more than 1m from any boundary.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Roade Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site falls within the Roade Conservation Area ('the RCA'). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in respect of development affecting conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 ('Framework') states that great weight shall be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, such as conservation areas, and that harm to their significance requires clear and convincing justification. It continues at paragraph 216 that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications, with a balanced judgement required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
5. The Roade Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2015 ('the RMP') sets out that the key characteristics of the RCA includes earlier buildings built predominantly in limestone, and Victorian buildings more typically in red brick. They comprise a mix of fairly simple cottages, which tend to run parallel to the road, and larger farmhouses, which often have distinctive architectural detailing, and which are typically set back further from it.

6. Elms Farm House, along with 40 and 38 High Street, are traditionally constructed stone buildings with steeply pitched slate roofs, brick chimneys and windows with lintels and cills. This group, and the terrace of stone and red brick cottages at Church End to the rear of the site, are identified as 'other significant buildings' in the RMP. Given their age, form, style and appearance, I agree with the Council that they are non-designated heritage assets.
7. The proposed garage would be located towards the rear of the host's large plot, where it wraps around the garden of 40 High Street, and close to the cottages at Church End. At 12 metres long and 6 metres wide, it would be much larger than nearby domestic outbuildings, including sheds, garages and garden rooms. Although its ridge height would be limited, its substantial scale and its shallow pitched roof would give it a utilitarian and bulky form.
8. The building's functional appearance would be exacerbated by its large roller shutter doors, and by the green steel sheeting on its walls and roof, which would serve to draw the eye to its incongruous appearance. Those materials would be at odds with the prevailing stone, slate and brick on larger buildings in the RCA, and with the use of stone, brick or timber on many of the smaller outbuildings. Whilst the appellant states that steel was chosen to reduce the potential for a future residential conversion, it would be inappropriate for this large building in this location.
9. As the garage would contrast unfavourably with the form, materials, steeply sloping roofs and design detailing of the non-designated heritage assets at 38 to 42 High Street (evens) and the cottages at Church End, it would cause modest harm to their significance.
10. Due to the garage's siting well back from the road, and to the rear of other buildings, it would be barely visible from public vantage points, including the streetscene. However, notwithstanding boundary features and landscaping, it would be visible from nearby houses and their gardens, where it would jar with the prevailing characteristics of the area.
11. It would thereby conflict with the requirement for good design which integrates with its surroundings in Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 and Policy RNDP4 of the Roade Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2029 (2019) ('NP'); along with the stance on visually attractive architecture which is sympathetic to local character at paragraph 135 of the Framework.
12. The scheme would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the RCA. As it would not conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, it would conflict with Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) 2014; and with NP Policy RNDP2 which requires development to preserve and, where possible, enhance the RCA, having particular regard to matters such as the use of traditional materials, robust design detailing and traditional proportions of openings to walls.
13. However, whilst I found that the significance of the adjacent non-designated heritage assets would be harmed, as they are not identified as 'local non-designated heritage assets' at Map 5A or Appendix 2A of the NP, the scheme would not conflict with the wording in its Policy RNDP3.

14. Given the garage's fairly discrete siting, and having regard to Framework paragraph 215, the harm to the RCA would be less than substantial. I am therefore required to weigh it against the public benefits of the proposal. In its favour, the scheme would provide a space for the appellant to store, and work on, his classic cars. However, that benefit would be largely private, and would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have found.
15. I have applied great weight to the conservation of the RCA, and I have found that the scheme would harm its significance. The appellant's suggested conditions to restrict the use of the garage to non-commercial purposes, and requiring landscaping or screening enhancements, would not overcome that harm.
16. The proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and it would conflict with policies in the development plan and the Framework. Consequently, and having regard to all other matters raised, including representations by interest parties, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR