



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2012

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 2 October 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/12/2173527

Land adjoining Laurel Cottage, Main Street, Barrington, Somerset, TA19 0JN.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Bradlock Homes Ltd against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref. 11/03673/FUL, dated 12 September 2011, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2011.
 - The development proposed is a dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The two main issues are: whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barrington Conservation Area (CA) and; the implications for highway safety along Main Street.

Reasons

Conservation Area

3. The special qualities or significance of the CA include the gardens and many of the green spaces around the dwellings within this attractive village. These provide a pleasing sense of space within the street scene of Main Street and considerably add to the charm and character of the settlement.
4. The appeal site forms one of these important garden/green spaces within the CA. It assists in setting Laurel Cottage apart from neighbouring buildings and the largely unspoilt open qualities provide a pleasing contrast with the group of dwellings on the opposite side of the street. Whilst the existing garage and car port on the site are lacking in architectural merit, these small buildings are set back from the street and do not detract from the significance of the CA. The trees growing within the site add to the unspoilt qualities of this part of the CA.
5. The modest size/proportions of the proposed two storey dwelling and the use of stone, slate, and timber framed windows in a simple design, which includes a chimney stack, would reflect the local vernacular. The new house would be designed to a high standard. However, it would be built very close to the flank wall of Laurel Cottage and would occupy much of the garden to the east of this dwelling. The proposal would considerably reduce the space around the existing cottage and in front of the group of houses on the opposite side of the street. This new building would markedly erode the unspoilt open qualities of

the site and, in so doing, detract from the character and appearance of the CA. This would conflict with the relevant provisions of the development plan¹.

6. There is a difference of opinion between the Council's landscape officer and its conservation officer. Given the site's inclusion within the CA, I attach greater weight to the concerns raised by the conservation officer.
7. In 2010, I found harm in respect of a proposed housing scheme on land at Budds Farm (Refs. APP/R3325/E/10/2116325 & A/10/2116321). That site involved the setting of a listed building and is different to the appeal now before me. Each case must also be determined on its own merits. My findings in respect of Budds Farm do not set a precedent.
8. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the CA.

Highway Safety

9. Part of the site has a long-standing use for the parking of vehicles. Whilst in the past this has been of benefit to some neighbouring residents, the car port/garage and access thereto do not appear to be tied to a particular dwelling. This access also appears to have been used for many years without compromising highway safety interests along Main Street. It would therefore be unreasonable and unnecessary to require improvements to the visibility at the site entrance as part of the scheme. Such works would also be likely to diminish the pleasing contribution the roadside wall makes to the street scene.
10. If permitted, residents who previously used the site would have to find alternative car parking. In all likelihood, this would entail vehicles being parked along Main Street. This would be unfortunate as it could interrupt the free-flow of traffic along this section of the highway.
11. My attention has been drawn to the visitor traffic to the nearby National Trust owned Barrington Court. During my visit, I also saw vehicles, including a bus, negotiating some other parked vehicles along the street. However, I did not witness any congestion and there is nothing of substance to show this is an issue within the village. The very limited number of vehicles that would be displaced from the site as a consequence of the scheme would be unlikely to result in harmful congestion or pose a serious risk to highway safety interests.
12. I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would not result in any harmful implications for highway safety along Main Street and, in so doing, would accord with the highway provisions of SP policy 49.

Other Matters

13. There is nothing before me to indicate that ground conditions are unstable. Any damage to neighbouring properties during construction works would be a separate matter for the respective parties. There is also nothing of substance to demonstrate that the proposal would harm nature conservation interests.

¹ Policy EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan and policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (SP)

Overall Conclusion

14. My findings in respect of highway safety do not overcome or outweigh the harm that I have identified to the CA. Furthermore, there are little or no public benefits to weigh with this harm. This in turn leads me to find that the scheme would conflict with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
15. Given all of the above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector