



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2013

by Roger Dean BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 January 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/12/2188846

Moor View, 3 Church Street, Drayton, Langport, Somerset TA10 0JY

- 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 N Laurence against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 12/02815/FUL was refused by notice dated 26 September 2012.
 - The development proposed is a dormer window on the north elevation of a garage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dormer window on the north elevation of a garage at Moor View, 3 Church Street, Drayton, Langport, Somerset in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 12/02815/FUL, dated 12 July 2012, and the plans submitted with it.

Main issue

2. This is the effect of the development proposed to be retained on the character and appearance of the Drayton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site lies at the edge of this conservation area to the south of Church Street. Here the main character arises from the dominance of St Catherine's Church and its graveyard surroundings on the northern side and tightly-grouped stone built cottages opposite. On backland plots behind these cottages are some dwellings and outbuildings of considerable variety. Moor View is one of these dwellings which I am told was formerly a derelict period cottage. It has been attractively renovated as a one and a half storey property under a mainly thatched roof.
4. The appeal concerns the property's adjacent detached garage where the dormer window has been installed at the centre of its tiled roof. It faces the private entrance into the site but is not seen from Church Street or along most of the length of the private access way leading from it.
5. The window itself is a timber casement type with small panes, reflecting similar fittings in the renovated dwelling. I can see no need for the panes to be made any smaller or for obscure glazing to be installed as the Parish Council has suggested. The window surrounds in the dormer construction have been finished in stained shiplap boarding, also matching features in the restored cottage.

6. I recognise that the dormer has a box-like form that is not usually seen on a garage building or traditional outbuilding of this type and indeed I could see no similar examples locally during my visit. Nonetheless, I take account of the inconspicuous position of the development and the fact that it is part of a subsidiary building, thereby not having a dominating effect on the immediate private surrounds of Moor View. Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that the dormer is seen from some private locations in the Conservation Area, I would not expect it to appear disproportionately bulky at the distances involved.
7. These factors lead me to find that there would be no conflict with the thrust of Policies ST5 or ST6 in the South Somerset Local Plan. Although material finishes would comply with item (3) of Local Plan Policy EH1, there would be an element of conflict with item (1) of that Policy requiring conformity with historic patterns of development.
8. Against that, however, I note the appellant's contention that the dormer construction is required to give headroom in the loft above the garage in order to provide necessary storage space for Moor View. This has not been disputed by the Council, which I would imagine is aware of the layout of the cottage itself, and I can well imagine the difficulty of providing such storage space in a renovated cottage of this type. To my mind, this factor is a material planning consideration which in this case of a well restored cottage outweighs the minor conflict with development plan policy.
9. Moreover, I have come to the overall view that the visual impact of the construction in this secluded position is so slight that it causes no material harm to the significance of the Drayton Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset. Consequently I find that the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole has been preserved.
10. I have taken account of all other matters raised but there is nothing to draw me away from the conclusion I have reached on the main issue. The appeal will therefore succeed. The local planning authority has suggested one condition in the event of such an outcome, to place a start date on the development as has been implemented. However, Section 73A of the 1990 Act provides that the permission granted under this appeal can be taken to have effect from the date on which the development was carried out and I can see no necessity for a date to be specified in my decision.

R G Dean

INSPECTOR