
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2016

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 7 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2003/D/16/3156857

Rowan Tree House, 21 Main Street, Saxby All Saints, DN20 0QJ

- 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 Mrs Rosemary McDonagh against the decision of North Lincolnshire Council.
 - The application Ref PA/2016/668, dated 10 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is replacement of wooden double glazed windows and doors with uPVC windows and composite doors. Installation of a satellite dish.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council's reason for refusal relates to the proposed windows and doors and I note that the Council has no objections to the proposed satellite dish. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. Therefore the main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the proposed replacement windows and doors would have on the significance of Saxby All Saints Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. The Conservation Area encompasses a distinctive village with a tightly knit and largely linear settlement pattern of C18 and C19 cottages interspersed with more recent houses lining the main street. The form, scale, materials and detailing of buildings, including their windows, make an important contribution to the Conservation Area's character and appearance.
 5. The appeal building, which the appellant advises was built in the 1990's, shares many of the features of traditional buildings which the adopted Saxby All Saints Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) identifies as part of the Conservation Area's character. This includes the two storey brick construction with an orange clay pantile roof, and being of a simple design which I note also shares details, including timber sliding sash windows, with older cottages. The appeal building is consistent with the category of C20 buildings the CAA notes take their cue from these historic properties and that fit comfortably within the historic townscape.
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6. Although the CAA refers to a Townscape Analysis Map this does not form part of the adopted document. As such I can only give the map provided by the Council, which does not appear to be complete, very limited weight. Notwithstanding that it shows a building on the appeal site having a neutral effect, for the above reasons I consider that the appeal building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
7. This is due in part to the timber vertical sliding sash windows used throughout the house. These have a painted finish and relatively slender meeting rails and glazing bars creating panes with vertical emphasis. The bottom sashes are set noticeably behind the top ones providing depth and articulation to the fenestration on the building. The rear and French doors have similar slender glazing bars and the front door is a simple panelled door, albeit with two modest glass panes at the top.
8. From the information provided, the majority of the replacement windows would be top hung casement windows with wider, flatter frames and much shallower relationship between the opening and fixed parts than the existing windows. It is not clear how the glazing bars would be formed but these appear as secondary features rather than as an integral part of the window design and in some cases create a horizontal emphasis to the windows. The proposed doors, including the uncharacteristic glazing pattern on the back door and more extensive glazing to the front, would contrast with the simple traditional design and appearance of the house. The plastic appearance of the window frames would be more uniform than the more subtle effect of painted timber.
9. Overall the proposed windows would appear overly heavy, prominent and lacking in depth and definition, and the doors would be incongruous. This would detract from the character and appearance of the property and harm that of the Conservation Area, and hence its significance. The front of the house is screened to a degree by a hedge and other vegetation and the side and rear elevations are largely concealed from public view. However, these aspects would only mitigate the proposals' harmful effects to a very limited extent as a result of the Conservation Area's character not being derived solely from buildings' appearance from public vantage points.
10. Although the appellant advises that the existing windows need replacing and I can understand that the proposed windows may offer the appellant improved thermal efficiency, there is little evidence to suggest that this could only be achieved by way of windows and doors of the materials, design and configuration proposed.
11. The proposal would be contrary to North Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2003 Policy HE2 and North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2011 Policy CS6 which, amongst other criteria, together require development in conservation areas to respect distinctiveness, preserve or enhance their character and appearance and in particular respect that character and appearance through detailing and materials which are appropriate to their locality and context.
12. These Policies are supported by the CAA which identifies the use of non-traditional materials including uPVC as a negative feature to be discouraged and The Saxby All Saints Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Guidance which advises that the use of materials other than timber is unacceptable for windows, doors and conservatories.

13. Bearing in mind paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), having paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, I have given this harm considerable importance and weight in reaching my decision. Although this harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial due to its relatively localised effect on the wider Conservation Area, in the context of paragraph 134 of the Framework there is little evidence that the proposal would have any public benefits which would outweigh that harm.

Other Matters

14. In support of her appeal the appellant has referred to a number of properties in the Conservation Area where uPVC windows have been installed albeit that I have very little information about the circumstances or considerations which led to the acceptability of those which benefit from permission. From my site visit I note that some of those which have permission relate to distinct groups of buildings of similar design, such as those on North Carr Lane or on buildings of a more conspicuously contemporary design than that of the appeal building. In any event, none of those examples appeared to relate to a building with the same characteristics as those of the appeal site and they are not so ubiquitous as to be the predominant window type. These examples do not therefore lead me to conclude that the harm of the appeal proposal would be justified.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons the proposal would harm the significance of the designated heritage asset contrary to the development plan, supplementary guidance and the Framework. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR