
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2017

by L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/16/3163564
122 Norwich Road, Tacolneston NR16 1AL

- 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 Mr & Mrs Manning against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/0776, dated 4 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a dwelling on land adjacent listed building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Tacolneston Conservation Area (CA) and whether it would preserve the settings of No 116 Norwich Road and No 122 Norwich Road (Nos 116 & 122) and the Pelican Inn all of which are grade II listed;
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of nearby residents with particular regard to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Heritage Assets

3. In accordance with the duty imposed by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Furthermore, section 66(1) of the same Act requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Moreover, paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of new development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
 4. The CA is characterised by traditional buildings of a variety of sizes with mature planting and trees in the spaces between small clusters of buildings. The properties display traditional architectural details and are finished in complementary materials. As such the grade II listed Nos 116 & 122 are a pair
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of attractive thatched roof detached dwellings positioned close together but set in relatively large plots with gable ends and chimneys. Thus, I find the area has a traditional and verdant character and appearance and the significance of the CA and the listed buildings within it is derived from the architectural quality and the groupings of the buildings as well as the spaces between them.

5. The proposed dwelling and double garage would be relatively large buildings visible through the access, above the boundary treatments and from the dwellings nearby. Although not as tall as No 122 Norwich Road (No 122) the proposed dwelling would be two-storey with a wide front elevation facing the road. Even though set back, with views limited by vegetation, the proposal would introduce a significant bulk of development into the space between Nos 116 & 122 and No 126 Norwich Road (No 126).
6. Whilst constructed from materials and incorporating architectural details prevalent in the CA, the orientation and the expanse of the pantile roof would draw attention to a modern dwelling which would appear noticeably larger than Nos 116 & 122. In my view its scale exacerbated by its orientation is such that it would compete with them and draw attention away from Nos 116 & 122 when viewed from Norwich road. Furthermore, the proposed development would erode the space between Nos 116 & 122 and the row of terraced dwellings. This diversion of attention and erosion of space would harm the significance of Nos 116 & 122 and the CA and would harm the character and appearance of the area.
7. In reaching these conclusions I acknowledge that the historic maps show a number of buildings in the vicinity of the appeal site. However, these buildings are no longer in place such that they no longer influence the character or appearance of the area. Furthermore without full details, I am unable to assess their relevance to the significance of the heritage assets. I have therefore afforded this matter limited weight.
8. I have also considered the effect of the proposal on the grade II listed Pelican Inn. However, the separation distances and intervening trees are such that the proposal would have a neutral effect on this building and thus its setting would be preserved.
9. Moreover, I have also assessed the effect of the proposed development on trees and hedgerows. Whilst I acknowledge that substantial tree works are proposed the majority of the trees and hedging would remain and additional planting would be provided. I therefore find the proposed development acceptable in this regard. Thus, there is no conflict with Policy DM4.8 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (2015) (DMPD).
10. However, overall I find the proposal would fail to preserve the settings of the grade II listed Nos 116 & 122 and would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA. It would therefore be contrary to the provisions of the respective sections of the Act and would fail to accord with paragraph 132 of the Framework, which attaches great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings.
11. For the same reasons the proposal would not accord with Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011 amended 2014) and Policies DM3.8 and DM4.10 of the DMPD which among other things seek to

achieve good design and ensure that new development does not harm designated heritage assets.

12. That said, in the context of the significance of the heritage assets as a whole, I would calibrate the harm arising from the proposed development, in accordance with paragraphs 133 and 134 of the Framework, as less than substantial. In these circumstances, the Framework requires the degree of harm to be balanced against any public benefits the development may bring.
13. There would indeed be some benefits, such as one more dwelling thus contributing to housing supply. Furthermore there is additional benefit in that the proposed dwelling would be self-build in a location where I am told there is a demand for such. I also note the proposed living accommodation has been designed to be flexible in order to meet changing needs over time.
14. Moreover, the proposed dwelling would be close to basic services and facilities such that they could be easily accessed through walking and cycling and the area has public transport connections to larger settlements nearby. The occupants might work locally and support local services and there may also be employment opportunities associated with construction.
15. However, whilst I acknowledge the limitations in extending a listed building and even if I were to accept the proposal would represent the redevelopment of previously developed land, the combined benefits are modest, and do not outweigh the harm identified to the designated heritage assets.
16. In reaching these conclusions I acknowledge the appellants comments about whether or not the Council are able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land within the terms of paragraph 47 of the Framework. Relevant to such I note the comments with regard to the deliverability of sites allocated for development in Tacolneston and the need for housing in the village and specific parts of the district. However, overall I find the evidence on this matter to be inconclusive.
17. Nonetheless, I have found harm to the setting of designated heritage assets and consequently, footnote 9 from the Framework indicates that development should be restricted. Even if this is not the case and the second bullet point under the decision-taking section of paragraph 14 is engaged, in my view the harm would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole.

Living conditions

18. The proposed dwelling would sit centrally in a large plot positioned some distance from the plot boundaries. Thus it would be some distance from the rear gardens of the terraced properties on Norwich Road.
19. I acknowledge that the proposed garage would be positioned on the boundary with No 126. However, even when taking account of the change in levels the proposed garage building would not be overly tall and the majority of the shared boundary with the appeal site would remain free from structures, such that it would not result in any sense of enclosure or overbearing effect.
20. The northern side elevation of the proposed dwelling would only have one window which would be obscurely glazed and views towards the gardens of the terraced dwellings on Norwich Road from other elevations would be from

oblique angles and partially restricted by planting. Views over the rear garden of No 116 Norwich Road would also be from an oblique angle. Whilst the proposed dwelling would look out over a large area of land in front of No 122, this property would retain a large area of outdoor space to its rear thus maintaining a private outdoor space.

21. For these reasons, I find no harm to the living conditions of nearby residents with particular regard to outlook and privacy. Thus, the proposal would accord with Policy DM3.13 of the DMPD which seeks to ensure new development does not harm residential amenity.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, even though I have found no harm to nearby residents' living conditions I have found harm to the character and appearance of the area and designated heritage assets. Thus on balance the proposal would not accord with the development plan and therefore having had regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR