
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2017

by David Cross BA (Hons), PGDip, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C2741/D/17/3170016
2 Hawthorn Mews, Strensall, York YO32 5RR

- 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 Wayne Dixon against the decision of City of York Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02571/FUL, dated 3 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is pitched roof dormer to rear with 2no. velux rooflights to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, with due regard to the location of the site in the Strensall Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings which are part of a small residential development which is located behind the frontage of Strensall village and which backs onto the River Foss. The site lies within the Strensall Conservation Area (CA) and as such I have had regard to the duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. I have taken into account the character statement of the CA and I note that it states that a main element of the character and appearance of the CA includes "...side lanes with vernacular farm buildings..." which contribute to its importance as a designated heritage asset.
 4. The appeal property and neighbouring dwellings are of a design which reflects the vernacular style of agricultural buildings in the CA. An important aspect of this design is a simple and uncluttered roofscape.
 5. Within this context, the proposed dormer would be an unsympathetic feature projecting above the roof slope. Although the dormer would cover less than a third of the roof slope, it would be an angular and intrusive feature projecting to the rear which would dominate views of the roof due to its bulk and incongruous design. Whilst the windows in the dormer would replicate the placement of windows on the rear elevation, the dormer would be placed asymmetrically in relation to the host property and its immediate neighbour.
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The gable roof extending to almost the full height of the ridge of the main roof would also lead to a top-heavy appearance in relation to the host dwelling. The use of materials matching those of the host property, including hanging roof tiles on the fascia, would not overcome the intrusive nature of the proposal.

6. Although the proposal would not be visible from the front of the site or from within the core of the CA, I saw that it would be visible in views of the CA from a footpath on the opposite bank of the River Foss to the rear of the site as well as from a bridge to the north east which is one of the main entrances into the CA. Whilst some screening would be provided by established trees, the proposal would still be apparent in views from public areas and in any event the screening would only be effective when the trees are in leaf.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to a modern housing development on the opposite bank of the river. However, this is out with the boundary of the CA and does not dominate views of the area to a degree where this would distract from views of the appeal proposal.
8. I conclude that the proposed dormer, due to its scale, design and location would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the group of dwellings of Hawthorn Mews. Furthermore, the proposal would not preserve the character and appearance of the CA. Whilst the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits that would outweigh that harm.
9. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies GP1 and HE3 of the City of York Draft Development Control Local Plan 2005 which state, amongst other things, that proposals should respect or enhance the local environment and should have no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the CA. Furthermore, the proposal would also conflict with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of requiring good design as well as conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The proposal would also be contrary to the Draft House Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2012 which advises against poorly located or designed dormer windows.
10. I have also had regard to the comments raised locally in relation to overlooking of neighbouring properties from the rooflights proposed to the front of the property. However, consideration of this matter has not led me to a different conclusion on this appeal.
11. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR