
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/Y/17/3167693

34 St John Street, Oxford OX1 2LH

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Professor William Scott-Jackson against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01426/LBC, dated 25 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2016.
 - The works proposed are a structural glass garden room extension to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for a structural glass garden room extension to rear at 34 St John Street, Oxford OX1 2LH in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/01426/LBC dated 25 May 2016 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan 00075963-82BAAB, 6613.002B, 6613.003, 6613.004.
 - 3) Large scale section drawings detailing the junctions and the abutment of the hereby approved glass enclosure to the existing rear walls, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority before the relevant parts are installed, and only the approved details shall be carried out.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. No 34 St John Street lies towards the northern end of St John Street on its west side. The property forms part of a coherent terrace with nos 35-46 St John Street and as part of wider group with Nos 2-33 St John Street and 5 Pusey Street. The listing notes that the buildings were laid out as a unified terrace scheme around 1837. The buildings are 3 storied with cellars and have Bath stone façades. Nos 34-46 are of a slightly plainer design than those further south, with sash windows set in plain reveals, doors set under

rectangular lights, and a stone band set between ground and first floor. No 34 is the end terrace property and differs from its neighbours in having a wider frontage, allowing a central door with two small sash windows set above.

4. The rear of No 34 is noted by the Council as being reconstructed around the end of the 20th century, and has a three storey gable on the left hand side with prominent elaborate pedimented 2nd floor window, and a lean to single storey extension on the right hand side. The rear and side elevation of the building is rendered in a cream colour, with this finish, and the clean lines of the recent sash windows giving the rear elevation a modern feel, distinct to the façade of the building and the red brick rear of its attached neighbour. The architectural harmony and overall quality of the façade of the building, both on its own and as part of the unified terraces, located close to the bustling city centre but retaining a peaceful air all constitute elements of the special interest of the listed building and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the Oxford Central Conservation Area (OCCA).
5. Policies CP1, CP8, and HE3 of the Local Plan¹, as well as Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy², together state that permission will only be granted for development which shows a high standard of design specific to its site context and is sympathetic to, preserves, or enhances the special character of listed buildings. Development to listed buildings should be appropriate in terms of scale and location and use materials which respect the character of the surroundings. Within conservation areas, development needs to have special regard to the character and appearance of the area. Policy HE7 of the Local Plan is also listed on the Council's decision notice; however on their statement the Council do not include it in a list of relevant plan policies. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special interest to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features or architectural interest it possesses.
6. The proposal seeks to construct a new glazed garden room to the rear of the building. The single storey structure would virtually cover the whole width of the property, extending and encompassing the kitchen door on the left side and extending across the single storey lean to on the right hand side. The building would be frameless with slim aluminium bi-fold doors to rear and would have a slight angle to the roof.
7. The design of the structure would allow the rear elevation of the property to remain visible and the height and see through material of the room would remain fully subordinate to the host property. No 34, by virtue of its wider plot has a more horizontal emphasis than its neighbours, and while there are vertical elements to the rear of the property in the form of the gabled feature, the single storey extension, 1st floor sloping roof above and the wide pedimented window all provide a more level emphasis. Although the proposal would extend across nearly all of the ground floor, in the context of this design of the property, I do not consider that this would harm the special interest of the house; the simple design of the proposal would remain sympathetic and fully subordinate to the elegant modern feel of the rear of the building. For the same reasons I consider that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the OCCA.

¹ Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, November 2005.

² Oxford Core Strategy 2026, March 2011.

8. Concern is also raised that once the proposal was occupied and filled with furniture and potentially blinds/curtains installed, the benefits of the lightweight design of the proposal would be minimal. However, internal furnishings will naturally vary over time. The structure and main elements of the proposal will remain and would not harm the architectural significance of the host property.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed building. The proposal would comply with policies CP1, CP8, and HE3 of the Local Plan and policy CS18 of the Core Strategy, as well as with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states as a core planning principle that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Conditions

10. I have imposed a condition to ensure that the proposal is carried out in accordance with the details submitted, in the interests of certainty. I have also imposed a condition suggested by the Council requiring large scale section drawings of the junctions and abutment of the proposal with the existing building to be approved, in the interests of the special character of the listed building.

Conclusion

11. I have concluded that the proposal would preserve the special interest of the host property. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR