
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23rd August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3010/D/17/3174302

16 Old Blyth Road, Ranby, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 8HZ

- 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 Ronald Davies against the decision of Bassetlaw District Council.
 - The application Ref: 16/01715/HSE, dated 3 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is extension to the lower ground floor and erection of conservatory to be built on top.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The description of the development used by the Council on the decision notice succinctly and accurately describes the proposal and I have used this for the purpose of the appeal rather than the description given on the planning application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling house; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the existing dwelling house

4. Number 16 Old Blyth Road, is a traditionally constructed dwelling with white rendered walls and a pitched roof finished in red tiles. Due to a change in ground levels the front elevation of the building is two storeys in height and the rear elevation three storey, with the lowest floor being single aspect. The building is narrow in plan, being only one room deep with a centrally located staircase. There is a small side addition at the lower ground floor level and a small garden area to the side of the property enclosed by a low brick wall. The Grade II Listed Chequerhouse Bridge is attached to the opposite side of the

house and the towpath of the Chesterfield Canal runs immediately adjacent to the rear wall.

5. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to not stifle innovation in design, it recognises that good design in the built environment is important.
6. The architecture and built form of the existing house is very simple with relatively small windows, asymmetrically arranged on the front elevation and symmetrically arranged on the rear elevation. This gives the rear elevation in particular a very strong vertical emphasis.
7. The extended ground floor store and the large amount of glazing on the elevation of the conservatory facing the canal would create a much more horizontal emphasis that would sit uncomfortably alongside the strongly vertical main house. The extensive glazing at first floor level would be a harsh contrast to the much higher solid to void ratio of the main dwelling. In addition, the top of the glazing would be at a higher level than the window heads of the other windows on the same level, leading to the first floor extension having the appearance of being disproportionate to the main house and disrupting the strong articulation of the rear elevation by the small, symmetrically arranged, windows. This would be exacerbated by the positioning of a doorway immediately below the large glazed area, with only a slim area of wall above, which would undermine the solidity of the rear elevation.
8. When taken as a whole, I conclude that this would be harmful to the character and appearance of the building.

Effect on the setting of nearby heritage assets

9. Section 66 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard must be given to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Paragraph 132 of the Framework also requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
10. Both parties state that the Chesterfield Canal is a heritage asset, but it is unclear from the evidence what status, if any, it has. Whilst it is of some age, there is no evidence from either party in respect of its significance. It does however, form an integral part of the setting of Chequerhouse Bridge.
11. Although the appeal building is not Listed, nor is it within a conservation area, it physically adjoins the Grade II Listed Chequerhouse Bridge, a single arched bridge constructed in red brick with stone copings. Due to this close physical relationship, the appeal building is an integral part of the setting of the Listed structure, particularly when viewed from the canal towpath. The present, simple, form of the building complements the functional form of the bridge.
12. The proposed extension would result in the appeal building having a more complex built form, made more prominent by the proposed use of timber cladding on the conservatory element which, together with the extensive glazing on the canal facing elevation, would draw attention to it and cause the appeal building to compete visually with the bridge. This, together with the effect that the proposed extension would have on the character and appearance of the appeal building itself would be harmful to the setting of the bridge.

13. I saw when I visited the site that there would be only limited views of the proposed development from the carriageway and footway of Old Blyth Road. However, the proposed development would be very prominent in views from the canal towpath, especially from the south west where the house and bridge are seen together in context with the canal. When approached on the towpath from the north, the rear wall of 16 Old Blyth Road is directly to the right when leaving the arch of the bridge and the proposed extension would be seen immediately upon exit.
14. I also saw that there are newer buildings at south end of bridge. Nonetheless, these are not so intimately associated with the bridge as the appeal building and, due to the frontages of Bridgend and Croft House being at an angle to the road, when viewed from the south these buildings serve to focus the eye on the bridge rather than compete with it. Appleby, on the east side of the road, is separated from the bridge by a high hedge and is set well back from the canal bank. As a consequence, these buildings have a lesser effect on the setting of the bridge than would be the case with the appeal scheme.
15. Whilst I note the appellant's point that the bridge is a utilitarian structure and that there are other similar examples along the length of the canal, this does not mean that the structure has no, or diminished, significance as it is a component of the overall canal infrastructure and its form is reflective of the working heritage of the canal. In any event, the Act nonetheless requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving its setting.
16. The appeal proposal would cause harm to the setting of the adjoining Listed Building, however, the nature of that harm would be less than substantial. Paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. Whilst the proposed extension would provide additional storage space within the dwelling, which I saw on my site visit is constrained internally particularly on the lower ground floor, and would increase the amount of living space available to the occupiers, these are private as opposed to public benefits. No public benefits of the proposal have been identified and whilst the improved internal accommodation would represent a slight benefit in terms of the ongoing use of the building as a dwelling, this is not sufficient to overcome the great weight that is required to be given to the conservation of the heritage asset.
18. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the setting of the nearby heritage asset. It would not comply with the relevant requirements of Policy DM8 of the Bassetlaw District Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011 which seeks to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the setting of heritage assets.

Other matters

19. I have noted that there have been no objections to the proposal from third parties and that the proposal is supported by the Chesterfield Canal Trust. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have found.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matter raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR