
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 March 2018

by D Boffin BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI Dip Bldg Cons (RICS) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 April 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/W/17/3179183

Burver Cottage, Crowborough Road, Georgeham, North Devon EX33 1JZ

- 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 Andrew Hill against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 62655, dated 22 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is extension and roof alterations to form kitchen and additional bedroom and bathroom.
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Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/Y/17/3179188

Burver Cottage, Crowborough Road, Georgeham, North Devon EX33 1JZ

- 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 Mr & Mrs Andrew Hill against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 62668, dated 22 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2017.
 - The works proposed are extension and roof alterations to form kitchen and additional bedroom and bathroom.
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed development and works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Burver Cottage or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and would its significance as a heritage asset be harmed.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a detached rendered rubble cottage with a thatch roof. Its front elevation is approximately at 90 degrees to Crowborough Road and one side elevation is in close proximity to that road. There are dwellings to the south and on the opposite side of Crowborough Road. When approaching the dwelling from the north on Crowborough Road it is clearly visible above the existing boundary treatments. The dwelling is within the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coast and Coastal Preservation Area.

4. The list description states that the main part of the dwelling dates from the 18th Century. It has a single cell plan that has been appreciably extended at ground floor level to the rear and sides in the 20th Century. The existing dwelling has clearly undergone a series of changes, prior to it being added to the statutory list, which have altered its external appearance. Some of these changes have partially obscured its original form but when viewed from Crowborough Road that original form is plainly discernible and is the focus of attention. From the details available to me, including the listing description, I consider that the significance and special interest of the listed building is largely derived from its age, single cell plan form, fabric and architectural features.
5. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Paragraph 132 of the Framework advises that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset.
6. The proposal would involve a number of internal and external alterations/additions including a partition and new door opening in an existing bedroom, extensions at ground floor to create a dining/kitchen and a bedroom and bathroom at first floor level. The extensions would have a hipped slate roof and dormer windows to a side and the rear elevation. The dormer window to the rear would be large and would fill the majority of the rear hip. The ridge of the roof would be below that of the thatch roof and the removal of the existing lean-to roof would expose an additional small amount of the existing rubble rear elevation.
7. However, even though the proposal would be subservient to the main house in relation to its height it would significantly increase the size of the dwelling visually when viewed from Crowborough Road or the rear garden. The materials of the roof of the extension would be visually discernible from that of the original dwelling. Nevertheless, the dormer windows of the extension would exaggerate its bulk and massing and would draw attention to the changes brought about through the proposal. Consequently, the bulk and massing of the extension would visually compete with and divert attention away from the principal part of the listed building.
8. The amount of structural changes to the 18th Century part of the dwelling would appear to be limited. However, the new door opening in the rear elevation would involve the removal of historic fabric. Moreover, even though the overall increase to the footprint of the building would be modest it would further erode the single cell plan form which is an important part of the special interest and significance of the listed building.
9. Taking into account all of the above, I consider that the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building contrary to the expectations of the Act. I must attach considerable importance and weight to these considerations when reaching my decision. I conclude that the harm caused to the designated heritage asset, would be, in the context of the significance of the asset as a whole and in the language of the Framework, less than substantial. In those circumstances, paragraph 134 of the

Framework says that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

10. I am conscious that the alterations proposed are intended to improve the overall facilities at Burver Cottage to enable the family to stay in it and that the dwelling was previously utilised as a holiday home. To an extent that is a public, as well as a private, benefit. However, given the absence of evidence that the current accommodation is deficient to an extent likely to threaten the viability of the house as a dwelling this has modest weight. Moreover, an extension of the size and form of that proposed is not the only way to extend the building and provide additional living space for the appellants and their family.
11. Even though I have found that the harm to the heritage asset is less than substantial it is not to be treated as a less than substantial objection to the proposal. The public benefits attributable to the proposal would not outweigh the considerable importance and weight to be given to the harm to the heritage asset. As such the proposal would not comply with paragraph 134 of the Framework.
12. It would also conflict with Policies DVS1 and ENV17 of the North Devon Local Plan which, amongst other things, state that development that conflicts with the design principles set out in table 2B will not be permitted and development affecting a listed building will only be permitted where it preserves the architectural or historic interest of the building.

Other matters

13. The site is within the AONB, Heritage Coast and Coastal Preservation Area and the Council considers that the scheme would not have a significant detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape. I have no reason to disagree with this finding as even though the proposal would visually increase the size of the dwelling it would be seen in any longer distance views against the backdrop of the adjacent dwellings and the predominantly residential character of this part of Crowborough Road. Consequently, I consider that the proposal would preserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, Heritage Coast and Coastal Preservation Area.
14. I note that the Parish Council did not object to the proposal. However, the lack of objection in this respect does not weigh for or against it.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

D. Boffin

INSPECTOR