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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2019

**by R E Walker BA Hons DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 16 October 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/D/19/3231360**

**Prospect House, Church Street, Happisburgh NR12 0PN**

- 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 E Dixon against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
  - The application Ref PF/19/0294, dated 8 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 April 2019.
  - The development proposed is the partial demolition of existing buildings and erection of granny annexe.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area, including the Happisburgh Conservation Area and the setting of the host dwelling.

## Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises of 2 single storey outbuildings within the grounds of Prospect House. The 2 outbuildings are positioned opposite an outbuilding which has been altered and converted into a holiday cottage. Prospect House is a large traditional property located within Happisburgh Conservation Area (CA) and is prominent on Church Street. The property, boundary walling and its outbuildings make a positive contribution to the historic built environment along Church Street and from views around the church.
4. One of the outbuildings is a later addition and in a poor condition, its demolition and proposed replacement would be in keeping with its historic environment. However, the proposed alterations would result in a raising of the height of the other, more historic outbuilding to a similar height to the holiday cottage. This would be apparent from both private and public views along Church Street and the church yard. Seen in combination with the converted holiday cottage opposite, the increased scale of building would disrupt the rhythm and hierarchy of the built form.
5. A previous proposal for a larger building was dismissed at appeal (Ref: APP/Y2620/D/18/3196873) due to concerns regarding a cramped form of development. I recognise that this proposal has reduced the scale of the built

form from the dismissed scheme and it would be subordinate in scale to Prospect House. Although the overall garden associated with Prospect House is large, the existing outbuildings, adjacent holiday cottage and host dwelling are all positioned in close proximity. The proposal would still, in my view, appear somewhat cramped in such a tight knit environment.

6. I appreciate that there is existing planting which adds to the existing height of the outbuildings. However, this serves to soften the environment whereas the built form would appear starker in the same context.
7. Although there is a dormer window on the holiday cottage, I consider that the size and number of dormers on the rear roof slope of the proposed development would appear as overly domestic features. The appellants have referred me to the Council's Design Guide which says that mono-pitch and wedge dormers are the 2 most common types of dormers in North Norfolk. However, from my onsite observations such dormers are typically found on residential properties rather than traditional outbuildings. I understand that the appellants were open to amend the proposals during the planning application process. However, this is not a matter for my consideration in this appeal and I am only able to make my decision taking into account the plans that were before the Council when they made their decision.
8. My concerns relate not to the principle of converting the outbuildings to an annexe but to the extent, scale and design of the alterations. For the reasons given, the combination of the increased scale, the extent and design of the proposed alterations and extensions overall would not preserve the character of these simple modest outbuildings. The proposals would therefore harm the setting of the host property and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
9. The harm to the CA would be localised given the limited instances in which the proposals can be seen from and, as such, would be less than substantial in the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Although the harm may be less than substantial any harm to the CA is a matter that attracts great weight, having regard to paragraph 193 of the Framework and the statutory duty to preserve or enhance CA's. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework I must balance that less than substantial harm against the public benefits of the proposals.
10. The proposals would provide ancillary accommodation for the appellants relative and secure the reuse and redevelopment of these buildings which would accord with the sustainability objectives of the Framework. I nonetheless give the benefits limited weight as the benefits to the public would be low. As such, I am not persuaded that these benefits outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area, including the CA and the setting of the host dwelling.
11. The proposals would therefore conflict with policies EN 4 and EN 8 of the adopted North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy Incorporating Development Control Policies 2008. These policies are concerned with character and appearance of developments and, where relevant, developments within CA's. The proposals would also conflict with paragraphs 127 and 130 of the Framework which seeks to secure high quality design.

## **Conclusion**

12. I have taken account of all the other matters raised including the benefits of the proposed annexe, the condition of the buildings, cited Historic England Guidance and the consultation responses received to the planning application. However, none changes the balance of these findings and harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area, including the Happisburgh CA and the setting of the host dwelling.
13. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Robert Walker*

INSPECTOR