



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 29 October 2019

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th November 2019

Appeal A: APP/Z2260/W/19/3224027

Appeal B: APP/Z2260/Y/19/3223564

7 Coastguard Cottages, Victoria Parade, Ramsgate CT11 8DU

- The appeals are made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission and under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeals are made by Mr Paul Davies against the decisions of Thanet District Council.
 - The applications Ref FH/TH/18/1518 and L/TH/18/1519, dated 1 November 2018, were refused by notices dated 8 January 2019.
 - The development proposed comprises works to create bedroom and en-suite to loft area, rebuilding of landing WC cupboard into concealed spiral staircase. Modification of first floor ceiling to enable floor structure to loft area. Conservation rooflight to rear area.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the architectural character and historic interest of the appeal property, which forms part of a Grade II listed group of dwellings at 3-10 Coastguard Cottages; and whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ramsgate Conservation Area (CA). The listed group forms the northwestern side of a block of 3 similar blocks arranged in a 'U' facing the sea. Erected in 1865, the red brick and stone 'Gothic' revival buildings remain remarkably unaltered.
3. The appeal property is near the centre of the group. The only aspect of the proposal which is intended to be seen from the outside would be the conservation rooflight which would face away from the central grassed area. However, the entire roof of the terrace is covered with graduated slates of good quality and it remains free of rooflights or other similar penetrations. The whole roof is not easily perceived from the adjacent street because of vegetation but is easily seen from the gardens of the terrace and from other properties nearby. The proposed rooflight would not be large but it would involve removal of important fabric, which is harmful. It would change the architectural character of the listed block. Whilst this would be 'less than substantial' in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and indeed in the scale

of harm fairly low, it would nevertheless be noticeable and would diminish the ability to appreciate its architectural character and historic interest. The change to an unaltered Victorian slate roof in a prominent position on the seafront (albeit at the rear) would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

4. The internal alterations would significantly alter the dwelling by creating an additional stair with steep winders ascending into a very constrained loft room with low headroom. The stairs would completely occupy a wc compartment on the first floor landing. Whilst I understand that this is not an original feature, it does not noticeably affect the original structure or fabric or noticeably interfere in the original architectural concept. The wc partition and door is sympathetically detailed with white painted tongued and grooved boarding which is not untypical of partitions of the late Victorian period and early 20th century. The main concern arises not because of the alteration of this, but the incursion the stair would inevitably make into the ceiling structure above. The new stair would require significant new framing around a new opening in the wc and the hall ceiling to achieve the desired height.
5. Moreover, the new loft room floor would require new structural support for the new floor loading, involving new beams and significant alteration. No details have been supplied of the proposed arrangement. The NPPF points out at paragraph 189 that the level of detail provided by the applicant should be proportionate to the asset's importance. In the case of a Grade II listed building this should at least include precise details of the existing structure, proposed dimensions and the locations of new beams and supports, the implications for existing finishes; and the arrangements for providing the necessary services, insulation and ventilation. In this connection, the appeal statement shows illustrations of an existing king post truss which retains intrinsic value as original fabric. It is not explained how this will be accommodated or altered to provide the desired room. I consider that without a substantially higher level of detail, it is difficult to conclude that the interference in original fabric is justified. There would be little public benefit to outweigh these concerns.
6. Great weight attaches to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification for any harm. I have taken account of the works approved at Nos. 1B and 3 referred to by the appellant, but little information has been provided and it is not clear what alterations might already have been made to these properties and whether either involved a rooflight or loft conversion. Moreover no evidence has been provided of the level of detail provided at application stage. In conclusion the proposed development would conflict with one of the main objectives of the Thanet Local Plan of 2006 and the character and appearance protection aims of policy D1, which are consistent with the corresponding objectives of the 2019 NPPF.
7. I conclude that for all the above reasons, the appeals should fail.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR