



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 November 2019

by David Nicholson RIBA IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th December 2019

34 Stamford Road, Easton On The Hill PE9 3NU

- The appeals are made by Mr A Beeson against the decisions of East Northants District Council.
 - The development/works proposed are: a single storey extension to house.
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Appeal A: APP/G2815/W/19/3236556

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The application Ref. 19/00730/FUL, dated 18 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2019.
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Appeal B: APP/G2815/Y/19/3236557

- 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 application Ref. 19/00731/LBC, dated 18 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2019.
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Reasons

2. The Easton on the Hill Conservation Area boundary covers the older parts of the village. An early map shows elongated plots running from the High Street back to Stamford Road. No.34 is shown as having mature grounds providing a significant plot with more formal gardens located to the front of the house. This arrangement was still apparent in the 1976 map. The house at No.34 is within the Conservation Area but much of its grounds are not. The proposed extension would also be outside. No.34, then referred to as The Abbey, was listed at Grade II in 1988. There is a 1702 datestone on the left stack, possibly reset. It is 2 storeys high, of squared coursed limestone with ashlar dressings, has a hipped Collyweston slate roof, lateral stone stacks and a 3-window range of 6-panel, unhorned sash windows. These form a symmetrical, polite frontage characteristic of its period. Inside there is an early 19th Century staircase with a stick balustrade. These all contribute to its special interest as a listed building.
3. The house has been changed and extended from the early 19th Century. With its outbuildings, it has a long planning history with permissions for new dwellings prior to listing and more recently consented alterations and additions. The proposed extension would stand to one side of the main façade and provide two additional bedrooms and a bathroom. Being single storey and slightly set back, it would be subservient to the original house. Simple vertical windows would not, of themselves, vie with those to the front elevation.

Nevertheless, by adding a new element attached to the formal composition of the front part of the house, the extension would detract from an appreciation of the fine, symmetrical and well-proportioned façade. The proposed link would be through the end wall roughly halfway up the staircase with a new half-flight replacing an outside WC and raising the 19th Century Collyweston slate roof. Consequently, there would also be some loss of historic fabric.

4. I acknowledge the attempts to address the comments of the previous Inspector and, like him, I recognise the skill put into certain elements of the design. This includes efforts to reduce the extent to which the façade would be affected, to minimise the interference and loss of historic fabric to the staircase, wall and roof. However, to interpret the previous appeal decision as providing tacit agreement that the property is capable of an extension in the proposed location and connected to the house, without causing any harm to the significance of the listed building, is quite a leap. In any event, the scheme before me, which is the only one that I can judge, does not manage this.
5. I therefore find that the scheme would harm the special interest and significance of the listed building. The proposals would be contrary to policy in paragraphs 184, 193, 194 and 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework that designated heritage assets such as listed buildings are an irreplaceable resource, that great weight should be given to their conservation, that any harm to, or loss of, their significance from alteration should require clear and convincing justification, and that less than substantial harm to significance should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The extension would be contrary to criterion a) of Policy 2 of the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy which seeks to conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance and setting of heritage assets.
6. I don't doubt that the extension proposed may be the minimum necessary to satisfy the Appellant's wish for two additional bedrooms with direct access from the main house, but this would be a private benefit. To justify the extension on the basis that it would provide bedrooms in proportion with the ground floor living accommodation, when the latter has already been substantially extended, would be a recipe for endless enlargement and cumulative harm. Nor do I accept that the extension is necessary to contribute to the long term conservation of the building, or to ensure its continued use as a dwelling, or that the longevity of the listed building is dependent on the works going ahead. I therefore find no public benefits that would outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused or the conflict with policy as set out above.
7. Much of the setting to the front of the house has been lost so that it is no longer possible to appreciate the façade from public viewpoints. Given its tucked away position, I find that the house contributes little to the appearance of the Conservation Area, even if its history and materials make a positive contribution to its character. As the materials would be echoed by the proposal, which would be outside the boundary, I find that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be essentially unharmed.
8. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised including an orchard tree, I conclude that both appeals should fail.

David Nicholson

INSPECTOR