



Appeal Decisions

Hearing held on 25 February 2020

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th March 2020

Appeal A: APP/C3240/W/18/3210634

Ventnor House, 8 Station Road, Madeley, Telford TF7 5BA

- 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 Origin Architects Limited against the decision of Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref TWC/2018/0354, dated 27 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2018.
 - The development proposed is an orangery extended from the main gable to the rear, incorporating the existing bread oven and cowling, first floor window opening enlarged for a double door access to a new balcony, a further opening made in the gable from the kitchen and associated landscaping with dwarf walls.
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Appeal B: APP/C3240/Y/18/3210692

Ventnor House, 8 Station Road, Madeley, Telford TF7 5BA

- 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 Origin Architects Limited against the decision of Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref TWC/2018/0355 dated 27 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2018.
 - The works proposed are an orangery extended from the main gable to the rear, incorporating the existing bread oven and cowling, first floor window opening enlarged for a double door access to a new balcony, a further opening made in the gable from the kitchen and associated landscaping with dwarf walls.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. A main issue for both appeals is whether the works would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building, and whether they would harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.
 4. A further issue relevant to Appeal A only is the development's effect on the living conditions of neighbouring residents.
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Reasons

Heritage impact

5. Ventnor House is a Grade II listed property that was originally a farmhouse but, although still used for residential purposes, all farming activity has now ceased, and it sits in a suburban context. Its precise evolution was not agreed by the parties. However, it seemed to be accepted that it dated from the mid-18th Century and was then extended and altered through the 19th Century. The front element has a polite formal plan form and a classically influenced elevation facing Station Road. To the rear the various phases and extensions are simpler, reflecting their more functional origins, and they terminate with a dominant 2-storey north-facing gable. Within this rear part a bread oven and various other original domestic elements and details remain.
6. Therefore, the dwelling's special architectural and historic interest lies in its age, form, fabric and architectural detailing. Moreover, its significance rests partly in the way it reflects the evolution and adaptation of a historic rural property over time. Whilst I accept a garage extension has been added, its design is not so discordant as to undermine this significance appreciably.
7. The proposed extension would be on the rearmost gable of the property. Its elevations would be primarily of glass and access would be from the kitchen by means of a new opening in the existing rear wall and the enlargement of the back door. The roof would be hipped, and 'sunk' in the roof void would be a balcony accessed from a door created by increasing the size of an existing window.
8. This is the second such scheme considered on the property. A previous one (the previous scheme) was dismissed at appeal in December 2017. This was broadly because what was then proposed, with its heavy horizontal emphasis and its wrapping around onto the eastern elevation, would have conflicted with the classical influence on the building and, with the transparency of its mainly glazed elevations and its hipped roof, it would have dominated the rear wing.
9. Although similar, what is before me now has been reduced in size so it does not run onto the east elevation of the rear wing, and the balcony now does not require a balustrade as it is 'sunk' sufficiently into the pitched roof to render one unnecessary. However, roof lights have been added that were not proposed before.
10. I raise no objections to the principle of adding a single storey extension onto the rear of this property. Despite its reduction in size though, I consider the scale of the proposal's roofing, with its accommodation of the 'sunken' balcony, would result in an unduly bulky addition onto the end gable. Furthermore, while the angle of the roof slope accords with that on the existing wing, the hipped roof treatment would sit uncomfortably against the dominant pattern of gabled roofing that tends to be found on the property. This would be compounded by the balcony, which, although now set entirely below the ridges of the roof, would nonetheless result in a roof form that would not reflect what was found elsewhere on Ventnor House and would relate poorly to a building of this age.
11. Finally, to my mind the large square glazed panels on the proposed elevations, when seen in the context of the extension as a whole, would not respect the form and nature of the property with its vertical emphasis. As a result, they

would be discordant and would detract from the historic composition of the building. The transparency of these elevations would allow some views of the brickwork of the gable elevation. Those though would be very much affected by the bulky roof of the proposal, and any benefit this arrangement would offer would not justify the works or overcome the harm identified.

12. For these reasons I therefore consider the extension would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the property, and would cause harm, albeit less than substantial, to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
13. I also consider the 4 proposed roof lights would be a discordant element on the extension. This is because they would be of a pattern and arrangement that would not relate well to the built form or to the plain roof slopes that characterise the older parts of the building. However, I share the parties' view that they could be deleted by condition and so they do not form part of the harm I have identified. Moreover, I consider the loss of fabric and the creation of additional openings would not harm the building's significance.
14. I have taken into account as well the proposed restoration of the existing bread oven, and its incorporation inside the extension. Although the origins and history of this were unclear, it was plainly a feature of some age, and restoring it in this way would assist in preserving the interest and significance of the building. However, I am not satisfied that such restoration necessitates the works before me, and therefore again it does not mean the scheme does not harm the significance or interest of the building.
15. The site is within the Ironbridge World Heritage Site and the Severn Gorge Conservation Area. The significance of these lies partly in the way they are characterised by the industrial heritage that reflects the important advances that were made here, and their appearance is still dominated by the older buildings and spaces in between that recount this era in the area's past. As the extension would be well concealed to the rear of this property, it would not adversely affect the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site or fail to preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area. As such, the significance of neither would be harmed.
16. Under the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building should be weighed against the public benefits. In this regard the appellant said the extension would enhance his Bed and Breakfast business by providing a pleasing place for guests to eat their breakfast with views of the garden. He also contended the increase in income would give him more money to maintain the building.
17. The parties did not say that the current use of the building as a family home that let out rooms was unlawful under planning legislation. I appreciate that tourism is an important aspect of the economy around Ironbridge and the Severn Gorge and I understand from the appellant that the Bed and Breakfast operation provides a significant amount of his income at present. By improving facilities it is reasonable to assume that not only would the Bed and Breakfast lettings benefit, but the appellant would have an increased income that could be used to maintain the building. However, I have no details about the financial contribution of the Bed and Breakfast operations to the appellant, or how these would be enhanced by the proposal. There is also no specific mechanism before

me to ensure some or all of the money would be used to maintain the building. As such, the weight I can afford this benefit is limited.

18. Accordingly, I conclude that the works would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the property, and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a designated heritage asset. In the absence of any public benefits to outweigh this harm, the scheme would be contrary to Policy BE4 of the *Telford & Wrekin Local Plan*, which seeks to safeguard listed buildings, and guidance in the Framework.

Living conditions

19. With the previous scheme the Inspector found that the distances involved and the vegetation in between meant that views from the proposed balcony into the rear windows of the neighbouring houses on Cottage Farm Close would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy. As the balcony before me is in a similar location I have no reason to come to a different view. Moreover, although the gardens of those houses are closer than their rear windows, they are screened to a great extent by the boundary wall and planting, and again the separation distances do not seem unreasonable in this suburban context.
20. With regard to the houses on the other side, the distances and the vegetation mean that the balcony would give rise to no unacceptable loss of privacy. Whilst that planting could be removed, I have no reason to consider that would occur and, in that event, the distance would still be sufficient to protect the privacy of those neighbouring residents.
21. Finally, noise from activity on the balcony was not found to be a reason to dismiss the previous scheme. Given the size of the balcony and the domestic nature of the use I have no reason to consider noise associated with these works would be unacceptable.
22. Accordingly, I conclude the development would not detract unacceptably from the living conditions of neighbouring residents, and so would not conflict with Local Plan Policy BE1 that seeks to protect neighbouring properties and avoid undermining them.

Conclusions

23. For the reasons stated I therefore dismiss both appeals.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr T Warner

Origin Architects Limited

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Mr A Gittins

Area Team Planning Manager with the Council

Ms P McKnight

Senior Built Heritage Specialist with the Council

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Cllr J Jones

Member for Madeley Ward

DOCUMENTS

- 1 Email dated 26 February 2020 from the appellant to the Planning Inspectorate concerning suggested conditions
- 2 Email dated 28 February 2020 from the Council to the Planning Inspectorate concerning suggested conditions
- 3 Email dated 2 March 2020 from the appellant to the Planning Inspectorate concerning suggested conditions