



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2020

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C2741/D/20/3247148

5 Water End, York YO30 6LL

- 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 C Gardner against the decision of City of York Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02149/FUL, dated 8 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is 'extension to roof and loft conversion (re-submission of 19/00967/FUL, revised scheme)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development provided by the application form has been updated in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description of development provided by the appeal form accordingly as it is more precise and accurate with respect to the proposal subject of this appeal.
3. The Council's decision notice refers to policies in the City of York Draft Local Plan 2005 (DLP), the City of York Local Plan - Publication Draft February 2018 (emerging LP) and the Supplementary Planning Document 'House Extensions and Alterations' (SPD). However, although the Council states that it has approved the DLP for development control purposes and the emerging LP has been submitted for examination, neither have been formally adopted and therefore, are not determinative in this case. Consequently, I only afford those policies weight insofar as they are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the significance of Clifton Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. Clifton Conservation Area is primarily centred upon the original village surroundings of the Clifton Green open space, albeit with some subsequent extensions to its boundary following its original designation. The historic rural character from which it derives its significance, as described in the description accompanying the Conservation Area plan, includes the small scale detached, semi-detached and terraced properties of differing architectural styles that are

clustered around the village green in a verdant setting, which over time has been supplemented by newer suburban streets.

6. The appeal site consists of a corner plot at the junction of Water End with Greycliffe Drive and lies close to the junction of Water End with Clifton Green. The appeal property faces Water End behind a relatively shallow front garden and modest boundary hedges, with grass verges separating adjacent footways from the roads. The site lies at the edge of the Conservation Area with the boundary wrapping around its rear boundary. When taken together with the adjacent semi-detached pair (Nos 1 and 3 Water End), the dwelling forms an important part of the transition from the more tightly packed and clustered nature of properties on the southern side of Clifton Green to the more spacious plots and gardens of newer suburban properties in the hinterland. This includes those properties that lie beyond the Conservation Area further to the west along Water End, including Zero House – a modern contemporary building on the opposite corner, and No 1 Greycliffe Drive to the rear.
7. There are notable variations in architectural styles, form and materials in the immediate surroundings both within Clifton Green and Water End, including the imposing presence of terraced properties with a variety of Georgian and Victorian styles on the opposite side of Water End. In contrast, the existing two storey detached dwelling is characterised by Arts and Crafts influences with a notable vertical emphasis arising from a hipped roof design with narrow gable outriggers to front and western elevations, together with prominent chimney stacks and distinctive windows with mullions, transoms and glazing bars. In that context, the more modest scale of the property, although likely a later addition, has a discreet appearance that assimilates with the mix of properties on the southern side of Water End where it meets Clifton Green and therefore, makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.
8. It has been drawn to my attention that planning permission has already been granted for the part of the loft conversion that involves the addition of a side gable on the eastern side of the main roof of the dwelling. During my visit, I observed that the development of that element had commenced. When taking account of the asymmetrical nature of the original roof form, the presence of the existing gables and the subservient position of the proposed ridgeline, it would not have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the dwelling or the character and significance of the Conservation Area.
9. Notwithstanding the above, the proposal before me includes a further roof extension to form a gable on the rear elevation above the existing eaves line of the roof. In that regard, the rear elevation of the property and those beyond that face both Water End and Clifton Green are visible in the space between No 1 Greycliffe Drive when entering the Conservation Area from the south. From those public vantage points, the predominant hipped style of the main roof of the property and those nearby to the east have a distinctive continuity of eaves heights and visible rear roof slopes resulting in a degree of unity and rhythm which assimilates their differences in overall form and materials.
10. In the above context, the introduction of a rear gable extending from the existing ridgeline would be viewed as an unduly dominant and bulky addition in a prominent position. The new gable would have a horizontal emphasis, despite the additional window at second floor level, and would appear incompatible with the rhythm of neighbouring rear elevations and rear roof slopes. It would

also draw attention from the existing visual interest and subservience of the narrower side gable and accompanying chimney on the western elevation due to its additional bulk and massing alongside the addition of rooflights in the original roof slope. Furthermore, it would reduce the sense of space between No 1 Greencliffe Drive at roof level and the associated relief from built form to which the existing roof slope contributes. The proposal would, thereby, detract from the character and appearance of the property and those nearby.

11. In reaching the above findings, I have taken into account that the proposal has sought to reference the architectural style of the dwelling and incorporate matching materials and complementary fenestration. Furthermore, I observed that No 1 Greencliffe Drive has a prominent front gable design with a porthole style window at second floor level. I also note the presence of other architectural styles, forms and materials when approaching the site from the south and west. Nevertheless, the diversity of built form, materials and detailing on front elevations nearby that lie outside of the Conservation Area, do not offer a precedent for or justify the harmful effect of the proposed loft conversion on the rear elevation and roof slope of the appeal property.
12. The harm caused would be significant in terms of the host property and the immediate surroundings of the proposal given the prominence of the rear elevation of No 5 when viewed from Greencliffe Drive due to its corner position. However, as that is only a limited public vantage point within the wider Conservation Area and it would not be visible within the context of the focal point of the Clifton Green open space, the harm would be less than substantial to the significance of Clifton Conservation Area when taken as a whole. In such circumstances, paragraphs 193 and 196 of the Framework require that the less than substantial harm be weighed against any public benefits.
13. The public benefits are that the proposal would secure a more efficient use of the building through conversion of the roof space and that there would be short term economic benefits during construction. However, the public benefits would be limited based on the scale of development proposed and do not outweigh the great weight given to the conservation of Clifton Conservation Area and the less than substantial harm to its significance which I have identified.
14. I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host building and the area and, therefore, would fail to preserve or enhance the significance of the Clifton Conservation Area. The proposal would be contrary to the aims of the Framework in that respect, with related conflict with Policies GP1 and HE3 of the DLP, Policies D1, D4 and D11 of the emerging LP, and guidance in the SPD.

Other Matters

15. The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, including the outlook and privacy of No 3 Water End. However, the absence of concern in that respect is a neutral factor.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR