
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 21 July 2020

by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th August 2020

Appeal A: APP/Z2830/W/19/3233064

Pathfinder Cottage, 34 Blackwell End, Potterspury NN12 7QE

- 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 Paul Saunders against the decision of South Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/2019/0479/FUL, dated 7 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension to listed building.
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Appeal B: APP/Z2830/Y/19/3233063

Pathfinder Cottage, 34 Blackwell End, Potterspury NN12 7QE

- 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 Mr Paul Saunders against the decision of South Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/2019/0480/LBC, dated 7 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2019.
 - The works proposed is a single storey extension to listed building.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Pathfinder Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. This duty is set out in s.16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in respect of the Listed building appeal and in similar terms at s.66 in respect of the accompanying planning appeal.

Reasons

4. The appeal building was first listed in May 1988 and is a late seventeenth century/early eighteenth century detached cottage with later twentieth century

alterations, including a single storey lean-to extension to the rear. It is constructed of coursed limestone rubble with a thatched roof, rendered end and ridge stacks, a two storey three window range and three unit plan. The front elevation has a twentieth century door to the left of the centre with a timber lintel. There are two casement windows to ground and first floors with the first floor ones in eyebrow dormers, all with timber lintels. The right end bay of the property is a later addition, as evidenced by a visible straight joint. The property was originally known as 'Pest House' and its location outside the settlement suggests that it is likely to have been a small isolation unit for outbreaks of infectious diseases in the locality.

5. Although the host building has been altered and extended it retains its simple form and a uniformity in its overall design, retaining its well-proportioned simple footprint, scale and massing. The extensions and alterations that have taken place to date do not disrupt the overall simplicity of the building and its historic and architectural integrity. As a former pest house, the building's historical significance also lies in its relatively secluded location within a relatively large landscaped plot, separate from other buildings in the locality.
6. The applications propose a single storey pitched roof extension to provide a new kitchen diner and a utility room with disabled toilet. The rectangular extension would set back from the front elevation of the cottage, linked to the existing cottage by a relatively short pitched roof corridor which would be attached to the existing lean-to single storey extension to the rear of the host building. The extension would incorporate stone external walls with a clay tiled roof and timber framed windows.
7. The appellant has stated that the extension would be situated in the least noticeable position when approaching the property along the driveway and that by being connected to the modern rear lean-to extension there would be no change to the original cottage and no loss of historic structure or fabric. The extension is a relatively simple structure in terms of its footprint and form, but it is unsympathetic to the listed building in terms of its relatively large footprint, poor relationship to the footprint of the property whereby it would result in there being an incoherent and poorly conceived addition to the side of the listed building. Its angled relationship to the host property and the detached nature of the extension, whilst maintaining some separation from the historic fabric, would introduce a markedly different form and design of development to the historic site. As such it responds poorly to, and would detract from, the architectural integrity of the listed building. It therefore fails to take adequate account of the special interest of the building which lies in its simple form. The extension would fail to respect the plan form and disrupt the massing of the building which would be harmful to the special character of the existing modest cottage.
8. Historically, ancillary buildings associated with the cottage would have been relatively modest in size and form whereas the proposed linked extension would have a relatively large footprint and be removed from the plan form of the building which would be at odds with the significance of the building and its setting. The inclusion of a link corridor fails to recognise the simplicity of the original building and introduces an overtly modern approach to developing the property for which there is inadequate justification in this case.

9. Due to the set-back position of the extension within a well-screened landscaped garden it is unlikely that it would be prominent from public or private views other than those experienced within the immediate surroundings of the property's garden. However, given the harm to the historic and architectural interest of the building and the poor relationship to the simple form and uniformity of the cottage it cannot reasonably be argued that this mitigates the harm I have identified.
10. Accordingly, the proposals would cause material harm to the special interest of the listed building, so failing to preserve it, the desirability of which (as required by the Act) has been affirmed by the Courts as a matter of considerable importance and weigh. Moreover, it would fail to accord with the expectations of paragraph 193 of the Framework which anticipates great weight being given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. For the same reasons the extension would also conflict with local development plan policies, particularly Policies G3, EV12 and EV13 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Adopted October 1997 (the LP), Policy BN5 of West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) Adopted December 2014 (the Joint CS).
11. There would also be conflict with Policies H17 and EV1 of the LP, Policy SDP2 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 local Plan Draft Submission (Regulation 19 Consultation) September 2018 and Policy SA of the Joint CS which, among other objectives, seek to ensure that residential extensions respect the scale and character of the existing dwelling, new development should pay particular attention to existing site characteristics and make a positive contribution to the built environment.
12. Paragraph 194 of the Framework states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but it should be remembered, however, that less than substantial harm does not equate to less than substantial planning objection, especially when the statutory tests have not been met.
13. Under such circumstances, paragraph 196 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings. The proposal would improve the living accommodation, but it seems to me that is a private benefit rather than a public benefit which is the test set out in the Framework. This significantly limits the weight to be afforded to this consideration in support of the appeal.
14. I am aware of the appellant's frustration with respect to the advice provided by the Council and the way in which the applications have been dealt with, but I have dealt with these appeals on their own merits.
15. As stated above, whilst the harm may be considered to be less than substantial, this does not equate with less than substantial planning objection, particularly having regard to the statutory duty to preserve the listed building have not been met. Moreover, there are no public benefits to outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion

16. The proposed extension would fail to preserve the listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses contrary to the clear expectations of the Act in respect of both the planning appeal and the listed building appeal. In addition, there are no public benefits or other considerations which would outweigh the harm identified. For these reasons and having taken all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A A Phillips

INSPECTOR