



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2020

by Beverley Wilders BA (Hons) PgDurt MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J0540/Y/20/3245911

66 Wisbech Road, Thorney, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE6 0SD

- 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 Mrs Michelle Anderson against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01600/LBC, dated 10 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2019.
 - The works are described as "change of roof to outhouse as current roof leaks – breather felt and Eternit slate – no changes to timber roof frame made".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The listed building consent application form states that the works to which this appeal relates were started in July 2019 and completed in August 2019. At my site visit I saw that the outhouse roof is tiled as described on the application form and as shown on a number of photographs submitted with the application and appeal. No elevational plans have been submitted of the works and I have therefore assessed the works as shown on the photographs, as seen on site and as described in the heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the works:
 - preserve Nos 54 to 82 (even) Wisbech Road, a Grade II Listed Building, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses; and
 - preserve the character or appearance of Thorney Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special Interest and Significance

4. Located in a prominent roadside position in the Thorney Conservation Area, 66 Wisbech Road is part of a pair of terraces (Nos 54 to 82 even) included on the statutory list at Grade II. The Listing Description highlights that the pair of terraces have been designed to be read in elevation as one. Notwithstanding a number of alterations that have been carried out to the front elevations of the

dwellings comprising the pair of terraces, including those noted in the Listing Description relating to No 76, the front elevation of the terraces has a high degree of uniformity. The same cannot be said for the rear elevations where there are numerous examples of alterations and extensions of varying size, form and detailing.

5. However, there is some consistency to the rear of the terraces in the form of two corresponding rows of ancillary outhouses positioned at the end of the rear yards. I understand from the evidence that the outhouses were constructed at the same time as the remainder of the terraces by the Duke of Bedford as improved housing for the labouring classes on his Thorney agricultural estate, built to the designs of renowned Victorian architect Samuel Sanders Teulon. Though there have clearly been some alterations to the ancillary outhouses, including replacement roofing and some re-building (including, according to the appellant, to the outhouse of No 68), they nevertheless have a high degree of uniformity in form and appearance, including the roof material. The architectural composition and layout of the terraces and outhouses impart a unified architectural character to Nos 54 and 82 (even) and it is for these reasons that the annotation "GV" is included on the Listing Description, indicative that the group value of the terraces is of particular note.
6. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal works, the significance and special interest of the listed building derives from its unified architectural form, appearance and relationship between the main terraces and their rear outhouses. The form and prominent position of the listed pair of terraces means that it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The works

7. The works are the re-roofing of the outhouse at No 66, replacing asbestos cement corrugated sheeting with synthetic slate tiles. In addition, new cappings have been inserted to either side of the roof where it joins the existing corrugated roofing on adjacent outhouses.

The effect of the works

8. Although not the original roof covering, the asbestos cement corrugated sheeting used across the outhouses gives them a consistent appearance and reinforces the unified architectural composition of the terraces. Whilst some reference has been made to similar replica slate tiles as those subject to this appeal having been used elsewhere in the area, I saw no examples of such tiles elsewhere on the outhouses. Consequently, the replacement of the sheeting to the outhouse at No 66 results in a very noticeable loss of consistency of roof material across the outhouses. I am mindful of representations to the effect that the original covering for the outhouse roofs may have been natural slate. Nevertheless, the works in this case have introduced a modern replica slate of a much smoother appearance and generally larger tile size when compared to traditional slate roof coverings. Moreover, due to their large size, the tiles are not well suited to the uneven form of the roof and therefore lift and kick-up in places where they adjoin the adjacent tile on an uneven surface, further demonstrating the unsuitability of the use of such tiles on the outbuilding.
9. The new roof covering has also necessitated the insertion of cappings to either side of the tiles where they adjoin the existing roof. Although cappings would be required for any new roof covering other than corrugated sheeting, due to

their particular form, size and placement, the cappings used appear much bulkier than the existing cappings on the ridge and ends of the outhouses. This consequently results in an awkward arrangement which serves to emphasise the lack of consistency within the roof structure and the incongruous appearance of the new roof covering.

10. Despite the set-back position of the outhouses to the rear of the pair of terraces and their limited public visibility, they are nevertheless visible from a large number of private viewpoints and the harm caused by the works means that they fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the Victorian character of which is largely defined by the concentrations of 19th Century buildings including a number of Duke of Bedford terraces along Wisbech Road.
11. In reaching my decision I note that the majority of roofs within the pair of terraces do not have the original tiles. However, the particular form of the terraces is such that unlike the roof of the outhouses, the roof is broken up by the presence of gables meaning that the use of differing tiles and the joins between them is less obvious than is the case on the outhouses which have much simpler and continuous roof forms.
12. Taking the above matters into consideration and mindful of the duties imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I conclude that the significance and special interest of the Grade II Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are not preserved.

Other Matters

13. The appellant states that the new roof covering was necessary in order to repair the outhouse and to prevent leaks and I note that no objections have been raised to the works by neighbours, the Parish Council or the Thorney Society. However, whilst the works have the benefit of repairing the roof of this particular part of the outhouse, ensuring that it is watertight and helping to secure its long term retention and maintenance, it has not been demonstrated that such benefits could not be achieved through alternative means, so avoiding the harm identified to the heritage asset. For these reasons, it has not been conclusively demonstrated that the works have resulted in the optimum viable use of the building. I therefore find that no public benefit has arisen or would arise as a result of the works subject to this appeal.
14. The appellant has referred to other outhouses within conservation areas that have been granted permission for various alterations including rooflights. Be that as it may, I have no details of these other examples and in any event, I must determine the appeal before me on its own merits.
15. I note that the appellant sought advice from the Council prior to carrying out works to the property and was under the impression that consent was only required for works to the main dwelling and not the outhouse, a point emphasised in responses from the Parish Council. Although I have some sympathy with the appellant, this is essentially a procedural matter that does not alter my findings on the main issues set out above.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

16. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) anticipates that once a finding of harm to the significance of a heritage asset, such as a listed

building or conservation area, has been reached, then the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. In this case, I conclude that the works cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building at Nos 54 and 82 (even) Wisbech Road and the Conservation Area when considered in the context of their significance as a whole. Nevertheless, at paragraph 193 the Framework sets out that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation irrespective of whether any harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Moreover, at paragraph 196 the Framework states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the works. Such benefits could include, where appropriate, instances where the works would secure the optimal viable use of a building.

17. For the reasons given above, it has not been demonstrated that the works have resulted or would result in any public benefit. Consequently, the harm to the significance of the heritage assets, a matter to which I attach great weight and importance, tips the overall balance against the works subject to this appeal. In this way, the works conflict with the Framework insofar as, amongst other matters, it requires heritage assets to be managed in a manner appropriate to their significance. For the same reasons the works do not accord with Policy LP19 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 adopted July 2019 which seeks, amongst other things, the protection of designated heritage assets.
18. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Beverley Wilders

INSPECTOR