



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/19/3239709

5 Youngs Yard, Victoria Street, Southwold IP18 6JE

- 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 Greg Wolton against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/19/2021/FUL, dated 17 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the creation of first floor and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission is granted for the creation of first floor and internal alterations at 5 Youngs Yard, Victoria Street, Southwold IP18 6JE, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/19/2021/FUL, dated 17 May 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 151101 and 151102 dated Feb 19.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the setting of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Southwold Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Listed buildings and the conservation area

3. The proposal is the construction of a first floor to provide two bedrooms within a new duo-pitched roof on a small, single storey monopitch dwelling at the end of Young's Yard, a lane off the southern side of Victoria Street. The Yard provides access to a series of buildings on either side and at the end provides rear access to Nos 82-86 High Street which is a Grade II listed building. Together with Nos 80/80A on one side (also Grade II listed) and No 88 on the other, these buildings front the main commercial thoroughfare of the town which forms the heart of the Southwold CA. The single storey appeal building lies immediately behind No 82 with pedestrian access via a narrow passage.

4. Nos 82-86 is of two storeys with attics dating from the early 17th century. Timber framed with rendered brick, it was subdivided into three houses and extended to the rear in the 19th century and converted to two shops in the 20th. Nos 84-86 comprise the main range, parallel to the High Street, whilst No 82, which backs onto the appeal building, is a cross wing with a brick stack to the rear and whitewashed gable facing the street.
5. The immediate vicinity of the site is characterised by ancillary offshot buildings, generally of narrow form, running back from the principal buildings fronting the High Street. However, it is not clear if or how the appeal building related to No 82, nor the date of construction, but the Council is satisfied it comprised a different planning unit by 1971 and is therefore not listed. Importantly, the building is separated from the historic fabric of No 82 by a utilitarian 1960s two storey rear extension with monopitch roof, and this intervening structure significantly reduces the impact of the proposal on the historic building. The new first floor with steeply sloping duo-pitch roof would not adjoin the 1960s extension, a single storey element being retained, and the ridgeline would be both to one side and slightly lower than the top of the 1960s roof. Although higher than existing, the proposal would remain visually subservient to No 82 from close up and when seen amongst the jumble of roof forms from Young's Yard or Bank Alley. It would not therefore significantly affect its setting.
6. At its north eastern end, the new roof would abut the monopitch roof which forms part of Rutland Cottage on Bank Alley, which itself backs onto No 4 Young's Yard and abuts No 3, both two storey houses which form part of the close knit complex of buildings at the end of the yard. The new tiled roof would be visible from Bank Alley and obvious from the courtyard of Rutland Cottage, but would be a design improvement compared to the rear view of the existing monopitch. From the end of Young's Yard and the small service area behind Nos 84-86 the taller front wall and pitched roof would also be clearly seen, but the building would still appear modest in the context of the bulky High Street buildings on one side and No 4 on the other. The Council's primary concern, that the proposal would not reflect the traditional stepping down of rear outbuildings, would therefore be unfounded.
7. The south east elevation would also have three dormer windows on the roof slope, but these are small and not out of proportion to the building. Gabled dormers are a common feature locally, and although the Council would prefer two and a 'conservation' rooflight, this is not a significant concern. The cottage style elevation would in fact be more in character with nearby pitched roofs than the existing unusually low pitched roof.
8. For these reasons the proposal would not cause significant harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings and would preserve the character and appearance of the Southwold CA. The proposal would not therefore conflict with Policy WLP8.37 of the Waveney Local Plan 2019 which requires proposals to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings. There would be no conflict with the legislative requirement to have special regard to preserve such assets and no need to consider the scheme against paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other matters

9. The new roof and the southern dormer would affect the outlook from, and light entering, the first floor kitchen window in the rear of No 82, but this does not

serve a principal living room and a gap would be retained. Given the tight urban grain of the conservation area this relationship is acceptable. The loss of outlook and light from Rutland Cottage and its courtyard would be minimal given the buildings behind.

10. The existing small, one bedroom dwelling would be expanded in size and offer more spacious two bedroom accommodation which may result in increased pressure for parking in the area. However, similar properties in Southwold are without parking and this is part of the inherent character of the town centre.
11. The property has minimal outside amenity space or bin storage but this is already the case. Cycle parking could be provided below the stairs if required. Access for maintenance is not a determinative planning matter and often requires co-operation between neighbours. The standard of accommodation would be relatively limited, but still an improvement on the existing.
12. Three conditions are required, the standard implementation time limit, to define the plans which have been approved in the interests of certainty and to control the materials to be used to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.
13. Having regard to the above the appeal should be allowed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR