
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2020

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/20/3245214

Anchor Cottage, Seafeld Road, Seaview, Isle of Wight PO34 5HD

- 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 and Mrs Glanville against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01316/HOU, dated 28 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as roof extension and alterations, including dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The scheme as outlined on the submitted plan, includes a hip to gable roof extension, and the addition of dormers on both the front and rear roof slopes. The parties agree that the hip to gable extension and the rear dormers could be added as permitted development. On this basis, whilst raising concerns in relation to these elements, the Council states that its objection relates to the proposed front dormers only. I have therefore considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of Seaview Conservation Area (the Conservation Area).

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of a larger building complex. As a whole the complex occupies a prominent, and visually important position within the streetscene, overlooking the junctions between The Esplanade and The Rope Walk, and The Esplanade, Seafeld Road and Bluet Avenue.
5. The design of the complex seeks to suggest a fine grained, and visually interesting transition between buildings of functional character at the seafront, and those of residential character within its hinterland. In this regard the overall mass of the complex is broken up by variations in the scale, ridge heights, frontage positions, and detailing of its component parts, using a mix of

- warehouse-like forms and finishes, alongside elements of more modest domestic scale and character.
6. Anchor Cottage lies at the south end of the complex, and is one its more modestly scaled 2-storey domestic components. In common with most other units within the complex fronting Seafield Road, its street facing elevation features first floor windows with small glazed gablets over, and a rooflight in the roof slope above. Indeed, the only parts of the complex as a whole whose street facing elevations incorporate windows of a different type above eaves level, are those of more substantial height, scale and form, including a corner tower and 2 warehouse-like elements with large front gables. However, not even these parts of the complex feature dormer windows of the type proposed on their street facing elevations.
 7. The introduction of the proposed dormer windows would therefore neither reflect nor complement the overall design of the complex. The fact that similar dormers occur on other nearby dwellings of differing design, would not alter this fact. Nor would the dormers integrate well with the design of Anchor Cottage itself. This would be due to the awkward relationship created between the dormers and gablets above the first floor windows, the inconsistency in window sizing that would exist across the front elevation, and the congested top-heavy appearance of the roof that would result. The lack of integration, both with the design of the dwelling, and with that of the complex as a whole, would be clearly apparent to any observer. In this context the dormers would appear visually obtrusive. Moreover, by undermining the integrity of the design of the complex as a whole, the development would also undermine the important visual role it plays within the streetscene. The harm caused would again not be diminished by the fact that a taller building is located to the south of Anchor Cottage, as the building in question is a distinctly separate development of very different design.
 8. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The latter include conservation areas. Paragraph 194 of the Framework further explains that development within the setting of a heritage asset can cause harm to its significance.
 9. The Conservation Area incorporates all the land surrounding the block within which the appeal site is located, excluding the carriageway of Seafield Road itself. Insofar as it relates this appeal, the significance of the Conservation Area resides in the historic layout of the streets it covers, and the collection, design and interrelationship of historic buildings and spaces it contains. Within this context the appeal site lies between 2 parts of the Conservation Area whose character differs; one, including buildings on the opposite side of Seafield Road, which is predominantly characterised by late nineteenth and early twentieth century dwellings; the other, covering land to the north and east sides of the block, which includes a mix and residential and commercial seafront development of varying periods.
 10. The rationale for excluding the block from the Conservation Area is unclear, particularly as it features some buildings of similar age and design to those included within the Conservation Area. The inescapable fact otherwise remains that Seaview Road is lined by buildings on both sides, each of which form parts of the same view, and each of which are experienced together. The same also

applies in relation to the streets on the other 3 sides of the block. The appeal site, and the larger complex of which it forms part, thus inevitably forms an integral part of the townscape otherwise included within the Conservation Area. It follows therefore, that development within the block has a direct bearing on appreciation of the significance of development included within the Conservation Area surrounding it.

11. Neither the appeal site, nor the complex of which it forms part, holds any obvious heritage significance. However, as outlined above, the complex occupies an important position within the townscape, playing a pivotal spatial and visual role within the streetscene. Given that the development would be obtrusively at odds with the design and composition of the street facing elevations of the complex, it follows that it would form an appreciable source of visual distraction within the streetscene. Such a distraction would in turn detract from appreciation of the significance of the adjacent Conservation Area, in a minor, but nonetheless negative way.
12. With reference to paragraph 196 of the Framework, I find therefore that the development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. I attach great weight to the harm that would be caused. In accordance with paragraph 196 it is necessary to balance this harm against the public benefits advanced in favour of the appeal scheme.
13. In this case the development would facilitate use of the attic space of Anchor Cottage as an en-suite bedroom. However, this would be a private rather than a public benefit. Though the development would also generate construction work, any related broader economic benefit would be negligible. As such, the public benefits of the scheme would be insufficient to outweigh the harm caused to the setting of the Conservation Area.
14. Given that the Council does not object to the hip to gable roof extension or rear dormers, I have considered the potential of issuing a split decision. However, in the absence of the front dormers, a much smaller attic space would be provided. Thus, it appears unlikely that these works would be undertaken in isolation. In any case, as both parties agree that the rear dormers and hip to gable roof extension could be carried out as permitted development, a split decision would appear to serve no useful purpose.
15. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the Conservation Area. The development would therefore conflict with Policy DM2 of the Island Plan: Isle of Wight Core Strategy 2010 (the IP) which amongst other things seeks to secure development that both complements the character of the surrounding area, and preserves the settings of heritage assets; and Policy DM11 of the IP, which states that the Council will support proposals that positively conserve and enhance the special character of the Island's historic and built environment.

Conclusion

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

Benjamin Webb