



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2020

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26/02/2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/20/3255896

4 Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4AJ

- 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 & Mrs Hills against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/01403/FUL, dated 30 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is for extensions - two storey and replacement windows to existing property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building, which is locally listed, and the North Lowestoft Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of a semi-detached pair of Arts and Crafts style houses designed around 1912 and reputed to be of the design of local architect Ralph Scott Cockrill. The two properties stand on a prominent corner within the North Lowestoft Conservation Area and the architectural features of 'flared' gables, T-shape plan forms and canted entrance bays make these properties largely unique within the immediate vicinity.
4. The site is located within Character Area 2, Bellevue Park, of the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. The adopted conservation area appraisal illustrates that Bellevue Park represents the northward expansion of the Medieval settlement of Lowestoft in the late 19th century. As such the area is heavily characterised by Victorian and Edwardian villas and other substantial buildings, many of which are notable for their fine architectural characteristics. The appeal property is considered a Locally Listed Building as recommended by the North Lowestoft Conservation Area Appraisal in its review of March 2007. The status of the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset is not disputed by the appellant.
5. Despite the adjoining property now being a dental surgery and having a substantial extension to the rear, the appeal property itself appears to be

largely intact in its original plan form, with the exception of an additional garage being constructed to the side. On my site visit I saw nearly all windows had been previously replaced by UPVC apart from small windows in the sides of the front porch and the later encased French doors to the first floor of the porch. Other than that, I consider that the overall condition of the house is consistent with its original design intention.

6. In considering this appeal I have had regard to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This is reflected in paragraph 192 of The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), which illustrates the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to the creation of sustainable and economically viable communities. Paragraph 193 of the Framework also states that when considering the impact of a proposed development upon a heritage asset that great weight should be given to the assets conservation.
7. Policies WLP8.29, 8.37, 8.38 and 8.39 of the East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan 2019 (the Local Plan) as well as the Council's adopted Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which sets out guidance for change to historic buildings and conservation areas, also reflect The Framework in the fact that they require proposals to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment.
8. I consider that the proposed rear extension would be, for the most part, contextual in its general forms and response to the host building. The rear extension in particular would exhibit a modern interpretation of these traditional elements that I find suitably contextual in relation to the character and appearance of the Locally Listed Building and the conservation area.
9. However, the proposed two storey extension projecting from the gable wing and fronting onto Yarmouth Road and Sussex Road would introduce a harmfully dominant feature onto this elevation. Due mainly to the height and scale of this extension and the lack of a sufficient set back from the original elevation and minimal set down of the ridge, the original flared gable feature would be largely subsumed into this new elevation. This would have the effect of reducing the dominance and the perception of an important architectural characteristic exhibited by this building. As a result there would be a loss of some of the architectural detailing, typical of such Arts and Crafts houses, that enable this prominent locally listed building to contribute in its own distinctive way to the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole.
10. The loss of a prominent chimney would also introduce a level of harm into the fabric of the building that would contribute to a further erosion of the special architectural and historic character of the building and the conservation area. Due to the vast majority of windows already having been replaced, I am unable to find harm in replacing the majority of the windows, but I would identify the undesirable impact of removing any further original glass that, in this case, appears to be confined to small windows in the porch.
11. I consider the overall harm to constitute less than substantial harm as it would not result in the total loss of the heritage asset or its significance but would, nevertheless, see a cumulatively damaging effect upon this locally listed

building and would contribute to an erosion of a prominent building that is highly visible within the conservation area.

12. In finding less than substantial harm to the conservation area, I have considered the potential for public benefits that may be obtained through this scheme. In undertaking this balancing exercise I am also required by The Framework to give great weight to the assets conservation. Therefore, although I recognise the benefits of maintaining long term residents within the town I consider that the other benefits as outlined by the appellant are more private benefits. In assessing the public benefits therefore I do not consider that they are extensive enough to outweigh the harm to the Locally Listed Building or the harm that I have identified that would occur to the North Lowestoft Conservation Area.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the appeal building, which is locally listed, and the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. As such, the proposals fail to meet the requirements contained within the Framework, the Local Plan, and SPD that seek to preserve or enhance the historic environment.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons above, taking into account all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR