



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2021

by M Scriven BA (Hons) MSc CMgr MCIHT MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/W/20/3263145

Lindsay Place, Basset Green Village, Southampton SO16 3TY

- 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 K Netherwood of Sunset Red Ltd against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01019/FUL, dated 31 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of a first floor rear extension and conversion of laundry room to create a 1 bed maisonette with associated amenity space and new doors to flat 2.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. For clarity the description of the proposed development in the banner heading above is as described in the appeal form and Council's decision notice.
3. The Council's second reason for refusal related to the likely impact of the proposal on the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) of the Solent Coastline. I have dealt with this below.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the area, with particular regard to the Basset Green Conservation Area (CA) and setting of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located behind a 2-storey block of flats, within the CA. The laundry unit is centrally positioned to the rear of the building and is a single storey projection. It is of a similar height to other outbuildings and extensions nearby, including the garaging associated with the flats and more recent additions to the rear of the listed buildings to the north.
6. The significance of the CA derives from the arrangement of historic buildings around an attractive village green and the relationship between the two. The character of the CA is further informed by an apparent absence of separate residential development being located behind existing buildings, away from the green. Likewise, when seen from public points, the gaps between buildings, including that created by the block of flats, create a spacious appearance to the CA.

7. The significance of the setting of the adjacent listed buildings lies mainly in their architectural qualities, they are understood to be of late 18th Century origins of brick construction, being of one storey, incorporating dormers in the attic space. Sympathetic, rear, single-storey additions appear to have been made which incorporate similar materials and assimilate with the original buildings, whilst also appearing subservient. However, their setting is also positively informed by a clear respect from the neighbouring built form to an absence of outbuildings or extensions over single storey in height, creating a clear openness in the sky line to the rear and sides of the plots, albeit punctuated with tall trees and established vegetation.
8. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, (the Act) requires the decisionmaker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72(1) of that Act requires that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area in the exercise of planning powers
9. The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.
10. The proposal follows previous appeals at the site to create an additional flat, making use of the former laundry. Whilst I have had regard to the previous Inspector's Decisions¹, although the location is the same, as too the parking provision, I afford those Decisions moderate weight as the proposal before me is for a two-storey unit rather than being single-storey as previously proposed.
11. The proposal would introduce a first-floor addition which in itself would deviate from the established built form, harming local character. The intended gap at first floor level between the unit and the main block would also create the appearance of a separate two-storey dwelling when seen from the rear and nearby listed buildings, appearing at harmful odds with the developed form. The harm to character and appearance would be exacerbated by the proposed height of the roof which appears to sit above the eaves of the main building.
12. The proposed timber cladding at first floor level would not in my view soften the effect of the proposal to any meaningful degree. Similarly, I am not of the view that a condition relating to external materials or finishing would overcome the identified harm, as it is the overall intended form that would create that harm.
13. For the reasons above, I consider the proposal would neither preserve or enhance the setting of the adjacent listed buildings but rather result in harm to their setting by virtue of the introduction of what appears as a separate two-storey form nearby. Although there would be a moderate separation distance between the proposal and the closest listed building, it would have the effect of harmfully reducing the spacious, open setting and would be at odds with the built surrounds.

¹ APP/D1780/W/19/3241406; APP/D1780/W/19/3241411

14. Whilst constituting a clear departure from the existing built form, the proposal would be largely shielded from public viewpoints around the village green by virtue of its positioning behind the existing flats. There would also be very little effect on the existing gap between built form when seen from the Green. As such I consider the proposal would only result in moderate harm to the CA, however this would still be contrary to the Framework.
15. Therefore, the proposed development would not accord with policies SDP7 and SDP9 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review, amended 2015, (LP) which collectively seek to ensure development proposals respect the existing layout and scale of buildings. Likewise, the proposal would not accord with Policy CS13 of the Southampton Core Strategy Development Plan Document, amended 2015, (CS) which has similar intentions. The proposal would also not accord with Policy HE3 of the LP or Policy CS14 of the CS, which seek to ensure the setting of listed buildings are not adversely affected by intended development. Furthermore, I consider that the proposal would not accord with Policy HE1, which seeks to ensure the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas.
16. For the same reasons the proposal would not accord with Policy BAS1, BAS3, BAS4 and BAS8 of the Basset Neighbourhood Plan, 2016.
17. I consider the identified harm to the setting of the nearby listed buildings to be less than substantial given its positioning in the plot in relation to those buildings. I also consider the associated harm to the CA to be at the lower end of 'less than substantial'. In accordance with the Framework the identified harm to heritage assets should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would add one unit to the local housing mix and bring economic benefit during its construction. However, I have no evidence of any deficiency in housing land supply and as the proposal is for one dwelling these public benefits are likely to be very minor and I afford limited weight to this. Although described as 'affordable' by the appellant I have no reason to consider the scheme would constitute that defined as affordable housing. Therefore, these benefits do not outweigh the harm to the setting of the listed building or the wider CA.

Other matters and planning balance

18. The appeal site sits within 5.6km of the Special Protection Areas of the Solent Coastline. The Council consider that the likely significant effects on the integrity of European sites in the Solent, both alone, and in combination with other plans and projects would be mitigated through an appropriate financial contribution. I understand that at the time of their decision no contribution or unilateral undertaking had been provided. I have only a draft unilateral undertaking before me. However, given my findings above I have not considered this matter further.
19. That the Council have not objected to the proposal on other grounds, including the effect on parking provision and the living conditions of neighbours is of neutral weight in the appeal. Likewise, although the appeal site sits in an accessible location and would provide an additional dwelling to the supply, it would not, given my findings above, accord with the Framework as a whole.
20. The proposal would be at odds with its surrounds, harming the CA and the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Therefore, in my view, the very minor

benefits of the proposal identified above, would not overcome the identified harm.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons above, having considered the Development Plan and Framework as a whole, the appeal is dismissed.

M Scriven

INSPECTOR