
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2021

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/21/3273078

Pilot Cottage, 22 East Street, SOUTHWOLD, IP18 6EH

- 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 R Wyld against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref. DC/20/4603/FUL, dated 13 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is to replace lean-to with flat roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published on 20 July 2021, but as the revisions do not materially change the national approach to development of this nature it has not been necessary to seek the views of the parties on this matter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the Southwold Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end-terrace dwelling located in the Old Town Character Area of Southwold Conservation Area, and there is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in exercising planning functions. East Street is noted within the Southwold Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CAA) as being enclosed on both sides, with the continuous frontage on the northern side of the road being interrupted by yards between buildings. The appeal property sides on to one of these yards, and its side elevation is therefore visible from East Street.
5. The CAA identifies the appeal property as one of a group of small vernacular cottages with red pantiled roofs, rendered and painted walls, cottage doors and small pane windows, which fill the visual gaps and consolidate the continuous frontage. The appeal property is included in the list of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area set out in

Appendix 3 to the CAA. Whilst I note the appellant's view that the CAA is out of date, the document remains a relevant tool.

6. Within this context, the rear of the terrace of which the appeal property forms part is not prominent in the streetscene, but the varied roofscape in the vicinity contributes to the character and appearance of the area and its buildings. Although there are elements of flat roof nearby, these are the exception and the prevailing pattern is of traditional pitched roofs. There are also examples of small-scale and/or traditionally-designed dormer windows.
7. The property has a first-floor flat-roofed bay window, but otherwise a simple tiled roof. Notwithstanding a parapet wall, the proposal would be visible and would appear as an unsympathetic feature on the roof. In combination with the existing bay, it would create an unduly bulky addition. Rather than appear as a small dormer that would bring balance to the building as suggested by the appellant, it would materially change the roof profile and would be akin to a first-floor flat-roofed addition that is not characteristic of the period and architectural style of the existing building. The appellant advises that the alignment of the side wall means that the proposal would be hidden from public view, but given its proximity to the parapet and the adjacent yard, I am not convinced that it will be screened from East Street and the conservation area.
8. The proposal would therefore conflict with the design aims of Policy WLP8.29 of the East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan 2019 (LP), which amongst other criteria seeks high quality design which responds to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in matters including overall scale and character, the relationship between buildings and the wider street scene, and use of detailing appropriate to the local vernacular; and with LP Policy WLP8.38, which requires proposals to be compatible with the elements of the fabric and setting of the building which contribute to its significance.
9. Attention has been drawn to other flat roofed extensions in the vicinity, but no details of permissions granted or the reasoning for those decisions have been supplied. However, I consider that some examples in the vicinity have not enhanced the character or appearance of the dwellings or the conservation area and are not designs that should be encouraged. As such, they do not warrant acceptance of the appeal proposal.
10. Having regard to paragraph 202 of the Framework, I consider that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, but there is a requirement for that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I appreciate the need for the increased height to the small bedroom, but this would be a private benefit that would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the setting in the conservation area. The property would still be capable of being rented as tourist accommodation to contribute to the local economy as a three-bedroom unit, and altering the head room to this modest space would not materially benefit future occupants of the property. No technical information has been submitted relating to fire safety, although again this would be a private benefit arising from the decision to use the room as a bedroom.
11. Whilst I have had regard to the objectives of sustainable development set out in the Framework, I do not find that the proposal would accord with the social

and environmental aspects in terms of design and the effect on the built and historic environment.

12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the building and its setting in the Southwold Conservation Area, in conflict with the Framework, and LP Policies WLP8.29 and WLP8.38, and with LP Policies WLP8.37 and WLP8.39 which together seek to protect and enhance the district's historic environment.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR