
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: 19 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/D/21/3272611
Mulberry, Cross Road, Starston, IP20 9NH

- 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 C Griffin-Sparrow against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref. 2020/2190, dated 16 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is oak framed balcony to south gable.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the 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 appeal property and the setting of a listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a residential barn conversion located in a group of buildings that are understood to have originally been associated with Yew Tree Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building. The converted barn is in a prominent position next to the road, and is forward of the other buildings in the group. A chimney is an indicator of its domestic use but otherwise the elevations display the simplicity and form of the original barn.
5. There is disagreement between the parties as to whether the appeal property is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The Council's delegated report states that the building is not considered to be curtilage listed, but is regarded as a NDHA due to its age, character and historical relationship with the overall farm unit. The appellants' note that the building does not appear on any local list, and the building was not worthy of listing when the last survey of listed buildings took place in the district prior to its conversion. Having regard to the

Planning Practice Guidance¹, on the basis of the information provided I am not persuaded that the building constitutes a NDHA. It is not clear that the Council's identification of the building as a NDHA is the result of a recognised review process and a sound evidence base. That said, the appeal building is still part of a wider setting, and this is addressed below.

6. Although the building is now a dwelling, it has the appearance of a converted rural barn. Notwithstanding its use of good quality materials, the proposed balcony would appear as an incongruous addition that is not a traditional feature of this type of building. It would detract from its character and appearance, and its visual impact would be exacerbated by the prominent position next to the road. The proposal would be in conflict with the design principles of Policy DM 3.8 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document 2015 ((DMP), which amongst other criteria seeks high quality development that protects and enhances the environment and existing locally distinctive character; and which seeks development of a form and appearance that has a satisfactory relationship of structures and a successful integration into the surroundings.
7. There is roadside planting which would mitigate to a degree the visual impact of the proposal, but it would still be visible in the streetscene and in views from the nearby public footpath. Moreover, planting has a finite lifespan, and the photographs supplied in Appendix 1 to the appellants' statement also demonstrate that the screening effect would vary throughout the year.
8. There is a duty when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Part of the definition of the 'setting of a heritage asset' set out in the glossary to the Framework includes "the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced", and notes that elements of a setting "may affect the ability to appreciate that significance". The glossary also states that 'significance' derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
9. In this context, Yew Tree Farmhouse is set further back from the roadside with a landscaped front garden. I note the appellants' view that the significance of the listed building arises from its age, architectural features and method of construction rather than from its setting or from its relationship with any other buildings nearby. However, the array of buildings to the rear and west of the house form part of the setting within which the building is appreciated and experienced. Although it may not be regarded as a 'curtilage' listed building, the appeal property forms part of a recognisable group of buildings within the setting of the listed dwelling.
10. There would be few vantage points where the proposed balcony would be directly viewed alongside the farmhouse. However, the balcony would introduce an uncharacteristic feature that would undermine the contribution of the appeal building to the group, and in so doing, it would detract from the setting of the listed building. This would conflict with DMP Policy DM 4.10, as it would not sustain a heritage asset or make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, nor preserve the setting of the listed Yew Tree Farmhouse.

¹ Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019

11. Having regard to paragraph 202² of the Framework, I consider the harm that the proposal would have on the significance of Yew Tree Farmhouse would be less than substantial, but there is a requirement for this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Whilst I appreciate the purpose of the balcony, its benefits would be private and would not outweigh the identified harm.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal property, and would not preserve the setting of the adjacent listed building, in conflict with the Framework and DMP Policies DM 3.8 and DM 4.10.
13. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

² This was paragraph 196 of the previous version.