
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2021

by D Hartley BA (Hons) MTP MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/W/21/3267617

Riverside Works, 4 Waterside, Knaresborough HG5 9AZ

- 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 Ashbrooke Developments against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02789/FUL, dated 27 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension to create infill between the valleys of the roof, installation of rooflights and the replacement of roof tiles.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Knaresborough Conservation Area including its effect on the significance of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The appeal property falls within the Knaresborough Conservation Area (CA) and is known as 'Riverside Works'. It was constructed in 1894 following the demolition of five workers cottages and was originally built as a laundry works. It has been put to different uses in more recent years, but its historic original use is evident from the detailing shown across most of the roof slope facing towards the River Nidd in so far that it reads 'Claro Laundry'.
4. The building's significance as a non-designated heritage asset relates to both its historic use, but also in respect of its imposing two steep gables and associated valley roof which is appreciated when viewed from the adjacent park, Long Walk and from Knaresborough High Bridge, particularly in the autumn and winter months when the adjacent tree is without leaf. From Long Walk and Knaresborough High Bridge, the building is seen amongst a cluster of mainly traditional buildings lining the river and from which the stone viaduct, castle and other historic buildings gradually step upwards to higher land.
5. The valley roof makes a distinctive and positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the CA. The roof style is imposing and is seen as a striking and architecturally attractive addition within this urban landscape. I acknowledge that there are variety of different styles of buildings in this part of

the CA. However, that in itself does not justify making harmful alterations to the host building. While there are some exceptions, the buildings in this part of the CA are characterised as having traditional roofing materials and have predominantly unbroken rooflines. The general consistency and simplicity to the use of roof materials and styles add positively to the significance of the CA. While there is not a significant number of valley pitched roofs in the immediate area, it is of note that this arrangement does exist in respect of the building adjacent to Mother's Shippin Cave.

6. In the context of the above, and owing to the scale, position and design of the proposed roof extension to provide a large infill within the valley of the two gabled roofs, the proposal would unacceptably erode the overall significance of this non-designated heritage asset and the positive contribution that it makes to the character and appearance of the CA when considered as a whole. The infill extension would be seen as a contrived, substantial and overly fussy addition to this simple and traditional historic building and would appear incongruous in its wider setting.
7. I acknowledge that the appellant has stepped the infill extension back from gables of the property. Nonetheless, the step back arrangement would not be significant and the roof addition would be very noticeable from public viewpoints, particularly when seen from longer distance views such as Knaresborough High Bridge and parts of Long Walk. The development would also be conspicuous when viewed from the adjacent park and from higher ground when one enters Waterside. The overall effect of this development would be one of unacceptably competing with the simplicity of design afforded by the two pitched gables and associated valley roof.
8. The above harm would be compounded by the fact that it is proposed to install new rooflights in the southern roof-slope facing the river. In the main, and noting that there are some exceptions, one generally appreciates an unbroken roofscape panorama when looking across the collection of buildings from Knaresborough High Bridge.
9. For the above reasons, I therefore find that harm would be caused to the significance of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset and that the development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In the context of paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework), the harm caused to the CA would be less than substantial. It is therefore necessary for me to weigh this harm against any identified public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
10. The evidence indicates that efforts have been made to secure planning permission for an alternative use of the premises and, in particular, residential use. Indeed, the appellant has commented that planning permission was approved in December 2018 for conversion of the building into two residential dwellings¹, although I have not been provided with any details or plans. I do not doubt the appellant's claim that the property was put up for sale at auction and was not sold. However, I do not have any details about the guide price for the property. Furthermore, I am not certain whether investment in repairing the roof as configured now may have the effect of making the property more attractive to the market and hence whether this would bring it back into use.

¹ Planning permission 18/0216/FUL

11. I do accept that that the construction of the infill extension, including a better floorspace flow and head height for the upper part of the building, would likely make the property a more attractive proposition for all uses in market terms. There is therefore potential for the proposed development to result in the building being brought back into use more quickly than if the building was left in its current state from an internal configuration point of view.
12. The appellant states that the property has been marketed over the last 4 years for both commercial and residential purposes but '*there has been little interest*'. In the absence of more specific marketing information from the appellant including say sale/letting prices, interest shown, web site hits, type of marketing carried out etc, I am unable to afford the alleged '*little interest*' in re-using the building in its current form significant weight in the planning balance. A compelling case has not been made by the appellant to demonstrate that the building could not be put to a viable use in its current form, albeit with a repaired roof.
13. On balance, I therefore find that the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the less than substantial harm caused to the character and appearance of the CA and the scale of harm that would be caused to the host property as a non-designated heritage asset. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with the design, conservation and landscape character requirements of policies HP2, HP3 and NE4 of the Harrogate District Local Plan 2020; the Framework; the Knaresborough Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2008, and the Updated Heritage Management Guidance SPD 2017.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, I find that the proposal would not accord with the development plan for the area. There are no material considerations identified which outweigh the conflict with the development plan for area when considered as a whole. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Hartley

INSPECTOR