



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 August 2021

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U2615/Y/20/3257394

St. Johns Cottage, St. Johns Road, Belton, Great Yarmouth NR31 9NS

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Janet McManus against the decision of Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 06/19/0590/LB, dated 14 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 May 2020.
 - The works proposed are Proposed single storey rear garden room extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. This appeal only relates to the refusal of listed building consent, as described in the banner heading above, and does not relate to the refusal of planning permission¹. Furthermore, the application drawing submitted with the appeal², referred to in the Appeal Form, the Heritage Statement and the conditions recommended by the Council, illustrates a scheme for a single storey extension with a pitched roof to the rear of the property. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the scheme shown on that drawing.
3. Listed building appeals are not subject to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Accordingly, they do not need to be determined in accordance with the development plan. This is further confirmed by the lack of a requirement in section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (England) Act 1990 (the Act) to have regard to the development plan when determining applications and appeals for listed building consent. Policies CS9 and CS10 of the Council's Core Strategy³ are therefore a material consideration only. Similarly, the Council has referred to Section 72 of the Act, which confers on the decision maker a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. While this duty applies to listed building appeals, the site does not appear to be situated within a conservation area. It is not therefore appropriate to consider this in my reasoning.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 20 July 2021 (the Framework). The main parties have had the opportunity to comment upon the relevance of any revised content of the Framework and I have had regard to any responses received in my decision.

¹ Planning Reference: 6/19/0589/F.

² Drawing Reference: 1440/1.

³ Great Yarmouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013-2030 (Adopted December 2015).

Main Issues

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building known as 'St Johns Farmhouse'⁴, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, including its setting.

Reasons

Significance and setting

6. The appeal relates to a Grade II listed detached cottage, of early 18th Century origin, arranged on a lobby entrance plan with whitewashed walls beneath a gabled thatch roof. The pattern of the thatching is typically of architectural interest and adds to the visual appeal of the cottage. Similarly, although guttering to thatch roofs is not commonplace, it is a feature of the front and back roof slopes of the listed building and contributes to the understanding of its historical evolution.
7. The windows, doors and porch are generally 20th Century but the pilasters either side of the door remain. These are finished with capitals of two projecting bands, each painted in contrasting black. The listing description alludes to the fact that only one of these remains to the rear. This is present to the eastern side of the double door serving the lounge. The other was seemingly removed when an extension was added to the western side of the two-storey gabled and pantiled cross wing adjacent. There is also an extension to the opposite side of the cross wing. While both sit below its eaves, the kitchen extension protrudes beyond it further into the garden. The extended cross wing is therefore large, to the extent that it competes with and partly obscures the rear façade of the cottage. Nevertheless, much of the rear façade remains evident, which helps to ground the impressive thatch roof above.
8. Despite modern alterations to the listed building, as far as it is relevant to this appeal, its significance today is derived from its architectural and historic interest, as a noteworthy example of an 18th Century cottage in the village. In particular, the ornate thatch roof, pilasters and later guttering ensures that its architecture is decorative.
9. The listed cottage was formerly a farmhouse but is now detached from much of the farm, which remains opposite, and it is enclosed to the south, east, and west by newer residential development. While its setting has changed over time, it is situated within a large maturely landscaped garden which extends to its side and rear. The space that remains around the cottage therefore makes a positive contribution to the historic setting of the cottage, which contributes to its understanding and significance.

Effect of the proposal

10. The proposed extension would cover the remainder of the rear façade of the cottage up to under its eaves. The cottage would therefore be subsumed by the extensions to its rear, which would be harmful to its understanding and significance, particularly the appreciation of its architectural detailing and form. Moreover, the application drawing appears to show the remaining rear pilaster internalised, but it is unclear how this would be retained inside the proposed extension. Similarly, due to the position of the proposed roof, the existing

⁴ The listed building is now known as St Johns Cottage.

wooden guttering and metal brackets would be removed. While these are likely to be more modern replacements, as outlined above, together with the pilaster these features contribute to the historical development of the cottage and, thereby, its understanding and significance. Cogent justification has not been provided for either the removal or manner of retention of these features.

11. The proposed extension would be of brick, with a tile roof, but the south façade would include a large proportion of glazing with six vertical subdivisions incorporating top lights. The west façade would have two similar windows either side of a single door. There would be minimal detailing to the verge and eaves. The form and appearance of the proposal would therefore be more closely affiliated with the existing extensions to the cross wing, rather than the cottage. It would therefore be inharmonious with the character and appearance of the cottage, which contributes to its special interest.
12. Alterations to modern fabric in the existing kitchen extension, including blocking window openings, would not be harmful to the historic fabric or floorplan layout of the listed cottage. I also appreciate that the proposal would only be visible from the rear of the cottage and not from any public viewpoint. Nevertheless, the cottage is listed for its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and the visibility of the proposed works is not a determining factor in considering whether they would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the building.
13. The statutory duty in Section 16(2) of the Act is a matter of considerable importance and weight; and paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that this should have a clear and convincing justification.
14. The proposed extension would complement existing accommodation within the cottage and improve the living environment, whilst also maintaining access into the garden. Although this would better meet the needs of the appellant, this would amount to a private benefit. Moreover, there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest how the proposal is required to sustain the heritage asset. The continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is therefore not dependent on the proposal, as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
15. In accordance with paragraphs 199 and 202 of the Framework, considered together, I conclude that the public benefits I have outlined above do not outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm that I have identified.
16. In light of all of the above, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building. Hence, it would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 189, 197 and 199 of the Framework and conflict with the design and heritage aims of Policies CS9 and CS10 of the Council's Core Strategy.

Other Matters

17. The Framework stresses the benefits of early engagement and of good quality pre-application discussion. The appellant submitted the proposal following pre-application advice. I am mindful that this is not binding and, in any event, I have considered the individual merits of the proposal afresh. Any positive feedback given in respect of any matters does not warrant allowing the appeal.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR