



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 18 November 2021

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th December 2021

Appeal A: APP/Z2830/W/21/3269577

23 Lodge Road, Little Houghton NN7 1AE

- 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 David Perkins against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref S/2020/1872/FUL, dated 6 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is Ground floor rear extension and replace windows and doors.
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Appeal B: APP/Z2830/Y/21/3269580

23 Lodge Road, Little Houghton NN7 1AE

- 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 Mr David Perkins against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref S/2020/1873/LBC, dated 6 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2020.
 - The works proposed are Ground floor rear extension and replace windows and doors.
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Decision

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council has confirmed it is now known as 'West Northamptonshire Council', which replaces South Northamptonshire Council. This does not affect the Development Plan, so I have continued to determine the appeals on the basis of the policies referred to on the Decision Notices.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 20 July 2021 (the Framework). I have had regard to the Framework in my decision and I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party, particularly as the revisions do not alter the policies upon which this appeal turns.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposals would preserve a Grade II listed building, known as '23-29 Lodge Road', and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Little Houghton Conservation Area.

Reasons

Significance and special interest

5. The appeal concerns the most northerly of four cottages on the eastern side of the road, which are Grade II listed together as 23-29 Lodge Road, and situated within the Little Houghton Conservation Area (CA). The cottages probably date from the late 17th or early 18th Century and are of two-storeys, beneath an intricate thatched roof. The front and rear facades are finished in coursed limestone rubble, banded with ironstone. Chimneys are of brick and windows are a mix of timber frames and single glazing with leaded lights or timber glazing bars and lintels over. The ground floor front windows in No 23 are leaded and incorporate narrow frames and metal ironmongery and, at first floor, the casement windows in the original cottage are three-lights with a central externally hinged window.
6. Although the list description primarily focuses on the front of the properties within the listing, it is for identification purposes only and does not form an exhaustive list of the features of the listed building that are of special architectural or historic interest.
7. It is evident that No 23 has been subject of several extensions to the side and rear, most notably through a two-storey addition to the northern flank wall of the cottage. This was set back of the front and rear façades of the cottage and down from its ridge and finished with matching stonework to the front and brickwork to the rear. The roof was clad in clay pantiles and the windows are timber casements. At the rear, a single-storey range has been constructed with two distinct roof heights and diverging material palettes of stone and render. The scale and form of the extensions mean that they are subservient to the listed building and the rear elevation of No 23 remains evident, which contributes to its special interest. During my site visit, I also observed the conservatory constructed to the rear of No 25, which is of a fairly modern design and appearance.
8. Despite modern alterations to the listed building, its significance today is derived from its architectural and historic interest, as a mostly intact row of cottages originating from the late 17th or early 18th Century.
9. In so far as it relates to the appeal, the significance of the CA today lies at least in part in the positive contribution made by the rich legacy of historic structures and the architectural legibility of their built fabric, particularly through the use of natural materials. The buildings therein are generally constructed in limestone and ironstone, which are banded giving a 'striped' effect. Despite variety in the materials and style of window frames, those buildings with historic windows make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. The listed building is a typical example of such a building with stone walls and timber casement windows so therefore makes a significantly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the part of the CA it is situated within and, thereby, its special interest.

The proposals

10. All windows in the property, including those in the modern extension would be replaced with UPVC casement windows. The appellant's Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) suggests that the proposed windows would match the

existing in a conservation style. These would be taken from the cottage range produced by Anglian Windows Ltd, but no scaled drawings or technical information are provided for the proposed windows. It is also proposed to replace the existing door in the modern extension of the building with a vertical panel ledged and braced door constructed of oak and, again, no such details are supplied.

11. The proposed rear extension would be single storey and project out as far as the existing single-storey rear additions and beyond the original side elevation of the cottage partly across the rear façade of the side extension. It would be constructed of Northamptonshire stone, to match the existing property, and incorporate a flat roof which would converge with the roof slopes of the existing rear projections. There would be UPVC bi-fold doors to the side and identical windows to those proposed for the remainder of the cottage.
12. The garden patio area would be extended out further with a retaining wall to the existing ground level of the garden.

Effect of the proposals

13. Although stone would be used in its construction and the proposed extension would incorporate a flat roof to reduce its mass, it would cover much of the remainder of the rear façade of the cottage, up to just under its first-floor windows. The cottage would therefore be largely subsumed by the existing and proposed extensions. Together with the flat roof proposed, the significant extent of stonework would contrast awkwardly with the traditional form, appearance, and floor plan layout of the cottage. It would therefore be harmful to the understanding and significance of the listed building. Conversely, as the proposed extension would be to the rear of the property, it would not be visible from within the street scene or other public areas, so it would preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
14. Most historic windows will illustrate, to a varying extent, the materials, technology, craftsmanship and architecture around the time they were installed. The success of replacement windows therefore depends on their design, profile, size of openings and the extent of glazing. As I outlined above, details of the proposed uPVC replacement windows have not been provided. However, in my experience finish of uPVC windows tends to be uniform, which comes with the manufacturing process, so they lack the finesse and craftsmanship of traditionally constructed timber windows, which age over time. The framing, glazing bars and leading would also likely be incorporated in another form and profile, which would contrast with the existing refined and slender historic windows. As such, it would be readily apparent that proposed windows would be modern uPVC replacements. What is more, traditional ironmongery would also be lost with the proposed replacement windows.
15. The proposal to increase the size of the existing window opening to the lounge to create a doorway would, to a certain extent, be a reversible alteration. However, historic fabric would be lost in the process and there is no cogent justification why these works need to take place, particularly given that two existing door openings from the cottage would be blocked.
16. Removal of the existing historic windows throughout and built fabric at the rear would fail to preserve the listed building or its features of special architectural or historic interest. The cottage is prominently situated at the back edge of the

pavement, so is therefore prominent within the CA. As its significance would be diminished by the loss of historic windows, it follows that the character and appearance of the CA as a whole would be incrementally harmed by this element of the proposal.

17. The principle of the replacement of the modern timber windows and door to the side extension of the cottage would be acceptable and I note that the Council arrived at a similar conclusion. However, no details of either have been provided, other than a written description and confirmation of the potential manufacturer and their type of windows, so it would not be appropriate to agree such details by condition.
18. I note that the extension to No 25 was approved in 2004. I am not aware of the policies that applied at the time but the local and national policy context before me places emphasis on the preservation of heritage assets. Harm that may therefore have been caused previously should not be used to justify a proposal I consider to be harmful to the significance of the listed building.

Public benefits and conclusions on the main issue

19. The statutory duties in Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) are matters of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 197 of the Framework states that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation should be taken into account in determining applications. Meanwhile, paragraph 199 of the Framework also 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.
20. The proposed extension and the associated removal of historic windows and built fabric, would fail to preserve the listed building or its features of special architectural or historic interest. Furthermore, as the special interest of a listed building within the CA would be diminished, the character and appearance of the CA as a whole would be incrementally harmed. In my view the harm that I have identified equates to less than substantial harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets. In such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework identifies that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of proposals.
21. Addressing matters relating to thermal efficiency provided by the proposed UPVC double glazed replacement windows would be of public benefit in environmental terms. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the replacement windows are required to make the building habitable or sustain the heritage asset. The continued viable residential use of the listed building would therefore not be likely to cease in their absence.
22. Due to the siting of the proposed extension and the position of windows, I accept that it would not be likely to have a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, but the absence of harm in respect of such matters would neither weigh in favour or against the proposal.

23. Taking the above together, the public benefits I have outlined above would not justify allowing works and development that would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the CA. Therefore, in accordance with paragraphs 197 and 199 of the Framework, considered together, I am not persuaded that there would be wider public benefits of sufficient magnitude to outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm that I have identified to the significance of the heritage assets.
24. In light of the above, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the proposed windows to the front of the building would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Little Houghton Conservation Area. Hence, the appeal proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 197, 199 and 200 of the Framework and would conflict with the heritage aims of Policies HE5 and HE6 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 and Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (Adopted December 2014).

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeals should not succeed.

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR