



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2022

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/21/3282471

217 Preston Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6BN

- 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 Nicol against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref P/HOU/2021/00917, dated 10 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is to extend dormer to side of property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to extend dormer to side of property at 217 Preston Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6BN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/HOU/2021/00917, dated 10 March 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No 2904:229/001 Rev A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dormer extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dormer.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's reason for refusal refers to paragraphs 193-197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). After the decision, on 20 July 2021, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In the revised version the paragraphs are renumbered 199-203, but otherwise remain unaltered. The appeal timetable has allowed both parties the opportunity to make comments relating to the updated Framework.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling, and whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Sutton Poyntz Conservation Area and the settings of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

4. 217 Preston Road is a detached dwelling that fronts the A353 road, which runs through the settlement. The evidence indicates it to be of 20th Century origin.

It has a single storey eaves line, but the roof is steeply pitched and contains first floor accommodation. The ridge is perpendicular to the road, so the high front gable of the dwelling is a prominent feature in the street scene. It has a flat-roofed garage on its eastern side elevation, and a flat-roofed dormer, which breaks the eaves line, towards the rear of its western side elevation. The building is of no particular architectural or historic interest, unlike the other buildings fronting the road, to either side, which are of much earlier origin.

5. The building immediately to the west, Roman Bridge Cottage, is a Grade II listed building. It is a two-storey, early 18th Century house, with rendered walls and a thatched roof. Within the garden of this house there is a small footbridge, possibly dating from the 16th Century, which crosses the River Jordan, and is separately listed at Grade II. The house to the east, The Old Vicarage, is a Grade II listed late 18th Century stone building with a slate roof. As No 217 is seen in close association with all of these buildings, it forms part of the settings within which they are experienced.
6. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving these listed buildings, or their settings, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
7. The site also lies within the Sutton Poyntz Conservation Area (the CA). I have not been provided with a Character Appraisal describing the significance of the CA, but from what I saw, it lies in its attractive natural setting in the valley of the River Jordan, with a range of historic buildings of rural character. The narrow roads and semi-rural back lanes are a locally distinctive feature. The site, however, lies on the southern edge of the CA, adjacent to the A353, which has a more urban character. Here the significance lies in the line of predominantly historic buildings of various eras that have been developed along this major thoroughfare.
8. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
9. The proposal involves the extension of the existing dormer on the western roofslope towards the road, so that it would be roughly double its existing width. It would be of the same height and design, with similar window proportions and constructed in matching materials. It would, therefore, appear well-related to the existing building.
10. Although the existing dormer is set back beyond the chimney stack, it is, nevertheless, readily visible from the road in front of the dwelling, and when approaching from the west. Its enlargement as proposed, would not increase its prominence from these viewpoints to any great degree, and would not result in it being visible from a significantly wider area. A large expanse of sloping roof would remain above, and around the extended dormer, such that it would retain a subservient appearance, and would not dominate the original roofslope of the building. Consequently, the dormer extension would be appropriate to the architecture of the existing dwelling, and would not harm its character and appearance.
11. The existing dwelling is not historic or rural in character, so does not contribute positively to the overall significance of the CA. It conforms with the general

pattern of development fronting the road in this more urban part of the CA, but its comparatively recent origin and architectural style means that it is a rather discordant feature amongst the more characterful historic buildings to either side. The scale and design of the dormer extension would not significantly alter the character or appearance of the building. Consequently, its contribution to the significance of the CA would be unchanged. The development would, therefore, preserve the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

12. The extended dormer would be seen in juxtaposition with the three listed buildings. From the opposite side of the road, the dwelling is seen alongside The Old Vicarage. The extended dormer would be on the opposite roofslope to the listed building. As it would be set back from the front of the roof, it would be a recessive feature. The large and prominent gable would retain its visual dominance, and there would be no change to the impact that the dwelling has on the setting of The Old Vicarage.
13. Viewed from the west, the roofslope of the dwelling, and the existing dormer, can be seen in close association with Roman Bridge Cottage. The height of the roof, combined with its proximity to the boundary, means that it has a rather dominant relationship over the lower thatched roof of the listed building, and the existing dormer has a rather looming presence, which draws the eye. Consequently, it detracts somewhat from the setting of the listed building. The dormer extension would be further away from Roman Bridge Cottage, and would be largely screened by trees from this westerly viewpoint. Consequently, it would not have the same dominant visual impact, and would not result in any additional harm to the setting of the listed building.
14. The listed footbridge is located to the west of Roman Bridge Cottage, and therefore a greater distance from the proposed development. Furthermore, it is largely screened from view by the significant foliage in the garden of the listed building. Consequently, the development would not harm its setting.
15. In summary, the development would not harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and it would preserve the significance of the CA and the settings of the listed buildings. As there would be no harm to the heritage assets, there is no need to consider the public benefits of the proposal as set out in paragraph 202 of the Framework. I therefore conclude that the development would accord with Policies ENV4 and ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (adopted 2015), which seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets, and ensure that extensions are well-related to the existing dwelling. The proposal would also meet the Framework's aims to achieve well-designed places, and to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Conditions

16. In accordance with the legislation, I have imposed a condition limiting the period within which the development must commence. I have also included a condition specifying the relevant plans, as this provides certainty. The Council has suggested a condition requiring large-scale detailed drawings and sections of the dormer to be submitted for approval. However, this would fail the test of reasonableness, as the submitted drawings clearly show the proposal. A condition requiring that the external materials for the dormer match those of the existing dwelling, is all that is necessary to ensure that the development maintains the character of the existing dwelling.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR