



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2022

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24TH February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/21/3278203

1A-1B The Street, Trowse, Norwich NR14 8SX

- 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 M Manimaran against the decision of South Norfolk Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/0344, dated 12 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2021.
 - The proposed development is to rise roof height to match neighbouring property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the Trowse and Newton Conservation Area and the impact of proposals upon the living conditions of neighbours with regards.

Reasons

3. The appeal property appears to have its origins as a vernacular village building of some age and it appears likely that the existing shop and adjoining cottage pre date the works to improve the village as a 'Model' community by the Colman family from around the late 19th century. The building is cream rendered with pantiles to its primary elevation with a tall central chimney stack and attractive shopfront that appears to date from at least the early 20th century. In light of the building's significance, the appeal property is identified as a Building of Townscape significance within the Trowse and Newton Conservation Area Appraisal.
4. The property sits noticeably lower than its neighbours within what is otherwise a fairly uniform street elevation where most other properties appear of a similar age and style and this is reflected in the proportions and heights of the adjoining buildings. The appeal site however presents a much more modest scale to the street which I consider, along with its existing shopfront, adds considerably to the special architectural and historic character and appearance of this part of The Street.
5. Due to this difference in height and design the Appellants wish to increase the height of the existing property so as to reflect the height and proportions of the neighbouring buildings whilst at the same time allowing extra ceiling height within the upstairs rooms in order to improve the first floor accommodation. In

terms of justification, the Appellant's suggest that the existing ceiling height is too low to offer good enough first floor rooms or to meet current Building Regulations. The proposal would therefore result in the removal of the existing roof in its entirety and the raising of the eaves and ridge. Although revised plans show a slight set down from that as originally proposed, the overall result would be similar.

Impact Upon the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

6. In considering this appeal I am required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 'Special Attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This is reflected in paragraph 189 of The Framework, which illustrates the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to the creation of sustainable and economically viable communities.
7. As mentioned above, the Trowse and Newton Conservation Area is defined by both its vernacular rural village origins as well as its substantial rebuilding by the Philanthropic Colman family in the late 19th century. The form and architectural style of the village therefore contains a mix of both earlier vernacular buildings and those remodelled by the Colman's at a later date. The forms, architectural styles and materials of properties all contribute to the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole as does their relationship to the streets and open spaces that they form part of.
8. I consider that the appeal site is a positive building within the Conservation Area due primarily to both its earlier vernacular character and that of its distinct architectural features including its shop front and indeed its lower scale of eaves and ridgeline that are potentially rare survivals from before the village's remodelling. The fact that this building is set lower than its neighbours is therefore of significance to the Conservation Area as it illustrates the historic development of the village through its architectural style.
9. Although I give some weight to the Appellant's concerns that the upstairs floor would not be useable without this proposal, I have no evidence before me as to whether or not Building Regulations would accept the continued use of these first floor rooms as habitable spaces or whether there would be another solutions to enhance the habitable rooms without resulting in the raising of the roof. I did see on my inspection of the building for instance that there is a flat roof ceiling internally and that the existing roof does not extend to the full height of the building's ridge. There would appear to be the possibility therefore that some modest increase in height could be achieved in other ways so as to improve the first floor accommodation and potentially meet current regulations.
10. In raising the roof height however, altering the building's proportions and losing the existing chimney, the proposal before me would considerably dilute the historic narrative and understanding of the evolution of the village. It would also see the removal of historic features and fabric that I consider are important for the understanding and attractiveness of the Conservation Area as a whole.
11. As such I consider that significant harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area that is not outweighed by the largely

private benefits that would be obtained through improving the ceiling heights within.

12. In light of the reasons above I consider that the proposal before me fails in its duty to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the Trowse and Newton Conservation Area and as such would be contrary to the requirements within Section 16 of the Framework as well as Policy DM 4.10 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document 2015.

Impact of the Proposal Upon the Living Conditions of Neighbours

13. The proposal would see the increase in height of the rear elevation of this building from its current low 'cat slide' roof to a full two storey elevation with new windows facing to the rear. I noticed that most properties along The Street are of a similar two storey scale and that many have first floor windows facing to the rear also. I consider therefore that this increase in scale per se would not necessarily cause harm to the living conditions of neighbours and that a window facing to the rear of the property could be obscured so as to remove any issue of overlooking due to the first floor room being double aspect.
14. Nevertheless, the removal of the low, catslide roof in itself, along with the other harmful changes that I have identified above are sufficient to dismiss this appeal as they cause such harm to the character of the Building of Townscape Significance and ultimately harmfully affect the Conservation Area.
15. Therefore although I find no conflict with Policy DM 3.4 and DM 3.13 of the Local Plan that could not be resolved through appropriate condition, this would not address the harm to the Conservation Area and would still fail to meet the requirements of Policy DM 4.10 above.

Other Matters

16. The Council have included in their reasons for refusal a reason regarding the lack of details with regards the physical impact that the proposals would have upon the historic fabric of the building. I have little evidence before me as to the precise method or nature through which these modifications would be implemented and as such I consider that there could be a potential risk to the fabric of the building. However, I would consider that appropriate conditions could address and give confidence so as to address this reason for refusal were I minded to allow this appeal.
17. As it is however I consider that the proposals cause sufficient harm in any case so as to make this reason for refusal a mute point at this time.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons above, taking into account all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR