



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2022

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/W/21/3288247

32 Richmond Place, Beacon Hill, Bath BA1 5QA

- 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 Margaret Pope against the decision of Bath & North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02688/FUL, dated 7 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two-storey rear extension above an existing extension at lower ground floor level.
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Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/Y/22/3294484

32 Richmond Place, Beacon Hill, Bath BA1 5QA

- 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 Margaret Pope against the decision of Bath & North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02689/LBA, dated 7 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2021.
 - The works proposed are erection of a two-storey rear extension above an existing extension at lower ground floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. 32 Richmond Place is a mid-terrace dwelling within the circa 1825 Grade II listed building 30-39 Richmond Place and is inside both the City of Bath Conservation Area (CA) and the City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS). In that context, the main issue to be considered is the effect of the proposals on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and, linked to that, whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Furthermore, their impacts on the WHS need to be considered.

Reasons

3. Amongst other features, the listed building draws significance from its exposed or rendered limestone ashlar walls and its principally single depth plan. There is a uniformity about the terrace but there are also moments of embellishment in its detail which individualise each home. I am informed by the list description that the terrace had rear outshuts, but these have typically been modified or replaced with taller, modern extensions. Overall, this is a characterful, artisan terrace of subtly distinct homes that together contribute well to the character and appearance of the CA and the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS.

4. No 32 is distinct in that most of its rear elevation is bare and unextended. At its ground level is a small modern extension which I understand is a remodelling of previous built form and which has an aesthetic akin to a traditional outshut. As one of the unrendered elevations of the terrace, No 32's rear showcases the ashlar, and it also contains an opening housing a small sash window which appeared to me, at least in part, likely original. I also noticed the wall to have a gentle crook which turns past and provides delicate definition to the apparent remnants of an integral chimney, the stack of which breaks the eaves.
5. Thus, whilst I agree that No 32 is an anomaly in eluding significant extension, I find its rear elevation to nonetheless convey individual aspects of evidential value and historic interest, and to make a contribution to the significance of this somewhat varied listed building and, in turn, the CA and the WHS.
6. I appreciate that the extension would read as a fairly subservient addition and that its design may compare favourably to less refined enlargements that have taken place along the terrace. However, the scheme would further remove the terrace from its original plan and truncate the form of No 32's lower ground floor element which, although not original, is a visual cue to the outshuts that once punctuated the building. An expanse of ashlar would be subsumed into the extension, and legibility of the chimney, and the wall's characterful crook, would be reduced. There would also be a degree of historic fabric loss, including ashlar wall, part of an original opening and the window joinery.
7. The development/works would therefore detract, albeit modestly, from the significance of the listed building and its role within the CA and WHS. I do not prescribe to the argument that this harm can be justified or excused by the absence of public views along the rear elevation of the terrace.
8. However, given the limited impact of the development/works, I would quantify the harms to the designated heritage assets affected as less than substantial. Nevertheless, Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) explains that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 202 goes on to require decision makers to weigh any less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset against the public benefits of the scheme, including securing its optimum viable use.
9. That balancing exercise must take place in the context of s.16(2), s.66(1), and s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which set a strong presumption against a grant of planning permission or listed building consent for development or works that would cause harm to the special interest of a listed building and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.
10. The scheme would rebalance the house's ratio of bedroom to living space, which may secure its long-term demand and therefore maintenance, and would also promote health and well-being, and a higher standard of amenity for the existing occupant. However, whilst the current layout is not to the appellant's satisfaction or family requirements, these may not be circumstances shared by future occupants. As such, the weight I attach to these potential public benefits is limited and does not justify the harms that would arise, which must each be given considerable importance and weight in the balancing exercise.
11. These findings also bring the scheme into conflict with the respective design and heritage aims of Policies D2, D5 and HE1 of The Placemaking Plan for Bath

and North East Somerset (adopted 2017) and also Policies B4 and CP6 of the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy (adopted 2014).

Conclusion

12. For these given reasons, and taking all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones
INSPECTOR