



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2022

by E Worthington BA (Hons) MTP MUED MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/Y/21/3282940

The Grange Barrowby, Low Road, Barrowby, Grantham, NG32 1DL

- 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 Simon and Jayne Brodie against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S21/0691, dated 6 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2021.
 - The works proposed are described as 'Replacement porch extension, replacement windows to the east elevation and replacement roof to the north elevation.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. As the proposed works relate to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building, The Grange and adjoining boundary wall and stable, Low Road (Ref: 1265079) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is a large house dating to 1656, with a number of additions including those dating to around 1715 and the late 19th century. Built of stone and brick over two storeys with rooms in the roof, its various sections span an impressive nine window range and its linear form is situated on the main road hard up to the back edge of the pavement. To the east the building has an extensive lawned garden with mature trees and countryside beyond. The various stages of its development are also evident on the building's eastern elevation which displays a number of features including a canted brick bay window with parapet and a shallow two storey stone bay window.
 5. Despite its later additions and various stages of development, the building maintains an attractive rural grandeur with distinctive architectural features, detailing, openings, and proportions. Thus, its historic form and function as an
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impressive rural residence, as well as its evolution over time and considerable charm is still clearly legible.

6. From the evidence before me, insofar as it relates to this appeal, I therefore find that the special interest of the listed building is drawn from its distinctive architectural design and proportions, its detailing and features, including its characteristic openings and the spaces between them, as well as the use of traditional materials.
7. The proposal includes works to replace some of the windows at the southern end of the building's east elevation and the roof tiles at its northern end. Whilst the Council raises no objections to these works, it is concerned about the porch that is also proposed. This would replace the existing porch on the building's east elevation which dates to the 19th century. It is built in stone with a double pitched and gable roof and a central half glazed timber door. The Council raises no objection to its removal, and finds that it does not have a significant or positive impact on the character and appearance of the building.
8. That said, the existing porch is modest in size and despite being an obviously later addition is generally in-keeping with the host building and does not actively detract from it. Moreover, it does not unduly interrupt the appreciation of the building's eastern elevation, upset the proportions of that façade or compete visually with the other characteristic features there.
9. In contrast the replacement porch proposed would be much larger and more obvious. Although it would not protrude forward of the limestone gable element of the building at its northern end, it would project a good deal further forward from the building than the existing porch. Whilst it would sit between the French doors to the south and the brick quoin detailing to the north, it would be considerably wider than the existing porch. Additionally despite being the same height as the pitch of the roof of the existing porch, due to its flat roof design, it would be a much more considerable and bulky addition.
10. This being so, whilst the historic fabric of the building would be retained behind the proposed porch, it would cover a much greater extent of this part of the building's eastern façade at ground floor level and obscure more of the historic fabric than is currently the case. It would also bring development closer to the French doors immediately to the south and the first floor window above and thereby infringe upon the existing spacing between those openings. This would appear at odds with the generally more generous spacing of the openings on this part of the building and result the porch appearing somewhat cramped and squeezed in. Thus the proposal would undermine the existing proportions created by the arrangement of the openings on this part of the façade.
11. I accept that the distance that would be maintained between the top of the porch and the first floor window above would be similar to that between the adjacent canted brick bay window feature and the window above it. However, that existing feature sits within a different section of the appeal building and the windows above it form part of the roof. As such, it is seen within a particular and distinct context and does not form part of the pattern of openings on that part of the building that would accommodate the appeal proposal.

12. I acknowledge that the use of brick and glazing, timber frames, cast aluminium rainwater pipes, low brick plinth feature, brick detailing and cornice style moulding to the parapet, along with the symmetrical glazing arrangement of the proposed porch are intended to reflect and tie in with the main building. Even so, although it would not be as tall or wide as the adjacent canted brick bay window feature, or the stone bay window beyond further to the north, the proposed porch would nevertheless be a significant addition that would appear as a large and dominating feature on the property's characterful eastern elevation. Due to its form and scale it would also compete visually with the other distinctive features on this elevation and detract from their prominence. This would be so despite its design being in the style of an orangery.
13. Taking all these factors into account, even appreciating that the building has been extended and altered over time, I find that the proposal would be an unsympathetic and over-dominant addition that would conflict with the architectural form and proportions of the listed building. It would appear as an unwelcome intrusion that would conceal more of the remaining extent of its historic fabric than is currently the case and distract from the existing important architectural features there. This being so it would impair its historic legibility and fail to preserve its special interest.
14. In coming to this view I appreciate that the proposal would not undermine the property's relationship or connection with its grounds or the countryside beyond, or unduly interrupt views from the building out towards the gardens. Nor would it impinge on its cultural relationship with the village or the people of Barrowby. However, this does not alter the harm to the listed building that I have described.
15. I am also mindful that the proposed porch would not be visible from the road or in the street scene and would not be appreciated from any public rights of way. However, the fact that the rear of the building is not widely visible does not affect my conclusions. Listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposed works would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the balance of this appeal.
17. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises at paragraph 199 that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. I consider that the harm to the listed building in this case would be less than substantial, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
18. Paragraph 202 of the Framework requires that less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

19. The proposal would make the property more accessible. I understand that the appellants have health and mobility issues that may necessitate the use of a wheelchair/crutches in the future. The alignment of the doors and the layout of the porch would provide sufficient space for a temporary ramp to be installed in the future if it is required (in order to overcome the difference in levels between the finished floor level of the porch and that of the house). Space to park a wheelchair and allow the use of crutches would also be provided. Additionally the proposal would facilitate easier access to outside to allow exercise and would 'futureproof' the building. I appreciate that the Framework seeks to achieve places which are safe and accessible, and that Historic England¹ recognises the balance to be struck between conservation and access in historic buildings. These are benefits of the proposal.
20. That said, whilst the appellants consider that this doorway is the only one that is suitable for modification to provide wheelchair access, I am conscious that the property has other doorways and have seen no evidence to demonstrate why these have been discounted, or why the addition of a porch is needed to make the property accessible. As such, an alternative means of access to meet the appellants' stated future needs cannot be ruled out.
21. Although the appellants refer to the optimal viable use of the building, I have seen nothing to suggest that the residential use of the property would cease in the absence of the appeal scheme.
22. As such, whilst benefits would arise to the appellants from the appeal proposal, they are limited by the factors considered above, and are in any event substantially personal benefits only.
23. I therefore find that the public benefits in this case would be insufficient to outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset that I have identified. For these reasons the proposed works would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 197 of the Framework. Whilst the decision notice refers to policies in the South Kesteven Local Plan I am mindful that listed building appeals are not subject to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and so do not need to be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matters

24. The appeal building is also within the Barrowby Conservation Area. The impact of the proposed works on the Conservation Area, or any other listed buildings nearby, is not a reason for refusal and I have seen no objections from the Council in this respect. Nevertheless, this does not alter my view as to the impact of the works on the listed building.
25. The Council raises no objections to the proposed works in terms of their impact on neighbouring occupants, and I am satisfied that they would not lead to the undue loss of any private amenity space. However, the absence of harm in these regards counts neither for, nor against the proposal.
26. The appellants regard the proposal to be reflective of additions to similar listed properties. No further details have been provided and I am unable to determine whether those works and the circumstances under which they were approved are similar to the appeal scheme. I also appreciate that the proposal

¹ Easy Access to Historic Buildings June 2015

follows the refusal of a previous application to the Council and includes a lowered roof height. I note that the appellants were unable to discuss the proposal with the Council's Conservation Consultant. Additionally I am aware that there is support for the proposal from the Barrowby Parish Council.

27. Be that as it may, I confirm that I have considered the proposed works on their own merits and made my own assessment as to their potential impacts. Accordingly, these matters add no weight in favour of the appeal proposal.
28. As set out above, the appellants have health and mobility issues that may necessitate the use of a wheelchair/crutches in the future. The proposal is intended to provide a new accessible entrance and porch to the building. In this context, I have had regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to which I am subject. Section 149 (7) of the Act sets out the relevant protected characteristics which include age and disability. Since there is the potential for my decision to affect a person(s) with a protected characteristic(s) I have had due regard to the three equality principles set out in Section 149 (1) of the above Act.
29. The negative impact of dismissing the appeal arises since the house would not be provided with the porch extension as sought. However, these impacts are mitigated by the possibility of an alternative scheme to meet the appellants' stated needs. As such, in my view the adverse impacts of dismissing the scheme on those with protected characteristics would be proportional having regard to the legitimate and well-established planning policy aims to protect heritage assets. Even when taken alongside the other considerations forwarded by the appellants, the PSED considerations would not outweigh the harm I have identified in this case.

Conclusion

30. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all the other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Worthington

INSPECTOR