



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022

by Hollie Nicholls FdA MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2022

Appeal A Ref: APP/U1105/W/21/3288154

Brampford House, Brampford Speke, Exeter EX5 5DW

- 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 Miss Sophie Watkiss against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01612/FUL, dated 8 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey sun room, with retractable glass windows, and pocket doors.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/U1105/W/21/3288966

Brampford House, Brampford Speke, Exeter EX5 5DW

- 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 Miss Sophie Watkiss against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01980/LBC, dated 8 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2021.
 - The works proposed are a single storey sun room, with retractable glass windows, and pocket doors.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

3. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and the same scheme. The remit of each regime is different, and the main issues below relate either to the planning appeal (Appeal A), or the listed building appeal (Appeal B), or both. To reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision letter.

Main Issue

4. The main issues, common to both appeals, are whether the proposed works and development would preserve the Grade II listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, and whether the character and appearance of Brampford Speke Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

Significance and special interest

5. The Grade II listed building known as Brampford House and Flanking Brick Walls is a handsome detached dwelling that dates from the early 19th century and features with stucco walls, slate roof, and traditional multi-pane sash windows. The statutory list description (List Entry Number: 1097615) identifies Brampford House as early 19th century with small 20th century single-storey extension to right hand end, irregular fenestrated right-hand elevation reflecting office and service rooms and a largely intact interior.
6. The significance and special interest of the listed building stems from its Classically inspired architectural aesthetic and detailing that denotes its origins as a relatively high status Georgian dwelling. Significance also comes from the listed buildings historic integrity, informed by legibility of the internal layout and balanced plan form, material treatment and historic fabric. Brampford has been extended over time, including through addition of a 'sunroom' and 'loggia' off its southern elevation. While of no particular architectural or historic merit, the extensions are relatively low key and unobtrusive. The relative modestly scaled extensions mean they do not compete with the proportions and balanced form of the principal listed building and thus have preserved its special interest.
7. Standing within spacious gardens enclosed by brick walls, the listed building lies roughly centrally within the Brampford Speke Conservation Area (CA). The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal, (1999) (CAA) indicates that the CA designation encompasses many vernacular buildings which date back to between C16 to the mid-C19 in a loosely grouped linear and attractively spacious village settlement. The agricultural influences are evident within and around the village, with a large area of agricultural land extending beyond Brampford House to the River Exe and separating the two ends of the village. The special interest and significance of the CA therefore stems from its tapestry of vernacular buildings within a verdant rural village, as well as the historic integrity and historic interest of individual buildings.
8. Brampford House is thus integral part of the village, being a notable example of a locally-significant early 19th century dwellings that forms part of the built backcloth and historic evolution of the CA. Thus, the appeal dwelling makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and thereby its significance and special interest.

The proposals

9. The appeal scheme proposes to add a pool room, which would extend from an existing sun room that was added to the building's southern elevation in the early 2000s. The proposed pool room extension would be a substantially large appendage to the side of the house, projecting more than half of the width of the original house and would substantially unbalance its form. Whilst much of the extension would have a flat roof so as to be lower than the level of the flanking wall, the proposed domed roof feature at the end would clearly breach the height of the flanking wall. The overall scale and form of the proposed extension would cause it to appear incongruous, detracting from the careful balance and symmetry. The proposed works and development would

substantially alter the listed building's overall form, layout and appearance and would therefore weaken its historic integrity.

10. Harm to significance does not depend on visibility, even so, the proposal would be visible from the rear and side, as well as from the front garden above the flanking wall at times of low leaf cover.
11. I therefore consider that the proposed works and development would cause harm and consequently fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, contrary to the expectations of Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (the Act).
12. Through diminishing the historic integrity of the listed building's form and appearance, something of the integral contribution it makes to the CA's interest as an example of a C19 Classically-inspired dwelling would be undermined. Consequently, the significance and special interest of the CA as a whole would not be preserved by the proposals but rather, albeit in a small way, harmed. Conflict therefore also arises with section 72(1) of the Act.
13. In the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and considering the scale and nature of the proposals, I consider the degree of harm to the significance of the listed building and the CA separately as a designated heritage assets would, in each case, be less than substantial. In circumstances where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 202 of the Framework requires the harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing [the asset's] optimum viable use.

Heritage and Planning Balance

14. The proposal would represent some investment in the fabric of the listed building and realise some economic benefits, largely associated with the construction phase. In the main, however, the benefits of the scheme would be associated with maximising living and storage space, and natural light. In the main, these benefits would accrue to the appellant and benefits to an individual's 'living experience' would not be of wider public benefit. The use of sympathetic matching materials and that no historic fabric or material would be affected are neutral aspects of the proposals, which do not carry any weight as public benefits. There is no indication that the works and development are necessary to ensure the optimum viable use of Brampford House, or ensure its ongoing conservation or preservation, bearing in mind it is a generously sized single-family dwelling that appears in good condition.
15. Taken together, I attribute the sum of public benefits associated with the proposals to carry limited weight in its favour. On the other hand, even less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, in each case, carries considerable importance and weight. Even cumulatively, the sum of public benefits of the proposals would not be of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm identified to the listed building and CA as individual designated heritage assets. The proposals therefore conflict with the heritage protection policies of the Framework.
16. For these reasons, conflict also arises with Policies D1, EN8 and EN9 of the East Devon Local Plan (adopted 2016) which collectively seek to ensure that the scale, massing, density, height, fenestration and materials of buildings relate

well to their context, demonstrate an understanding of the potential impacts on the significance of the heritage asset, and where development and works would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, requiring it to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. I do not find there to be material considerations that indicate that Appeal A be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

17. For these given reasons, and taking all other matters raised into account, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR