



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 September 2023

by Mark Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1570/W/22/3302680

Quendon White House, Cambridge Road, Quendon, Essex CB11 3XJ

- 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 R White against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/22/0949/FUL, dated 1 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'change of use of Quendon White House into five residential dwellings'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1570/Y/22/3302685

Quendon White House, Cambridge Road, Quendon, Essex CB11 3XJ

- 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 Mr R White against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/22/1039/LB, submitted on 11 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2022.
 - The works proposed are described as 'conversion of Quendon White House into five apartments'.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site relates to Quendon White House¹, which is a Grade II listed building in the Quendon and Rickling Conservation Area. Accordingly, I have borne in mind my statutory duties in respect of sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. Two different versions of the proposed floor plans² were submitted at the start of the appeals. One set shows alterations in blue, whereas the other shows alterations in both blue and pink. The appellant has requested that the latter set is taken into account, but it has not been confirmed that the Council made its decisions based on those plans. In any event, the differences between the two sets are negligible, with one showing a few new walls in slightly different locations to the other. The appellant has also submitted a new drawing³ at appeal. However, this principally annotates the blue and pink set of floor plans and does not seek to alter the scheme, aside from clarifying that acoustic and fire insulation is proposed, which is a matter that is in the scope of conditions. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the blue and pink set of floor plans and

¹ Identified in the statutory list as 'Coach and Horses Inn'; List Entry Number: 1275765

² Drawing references: 219203 PL 01 100 and 219203 PL 01 101

³ Drawing reference: 221233 PL 01 102

the new drawing can be taken into account, and that no prejudice would arise to any party in doing so. I have therefore determined the appeals on that basis.

4. The descriptions of the proposed development and works in the above heading are taken from the application forms. Although the descriptions differ, and notwithstanding the matters regarding the drawings discussed above, the scheme is the same for both the planning appeal (Appeal A) and listed building consent appeal (Appeal B). While the legal regimes for the appeals are different, I have dealt with both together in this letter to avoid repetition.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether or not the proposed development and works would preserve the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and whether or not the character or appearance of the conservation area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

6. Quendon White House was originally an inn, has previously been operated as a hotel, and is now a single dwelling. It is located in the rural and predominantly linear village of Quendon. It faces Cambridge Road in a prominent and elevated position due to significant level changes across its large site, which otherwise includes garden land, open space, and vehicular access and parking areas and features agricultural land to its rear.
7. According to the statutory list description, the building dates from the late 16th century, although documents held by the Essex Record Office suggest it may have been constructed in the 17th century. Its historic core is timber framed, which is evident in exposed posts, beams and studwork internally. However, it has been subject to considerable interventions over time, with some of the earliest including the refacing of its façade in brick, which is divided into bays by pilasters and includes traditional sash windows, and the addition of a double storey canted bay at its southernmost end. Based on the evidence provided, extensions to its rear were constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries; and a substantial cross-wing, which principally provided hotel rooms and features a canted bay to echo the other one, was also added around the 1980s.
8. The resulting building is substantial and has a prevailing Georgian façade that is almost symmetrical. Evidence of its former hotel use is most readily apparent both internally and externally due to the building's scale, layout and fixtures, but the inn use is nevertheless legible, with a bar area and rooms above in its historic core, despite clearly being modern features.
9. I consider that the special interest and significance of the building, insofar as relevant to the appeals, is derived from its considerable age, construction and surviving fabric, especially its timber framed core, together with its former use as an inn. The interventions to its façade are also important contributors to the architectural and historic value of the building that are indicative of the success of the inn. Additionally, the façade and position of the building relative to the road are telling of the importance of the inn to the village historically, and thus add to its special interest and significance.

10. The conservation area includes much of the village. It features buildings of differing ages, sizes and styles that are predominantly in residential use and reflect the vernacular of settlements in the Essex countryside. According to the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal⁴, it has changed relatively little over the last century notwithstanding some modern infilling. I consider that the special interest and significance of the conservation area as a whole stems in large part from the richness, quality and architectural variety of the buildings within it, and its countryside setting. Quendon White House is one of the more substantial and prominent historic buildings in the village and thus adds to the quality and variety of the conservation area. Further, the size and partly open nature of the site strengthens the village's association with the surrounding countryside. The site and the listed building therefore both contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole.
11. Internally, the scheme entails alterations to subdivide the building into five dwellings principally by means of the removal of existing fabric, the infilling of openings and new studwork. Insulation is also proposed between the units. The exterior of the building would be unchanged except where infilled windows would be reopened to match others in the façade, but the garden and vehicular access and parking areas would be altered to provide communal amenity spaces and allocated parking.
12. The first floor room identified as proposed Unit 1 is currently a large open space that has a partially exposed roof structure including a clearly historic wall plate with framing above it. The drawings indicate that new stud wall is proposed adjacent to the wall plate and framing and at one point would traverse them at 90 degrees, to provide a separate bedroom and bathroom. New stud walls would also be adjacent to and intersect a beam at the entrance to the room to provide a landing area. No details have been provided regarding how the new walls would attach to or otherwise affect the beams and timber framing in this room. Any cutting through or attachment to the beams and framing would damage historic fabric forming part of the building's core. Even if the beams were not cut through and the stud walls were not attached to the framing, those new walls would at least partly conceal the timber frame. Either way, the scheme would reduce the legibility of the method by which the building was originally constructed, and thus harm its significance. In addition, there are no firm details to indicate where the utilities and ventilation services to the bathroom would be located nor how the wall surfaces would be finished to protect from moisture given that a bath and shower would be included.
13. Additionally, based on the evidence before me, there would be a harmful loss of fabric to the building's historic core through the removal of walls in the area shown as a kitchen for proposed Unit 2. Furthermore, the infilling of a door and the insertion of a new wall to separate Unit 1 from Units 2 and 4 would effectively split the core into two internally disconnected sections, and adversely affect the legibility of the plan form and phasing of the building as a consequence.
14. The removal, addition and alterations of walls elsewhere in the building would seemingly affect newer fabric and would not further comprise its layout. In addition, there are no obvious reasons why insulation of the building could not be controlled satisfactorily by conditions. Moreover, the proposed reopening of

⁴ Quendon and Rickling Conservation Area Appraisal and Draft Management Proposals, 2015

the two infilled windows, the replacement of existing 20th century internal doors with sensitive alternatives and the reinstatement of details such as fireplace surrounds, taken individually, would be small positive enhancements to the building. I also note that permission and consent have been granted several times for more alterations to the building, including for its conversion into two dwellings, a hotel and offices. However, harm to the special interest and significance of the building would nonetheless arise due to the issues identified.

15. The internal alterations would not be readily perceptible externally. The proposed landscape arrangement would be largely reflective of the site currently, with the extent of existing and proposed hard surfacing similar. Whilst retaining walls would be used to address the site's level changes, these would enable landscaped terraces to be provided. A footpath would split the garden into two communal amenity spaces, but no boundary treatments are proposed to otherwise separate or enclose these spaces. Subject to the approval of a satisfactory planting scheme and levels drawings, I am satisfied that the scheme would reflect the rural setting of the building and its surroundings without creating an undue sense of subdivision across the site. Moreover, for these reasons, the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole would be preserved in line with section 72(1) of the Act.
16. Drawing the above together, the scheme would fail to preserve the listed building and the features of special architectural and historic interest which it possesses, in conflict with sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impacts to the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Having regard to the nature of the scheme and the impacts on the significance of the listed building, the harm would be less than substantial in the terms of the Framework. In such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits including, where appropriate, securing an asset's optimum viable use.
17. The scheme would result in a net increase of four dwellings at the site, which would bring about notable public benefits given that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, particularly if I were to accept the appellant's supply figure of 3.52 years. Additionally, the Council does not dispute that that the site is previously developed land in walking distance of services, facilities and public transport options, and that the occupiers would support the vitality of rural settlements by spending on and engaging with local amenities. Public benefits derive from these considerations. There would also be some limited economic benefits associated with the construction process.
18. The reopening of the windows, replacement of internal doors and reinstatement of details such as fireplace surrounds would be small enhancements and thus their weight as public benefits would be modest. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the scheme must come forward in the proposed form for viability reasons, or that the harm to the historic core of the building could not be avoided through an alternate room layout. Consequently, I do not consider that the scheme would secure the optimum viable use of the building.
19. Overall, whilst the sum of the public benefits is appreciable, this is insufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that even the less than

substantial harm to the significance of the listed building carries. The scheme thereby conflicts with the heritage policies within section 16 of the Framework. Furthermore, although the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out by paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is applicable due to the Council's housing supply position, the Framework's heritage policies provide clear reasons for refusing the development proposed. Consequently, the Framework does not indicate in favour of the scheme.

20. The scheme conflicts with policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (LP), which seek to protect listed buildings. However, I find no conflict with LP policy ENV1, which relates to conservation areas. The Council also alleges that the scheme conflicts with LP policy GEN2, but this refers to the compatibility of development with surrounding buildings and I have found no harm in that regard. Nevertheless, for the above reasons, I consider that the scheme conflicts with the development plan as a whole.

Conclusions

21. The scheme would harm the special interest and significance of the Grade II listed building, in conflict with the Act, the Framework and the development plan. Moreover, for the purposes of Appeal A, material considerations do not outweigh the proposed development's conflict with the development plan as a whole.
22. For the reasons given and having regard to all matters raised, both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

Mark Philpott

INSPECTOR