



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2023

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G2713/Y/23/3318516

Crawford House, Long Street, Easingwold, North Yorkshire YO61 3JB

- 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 Dr Frank Kirk against the decision of Hambleton District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02720LBC, dated 28 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2023.
 - The works proposed are described as retrospective listed building consent for new drive surface, brick gate piers supporting a pair of hung wrought iron gates and a single pedestrian gate and two reclaimed cast iron fall pipes on the front elevation and additional fall pipe on the north elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Preliminary Matters

2. Listed building consent¹ and planning permission² were granted on 20 January 2004 for construction of a two storey ancillary building to form a double garage and store at Crawford House. The approved plans indicate the driveway to be finished in Tees Scoria paving bricks (or similar approved) with new gate piers and gates, flush with the front building elevations, finished in York handmade brick with stone dressings and wrought iron gates. Notwithstanding the details on the plans, condition No 2 imposed on both permissions requires that, prior to development commencing, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces shall be approved by the local planning authority.
3. In correspondence dated 5 March 2004, the Council approved the use of York Handmade Hunsingore bricks, Stanton Buff Stone and Goxhill Old English pantiles. However, while the gate piers have been finished in the approved brick and stone, their siting is not in accordance with the approved plans. Moreover, the driveway, which appears substantially complete, has not been finished in Tees Scoria brick and no alternative materials have been approved.
4. At the time of my visit, I observed the driveway, gate piers and the cast iron fall pipes. However, the wrought iron gates had not been hung. Therefore, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans as well as my own observations.
5. The appellant considers that the works do not need listed building consent. Nevertheless, the appeal is against a refusal to grant listed building consent and I have determined it accordingly.

¹ ref 2/03/041/0408J

² ref 2/03/041/0408H

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the development would preserve the setting of a Grade II listed building "Crawford House" (ref 1314978).

Reasons

7. Crawford House listed building (the LB) dates from the late 18th to early 19th century, when it was constructed by Thomas Crawford as a dwelling in association with his horse-drawn carrier business, stables and cart sheds. It is a substantial detached Georgian dwelling, finished in brown brick with stucco detailing. It has a well-proportioned frontage with full height canted bays and large sash windows to either side of a full height round-arched recess with an elevated central entrance with jamb lights and an ornate radial fanlight. In contrast, the rear and return elevations are relatively simple and unadorned.
8. The LB is prominently sited on Long Street, this being one of the character areas of Easingwold Conservation Area. It is a wide historic thoroughfare with a strong, cohesive character that is derived from a well-preserved, common palette of materials comprising red brick and pantiles. The mixed frontage of modest vernacular buildings is interspersed with higher status buildings, such as Crawford House, and is punctuated by access points to the rear of the plots that front onto Long Street.
9. In tandem with the historic expansion and evolution of Easingwold, the setting of Crawford House has changed over time. Notably, the former commercial premises and buildings to the north and the agricultural land to the rear have been developed for housing. The neighbouring modern buildings are sympathetic to the historic built environment in terms of their appearance and general arrangement. Irrespective of this fact, I find that the large residential plot including walled garden, access from Long Street and the open yard area to the rear, and the open views around the LB, which comprise its setting, contribute to its special interest as a prominent high status provincial townhouse formerly associated with the Crawford family and their business.
10. The reclaimed cast iron fall pipes to the front elevation drain rainwater from the top of the canted bays and they discharge onto the footway. The fall pipe to the north elevation drains the roof and it discharges into a sewer. Although not original, they are more appropriate than the plastic rainwater goods they replaced and consequently beneficial to the special interest.
11. The driveway to the side and rear of the LB has been finished predominantly in pale grey granite setts. These are regularly arranged with large rectangular blocks of square setts delineated by pale narrow bands. Small irregular areas between the blocks and the northern boundary, including the recessed side elevation of the neighbouring building, have been filled with some of the cobbles excavated from the former driveway. The cobbled areas are limited in extent and set away from the LB. Neither they nor the variation in the colour of the granite setts disguise the contemporary regimented appearance of the driveway resulting from its extent, overall colour, and its uniformity in terms of the shape, size, surface and geometric arrangement of the granite setts.
12. The extensive granite driveway contrasts starkly with the mellow mottled brick of the LB, neighbouring buildings and walls, and the darker and more muted grey of the footway. It is a visually obtrusive feature that draws the eye away

from the LB. The driveway has a severe and uncompromising appearance that does not harmonise with the LB, neighbouring buildings or wider streetscene. Taking into account the nature of granite and that the setts have been reclaimed following their use elsewhere, it seems unlikely that their appearance would weather further or soften sufficiently to integrate the driveway into its surroundings. Consequently, the driveway fails to make a positive contribution to the setting of Crawford House thus eroding its special interest.

13. Prior to the works, the driveway was in a poor state of repair, the tarmac having been excavated on a number of occasions. This includes works associated with the neighbouring residential development and the installation of services to the rear garage and store. Even so, the former driveway was apparently tarmac laid over cobbles with little to indicate the historic use of granite, which is not a local or traditional building material in this area. Where granite has been used in Easingwold, it appears mostly as small-scale contrasting interventions in the public domain with darker granite in conjunction with other surfacing materials including tarmac, concrete, cobbles and grass. There is little evidence of its large-scale use in private driveways.
14. Conversely, building materials such as local stone, river cobbles and Tees Scoria bricks are traditional and visually appropriate in Easingwold. I accept that cobbles and Scoria bricks might not provide a safe walking surface for the appellant and that Scoria brick is not, in any case, available. However, while Scoria brick was proposed as part of the previously approved scheme, it is not specified by the Council. Instead, the Council considers that a combination of traditional stone, for vehicle and pedestrian pathways, with cobbled surface elsewhere would respect the local vernacular and the setting of the LB. There is little evidence that alternative solutions to the large-scale use of granite, such as this, were explored and discounted.
15. The gate piers are conspicuously large and tall structures and, while their brick finish may match the garage building to the rear of the site, it does not match either the LB or the neighbouring building. The painted ornamental metal gates would also be substantially large and more imposing than the former metal gates. While brick piers and wrought iron gates may be commensurate with a very small number of higher status buildings in Easingwold, there is no evidence before me to suggest that any such gates were previously present. If anything, evidence suggests that they would not be in keeping with the historic gateway that served Thomas Crawford's carrier business. As such, they are an inauthentic addition to the building's curtilage. Moreover, there would be a cumulative adverse effect on the setting of the LB as the gates and piers would be seen in the context of the extensive granite driveway and the overall lack of visual harmony would not be sympathetic to the LB.
16. Three metal-covered sockets have been installed in the driveway, forward of the gate piers. These would enable the use of removable metal parking posts to prevent vehicles turning in the driveway and potentially damaging the gates and piers. While they might not be permanently in place, contemporary parking posts would be out of keeping with the LB, and nearby residential buildings. Parking posts were used in the past to separate the open side of Crawford House from the neighbouring commercial premises and car park. However, this does not provide a justification for their use in the altered setting and where there is little evidence that turning vehicles would conflict with the access.

17. The proposal would fail to contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The extent, contemporary design and colour of the granite driveway jars with the LB and, in combination with other elements including the parking posts and gate piers, it would visually compete with and it would detract from the views of the LB. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the LB. Taking into account the scale and nature of the proposal, I find the harm to be less than substantial but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
18. In such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The rainwater goods function to protect and conserve the historic fabric of the LB and are a beneficial feature that enhances the special interest, which is a public benefit. While the prudent use of natural resources does contribute towards sustainable development, the re-use of the granite setts, reclaimed from Sheffield city centre, would be a limited public benefit in terms of resource use efficiency and carbon emissions given the limited scale of the development. Similarly, the visual improvement arising from the replacement of the previous driveway is only a limited public benefit in terms of improvements to the wider streetscene. The provision of a safer walking surface is primarily a private benefit. Taken together, I find these benefits are insufficient to outweigh the harm that has been caused to the setting as it contributes to the special interest of the listed building.
19. On this basis, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 197 of the Framework, and would conflict with Policies S1, S7, E1 and E5 of the Hambleton Local Plan Adopted February 2022 insofar as relevant.

Other Matters

20. The Council's concerns include the lack of information regarding the drainage of the driveway and the potential for water to drain towards the LB and its historic fabric. However, this is a planning matter that is outside the scope of an appeal against the refusal of a listed building consent and I do not consider it further.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR