
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2024

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/D/23/3319442

Wells Cottage, 3 The Pastures, Blakeney, Norfolk NR25 7LY

- 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 Jeremy and Gilly Cocks against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/22/2797, dated 25 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing rear single storey extension and first floor stair access, and construction of a new first floor and single storey extension to form a habitable room on part of the original building footprint. The application also includes for replacing existing windows with energy efficient fittings and insertion of a window to the garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing rear single storey extension and first floor stair access, and construction of a new first floor and single storey extension to form a habitable room on part of the original building footprint, replacing existing windows with energy efficient fittings, and insertion of a window to the garage at Wells Cottage, 3 The Pastures, Blakeney, Norfolk NR25 7LY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PF/22/2797, dated 25 November 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, and drawing no's 2020/382: EX01, EX02, P01, P02, P03 and SP01.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matter

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (the Framework) was published during the course of the appeal. The revisions to the Framework do not change the key areas of policy material in this case.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:

- The effect of the extensions on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area;
- Whether the extensions would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blakeney Conservation Area, and preserve the setting of Quay House (Grade II* Listed);
- The effect of the extension on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Reasons

Character and appearance, Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area

4. Wells Cottage, or 3 The Pastures, is primarily single storey although there is a bedroom in the roof space which overlooks the rear of the property, complete with balcony. The property forms part of a wider c.1980's development of closely knit single and two storey properties which is located behind development fronting onto The Quay such as Quay House (Grade II * listed) and the Blakeney Hotel.
5. The proposed extensions would effectively change the dwelling into a two-storey property. However, that would be entirely in-keeping in the context of The Pastures which contains several two storey properties. Indeed, the two adjoining properties: no's 4 and 5 The Pastures are two-storey. The additional balconies would be located discreetly to the rear of the property. I therefore consider that the proposed extensions would not appear dominant or out of context subject to the use of matching materials. Consequently, I find no conflict with Policy EN4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (CS) which requires new development to have regard to local context.
6. In terms of light spill, given the location of the property, away from the Saltmarsh behind existing buildings lining The Quay, some of which have large windows, I find that any light spill from the additional windows proposed in the extensions to the host dwelling would not have a harmful impact on the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or on the North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area. I therefore find no conflict with the relevant provisions of Policies EN1 and EN2 of the CS which seek to protect the special qualities of the Norfolk Coast AONB and its biodiversity.

Blakeney Conservation Area and the Setting of Quay House

7. The appeal site is located within the Blakeney Conservation Area (CA). Blakeney historically functioned as a port therefore The Quay and the intimate historic streets leading south from this make a significant contribution to its character and appearance.
8. The immediate context to the appeal site is that of a 1980s residential development. The use of materials in The Pastures follows the local vernacular and its close-knit style of development is also characteristic of the CA. The

proposed extensions would follow a similar vernacular and form to that of The Pastures. The proposed extension would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the CA.

9. The Council have made a case that the host dwelling falls within the setting of Quay House. Whilst that may be the case, the appeal site has for many years been a part of The Pastures residential development located to the rear of Quay House. Much of the historic and architectural interest of Quay House is, in fact, derived from its front elevation with its formal, symmetrical design, and its generous driveway and the land that lies to the front of it, all of which can be readily appreciated from The Quay. The proposed extension would blend in with the existing form and roofscape of The Pastures to the rear of Quay House. Even if glimpses of it were possible from The Quay I find no reason to conclude that this would be harmful to the setting of Quay House.
10. The Council have not elaborated on how views from Quay House or from the grounds of Blakeney Hotel over The Pastures development contribute to the character and appearance of the CA or the setting of Quay House. That the extension would be seen from these areas in the context of an existing 1980s residential development, would not, of itself, constitute harm.
11. With these points in mind I find that the extensions would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of Quay House. It follows, therefore, that I find no conflict with Policy EN8 of the CS which seeks to protect the special historic or architectural interest of designated heritage assets.

Living conditions

12. The proposal would result in a first floor sitting room and bedroom with a shared balcony to the rear. Whilst oblique views of neighbouring gardens such as 1 and 4 The Pastures might be possible this would not result in significant levels of overlooking.
13. In terms of Quay House, closest to the extensions would be a rear lean-to that appears to be of an ancillary nature. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary I find no harmful overlooking in this regard. I have also had regard to noise and outlook impacts but similarly find no harm having regard to the modest scale of development proposed. In my view adequate separation distances would be retained having regard to the intimate character of the area.
14. For these reasons the proposal would not conflict with the relevant provisions of Policy EN4 of the CS or the North Norfolk Design Guide which require development to have regard to the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit condition I have attached a plans condition for certainty. I have also included a condition requiring the use of matching materials to ensure a satisfactory appearance. A condition relating to bat and bird boxes is requested as an enhancement but this would not meet the test of necessity.

Other matters

16. The application has been publicised correctly and Historic England were consulted. I find no reason to conclude that insufficient parking would result in highway safety concerns sufficient to warrant a refusal of planning permission.
17. Even if the application was invalid this would not, of itself, invalidate the proceedings or require redress, particularly given that I am satisfied that no-one has been put at a disadvantage as a result.

Conclusion

18. The appeal is allowed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR