



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2024

by N Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 April 2024.

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3333592

Longcroft Lodge, Pickhurst Green, Hays, Bromley BR2 7QS

- 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 Michael Nevard against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/23/03385/FULL6, dated 9 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is addition of first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published since the planning application was determined by the Council. Both main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the relevant implications for the appeal. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decision.
3. I have taken the description of proposed development from the planning application form but have limited it to solely reflect the act of development.

Main Issues

4. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its effect upon the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings of Whites Cottages.

Reasons

5. The existing building is situated to the western side and within the grounds of 1-3 Whites Cottages. The proposal seeks to extend this annexe building by constructing an additional storey to provide living accommodation on the ground floor and two bedrooms on the first floor.
6. Whites Cottages are a row of simple late 16th century or early 17th century cottages. They are Grade II Statutory Listed Buildings. Their age and listed status make these cottages of architectural and historic value and this attracts special interest for these reasons. This is their significance. Longcroft Lodge is a visually simple structure which has a subservient visual relationship with the listed buildings and the historical surroundings. Longcroft Lodge is within the

setting of Whites Cottages and, therefore, forms part of the significance of these Listed buildings.

7. Historic maps confirm that a building at the siting of Longcroft Lodge either did not exist at all historically or was even smaller than it is now. It is important to maintain the visual prominence of the statutory listed buildings and their traditional surroundings. The subservient visual relationship of Longcroft Lodge to that of Whites Cottages is, therefore, of great importance.
8. The proposed first floor extension would significantly enlarge the existing building resulting in a much larger building adjacent to the statutory listed buildings. I do not agree with the appellant that the upward extension of Longcroft Lodge would represent a modest increase in height. An increase in overall size would not respect the historic layout of this heritage site, even if the building would be a smaller structure to that of Whites Cottages. Increasing the height of the Longcroft Lodge would severely compromise the existing subservient visual relationship between the host dwelling and the listed buildings. Although there is more modern development in the surrounding area, the Whites Cottages site retains its semi-rural setting. It would substantially alter the character and appearance of the site and would detract from the semi-rural setting of the Cottages. Taken collectively, this would cause harm to the heritage setting of Whites Cottages.
9. The setting of Whites Cottages has evolved over the years and Longcroft Lodge would remain an ancillary structure within the grounds with Whites Cottages continuing to be read as the principal building on the site. Notwithstanding this, once extended, the appeal building would be a significant element in the setting of Whites Cottage. I have found that, if extended, the development would be harmful to the setting of the Listed cottages for those reasons set out above.
10. The Council raises concern that the addition of a front door would add to the prominence of the building and would detract from the simple and understated elevation as existing. The appellant has suggested amending the proposal to remove this element of the proposal. However, given my above concerns it has not been necessary for me to pursue this matter.
11. Consequently, the proposed extension of Longcroft Lodge would be harmful adjacent to and within the setting of Whites Cottages and would fail to preserve the character, appearance and special interest of the adjacent listed building and its setting.
12. Given the size and scale of the proposal, along with its close proximity to Whites Cottages, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the setting of the Listed building. In accordance with paragraph 208 of the Framework, I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. Longcroft Lodge is lawfully an independent dwelling, but remains significantly below nationally prescribed space standards and those set within the London Plan. The proposed extension would provide a much better useable space for occupants. The proposal would provide additional living space within the property but this would be limited to providing a personal benefit for the appellant.

14. It is suggested that exercising permitted development rights could infringe upon this structure more harmfully than that of the proposal. However, I have not been directed to any Certificates of Lawful Development pertaining to extensions at Longcroft Lodge. The existence of permitted development does not make the development more acceptable, particularly if those rights remain in place that could be built out separately and add to the harm to the setting of Whites Cottages.
15. The improvements to the living accommodation and permitted development rights do not represent public benefits. Therefore, there would be no clear benefit to the public that would sufficiently outweigh the harm identified. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would fail to accord with national policy.
16. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings of Whites Cottages. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policies HC1 of the London Plan, and Policies 6, 37 and 38 of the Bromley Local Plan and the provisions of the Framework. These policies seek, amongst other matters, all development to be of a high standard of design and in regard of statutory listed buildings the character, appearance and special interest of that listed building should be preserved and there should be no harm to setting.

Conclusion

17. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR