



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2024

by R Norman BA(Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/Y/23/3323918

South View, 17 Weasenham Road, Great Massingham, Norfolk PE32 2EY

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs C Eldridge against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 22/01580/LB, dated 3 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2023.
 - The work proposed is a rear single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal concerns a listed building in a conservation area, I have had special regard to Section 16(2) and paid special attention to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. The appeal before me relates to the listed building application, reference 22/01580/LB. An associated full application was submitted to and refused by the Council under their reference 22/01579/F, however no associated full appeal has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. I have therefore determined the appeal against the refusal to grant listed building consent for the rear single storey extension and the statutory requirements of section 16(2) of the Act only.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building, South View with attached railings, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

The Special Interest and Significance of the Grade II Listed Building

5. The appeal property is a Grade II listed building, known as South View, with attached railings, with list entry number 1171581. It is a very attractive, early 18th century two storey property constructed of flint with red brick detailing and grey pantile roof. It has black railings and a gate to the front. It sits

adjacent to similarly designed properties, which are also Grade II listed¹, and collectively contributes to the character and appearance of the street scene.

6. The existing dwelling derives its significance and special interest primarily from its historical character as a traditional vernacular cottage and its architectural interest through its form, proportions, detailing and materials. It retains many of its traditional features and, both individually and when seen in the context of the adjacent listed buildings, it provides a significant historical contribution, as well as a group value, to the area. Pertinent to this appeal, the rear elevation comprises a secondary elevation that has undergone some change however the historic core of the property is still legible and therefore still contributes towards the property's significance.

The Appeal Proposal and Effects

7. The proposal would involve a single storey extension to the rear of the property. It would extend across the width of the rear elevation and comprise an L shaped extension which would incorporate the existing rear extension. It would provide a garden room, WC and additional bedroom. The extension would be constructed in tiles, brickwork detailing and stone coping to match the existing property.
8. As the proposed extension would run the entire width of the existing property it would obscure the existing historic rear elevation at ground floor level. This would result in the loss of the historic form, character and legibility of the rear of the property, and the use of large areas of glazing would not be sufficient to mitigate this loss. The level of glazing proposed would also jar with the modest fenestration of the core historic building and the creation of a new opening into the garden room would result in the loss of historic fabric.
9. In addition, the proposal would utilise a variety of roof forms, including a flat roofed element, a pitched element over the gable end and a mono-pitch. This would introduce a more complicated and cluttered visual aspect to the rear elevation which would erode the simple and traditional character of the property.
10. Furthermore, the overall size and floorspace proposed would result in a significant extension from the rear elevation which would be disproportionate and lack subservience to the existing cottage and would result in the loss of the modest, traditional footprint and form and, as a result, its historical legibility.
11. I accept that the main views of the proposed extension would be from the private rear garden associated with the property, however listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
12. The proposal would also involve the replacement of all of the windows with double glazed units. However, I have limited details of the proposed replacement windows before me to be able to fully consider their impact on the listed building and it would not be appropriate to be left to secure these details by condition. I note also that a previous listed building consent² has been given for secondary glazing to the existing windows.

¹ Primrose Cottage and Fantasia, with railings attached, list entry 1342393 and The Old Post Office, with railings attached, list entry number 1077691

² 23/1043/LB

13. I accept that the proposal has been reduced in scale and design from the previously proposed rear extension and that the upper portion of the rear elevation will remain unaffected by the proposal, nevertheless for the above reasons it would still fail to respect the traditional and historical character of the host property.
14. Accordingly, for the above reasons, the proposal would fail to preserve the listed building and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. As such, there would be harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset to which I return to below.
15. This would conflict with the statutory presumption under section 16(2) of the Act. Applications for listed building consent are not subject to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and therefore development plan policies do not carry the same weight as when considering planning applications. Nevertheless, I find that the works would not comply with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) which require new development to protect and enhance the historic environment and demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area, amongst other things.

Other Matters

Conservation Area

16. The appeal site is located within the Great Massingham Conservation Area which encompasses much of the southern half of the village. Within the conservation area are a number of listed buildings, including the St Mary's Church and the appeal property. The part of the village included within the conservation area has a more loose knit, open and rural character, comprising modest historic cottages, farmsteads and open areas of public space and ponds.
17. The proposed works would be located to the rear of the existing property, although the extent of its width would mean that a glimpse of the extension would be visible along the existing side access beyond the garden gate this would not be to a particularly noticeable extent and the materials would reflect those used in the existing property and the area.
18. I therefore find that the proposal would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the Great Massingham Conservation Area. As such, it would preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area and would not harm the significance of this designated heritage asset. It would therefore not conflict with the statutory presumption under section 72(1) of the Act, or the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (the Framework) which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Nonetheless, a lack of harm in this regard weighs neither for nor against the appeal.

Public Benefits Balance

19. The Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight

should be given to the asset's conservation. I have found that the proposal would result in harm to the significance of the listed building. Due to the nature and the extent of the proposal I find the harm to be less than substantial but, nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight.

20. Under such circumstances, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of the optimum viable use of the heritage asset. The proposal would provide improved living conditions for the occupiers of the property by achieving more space and a modernised living space, as well as the replacement of the existing rear extension. In addition, there would be some short-term economic benefits arising from the construction period. However, I have no substantive evidence that the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence. Taking into account the public benefits of the proposal, these would not be sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm I have identified, which must carry considerable importance and weight.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Norman

INSPECTOR