



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2024

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/Y/23/3323810

**Carrington House, 31 Keyhaven Road, Milford-on-Sea, Lymington
S041 0QW**

- 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 and Mrs Damien and Sam Combes against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/11363, dated 24 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2023.
 - The works proposed are described as *single storey front extension (application for LBC) part retrospective allowed for under LPA Ref 20/10216*.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The site is located within the Milford-on-Sea Conservation Area (MoSCA). Although the works' effect on that particular designated heritage asset is not mentioned in the Council's reasons for refusal, I am nevertheless required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area in determining the appeal.
3. As the description of the works above suggests, the works have been partly implemented with the extension constructed, fenestration installed and building occupied but with the final external finish, alcove feature and, what the appellants refer to as a string course, not implemented.

Main Issue

4. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect that the works would have on the special architectural or historic interest of the grade II listed Carrington Grange, and on the character or appearance of the MoSCA.

Reasons

5. Carrington Grange is an imposing eighteenth century house now subdivided, with Carrington House occupying the front portion of the listed building. It displays simple yet elegant proportions to the front, left side and part rear elevations, with extensions on the rear and right sides. Its age, materials, architecture, architectural features including the distinctive stone, classically detailed front porch and timber sliding sash windows, contribute to its

significance as a designated heritage asset. To a considerable extent the MoSCA derives its significance from, amongst other aspects, the historic townscape and spaces including the tightly knit buildings in streets leading from the village green out to buildings set in grounds, such as Carrington Grange, and the quality of the architecture of those buildings.

6. The extension would project forwards of the front of the listed building slightly set back from its right corner behind which a later addition runs. The extension's front elevation would therefore be read in close proximity to the formal and elegant frontage and porch. This elevation would be divided into five bays with a central, flush alcove feature flanked by two pairs of similarly proportioned openings with French doors. The expanse of wall above would be divided horizontally with a projecting artificial stone cornice feature and the parapet above topped with a simple coping. The rendered walls would be inscribed with a blockwork pattern.
7. Due to the mass of the building above the openings and alcove, the resulting proportions would appear awkward in comparison to those of the main part of the house. The plain parapet above the cornice details would appear dominant and ill-proportioned in relation to the lower part and to the older part of the host building. Although the parapet detail on the main part of the house is taller, this sits on top of a two storey elevation from which it is divided by a substantial stone cornice, resulting in its proportions being more harmonious seen within the elevations it forms part of.
8. Unlike the arrangement on the older front elevation, the proposed inscribed render pattern would show compressed lintel features surmounted by a deep scribed course which would compound the awkward and ill-proportioned effect. Whilst I note these lintel features are similar to those on a previously approved scheme, in that case the frieze detailing was immediately above giving a very different visual effect. Whilst the proposed design takes cues from the extension to which it would be linked, that feature is set back and visually recedes from the main building. The proposal's front and end elevations would be read in conjunction with the front elevation of the host building given its very close proximity and degree of protrusion to the front.
9. The drawings do not indicate that there would be any plinth or step feature below the doors which would give the front elevation an awkward unanchored appearance. It has not been demonstrated that the artificial stone proposed for detailing would weather in a manner sympathetic to the host building whose natural stone, like its Roman Cement rendered walls, has developed a patina of age and a softness in tone and appearance.
10. The overall effect would be one of weak architectural detailing, where poor proportions of the detailing proposed would not raise the quality of the composition to harmonise with, nor reflect, the subtle and elegant architectural vocabulary of the host building.
11. I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, and I have paid special attention to preserving the character or appearance of the MoSCA. Having done so, the proposed works would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, thereby harming its significance. It follows that as the special interest of the listed building within the MoSCA would be materially harmed, that the character and appearance of the MoSCA as a whole, whose significance relies to an extent on the

- architecture of its historic buildings, would be similarly incrementally diminished and would also fail to be preserved.
12. I have given great weight to the designated heritage assets' conservation. Given that the works would relate to an extension and they would only affect one building in the townscape which makes up the MoSCA, the harm to those assets' significance would be less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, less than substantial harm in this respect does not equate to the harm not carrying considerable importance and weight. The Framework and Local Plan¹ Policy DM1 require that such harm is weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.
 13. However, the benefits arising from the works would essentially be private ones for the owner or occupier of the property, and consequently the heritage harm would not be outweighed. To the extent that it is material, the works would not accord with Local Plan Policy DM1's requirements to conserve and enhance heritage assets.
 14. I note that the shell of the building is similar to that which has planning permission and listed building consent. However, that scheme was materially different to that proposed. In that scheme a combination of features including a more elaborate frieze picking up on that of the porch, and a pediment feature, meant that the area above the doors was divided in a way that displayed more sensitive proportions when seen in context with the host building. The detailing showed included doors with very slender glazing bars and different cornice detailing.
 15. In some respects the differences between the approved scheme and that proposed could be considered subtle. However, the approved scheme demonstrated a carefully considered and well informed approach to the exterior of the extension that would have utilised a language of classical proportions and detailing to produce a scheme which would sit in harmony with the listed building, particularly given the very close proximity of the two. That is not to say that the approved scheme is necessarily the only elevational treatment that may be suitable. Nevertheless, the proposal does not demonstrate that the manner in which it has attempted to display a simpler approach would have a harmonious or sympathetic appearance relative to the listed building.
 16. The appellants have referred to a larger extension with a simple elevational design that received consent in 2008 and 2011. However, I note that proposal was set farther back from the front of the host building, and in any event those permissions have elapsed. That scheme is not persuasive that the appeal proposal would be acceptable.
 17. I can appreciate that the rising building costs the appellants have faced will have been challenging. That they may have also found it challenging to specify materials or secure suitably skilled contractors for the approved scheme does not indicate that the proposed scheme is the only solution. However, these circumstances, along with the fact that the extension is substantially complete, are not a convincing justification to support an inappropriate external design.

¹ New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management, 2014.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons, the works would not preserve the special interest of the listed building nor the character or appearance of the MoSCA. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR