



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 25 June 2024

by G Bayliss BA (Hons) MA MA MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd July 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/24/3337550

Boscobel, 12 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire PE8 6XN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Burrows against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/23/00763/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of single storey rear lean-to and erection of two storey rear extension and internal alterations.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/M2840/Y/24/3337553

Boscobel, 12 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire PE8 6XN

- 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 Burrows against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/23/00765/LBC.
 - The works proposed are demolition of single storey rear lean-to and erection of two storey rear extension and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. For the purposes of clarity, I have amended the post code from that stated on the application form to that contained in the appeal form and decision notice.
3. There are two appeals on this site. They relate to the planning application and listed building consent for the same scheme. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with them together, except where otherwise indicated.
4. Since the applications were determined, the Council adopted the East Northamptonshire Local Plan (December 2023) (ENLP) and has advised that this document supplements the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016 (NNJCS). The Council identifies the ENLP Policies which they consider are relevant to this appeal and the appellant has had the opportunity to comment on them. I have taken the ENLP into account in coming to my decision. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has also been published since the Council issued its decision. In this instance, the relevant changes only relate to paragraph numbering and do not fundamentally affect the substance of the matters under appeal.

5. I have a statutory duty under sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I have also had regard to the duty imposed by section 72(1) of the Act which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Paragraph 195 of the Framework advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and whether it would preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Reasons

7. The dwelling (listed as Boscobel, Ref.1225662) was listed in 1988 and is a Grade II listed building within the settlement of Kings Cliffe and the Kings Cliffe Conservation Area (CA). It is of two storeys and an attic and is constructed in coursed limestone with a Collyweston slate roof. The list description states that the building is late 17th century with later alterations and restoration and was originally a 3-unit plan. It describes the architectural detailing of the building to the front and rear, including the arrangement and design of the windows and doors. Notably, it mentions that the rear elevation has two, 2-light stone mullion windows with chamfered mullions and one 3-light ovolo-moulded stone mullion window. The 18th century extension to the rear is also referenced and related to this, the appellant's appeal statement refers to a Royal Commission on Historic Monuments report which suggests that this building may have previously served as a separate cottage or detached kitchen with servants' room above.
8. The list description and the extract of the Royal Commission report also allude to internal features of significance including chamfered ceiling beams and I saw on my visit historic details and features reflecting the age and status of the building. These included historic fireplaces and staircases.
9. From the details available to me, including the list description, and my own observation, I consider that the special interest and significance of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is predominantly derived from its age, form, its historic fabric and architectural detailing. This includes the contribution made by its rear elevation and the adjoining building, referenced in the list description. Although the rear exhibits evidence of adaptation over time, it still contains a wealth of historic detailing and features which contributes to the integrity of the building as a whole. Furthermore, the L-shaped plan of the rear also allows multiple views of the building from within the predominantly enclosed garden. The building's well preserved internal layout and historic features also add to that significance.
10. The applications propose the replacement of a small, single storey building sitting within the angle of the buildings at the rear which currently provides the only access between them. From what I saw on site, although this is a relatively modern structure, its minimal massing, simple lean-to roof and

complimentary detailing and materials assimilate reasonably well with the host building. Furthermore, it does not detract from the visual prominence of the historic buildings. In its place is proposed a two-storey replacement structure with a slightly larger footprint extending up to link the first floor. Whilst it would be of traditional overall form and massing, with a pitched roof running parallel to the front range, and be constructed in matching stone with quoin details, much of the walling would be glazed set within oak framing.

11. Whilst I recognise the desire to link the rear building to the main house on two floors to achieve a more efficient and liveable building, the proposed extension would appear noticeably different to it. It would form a tall and imposing structure within the angle of the buildings and although having similar overall form and walling materials it would look out of place with its height and scale visually competing. Its height would also be emphasised by the eaves appearing to be higher than the main building to the front. Furthermore, the contrasting solid to void ratio with large areas of glazing and extensive timber framework would look distinctly different to the more expansive areas of walling of the host building. Whilst a contemporary design may have a place on this building, the proposed height and size in such a prominent location, and the design and extent of glazing would be such that it would draw the eye and look very different, awkward, at odds with the building's appearance. It would, in my view, be seen as a central design feature of the rear which would dominate rather than integrate with its surrounding built context. Furthermore, whilst I saw on site that the existing extension butts up rather awkwardly to existing openings, the proposed extension would similarly appear to sit too closely to those openings which would make it appear squeezed in rather than allowing a well-balanced gap between them.
12. Whilst the rear elevation would be largely hidden from public view, I have already commented that the rear of the building is an integral part its significance. Furthermore, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether public views are afforded.
13. Alongside the extension, the scheme proposes the enlargement of a ground floor doorway in the rear building, combining a doorway and window. However, no adequate details are provided to ascertain whether these are historic openings which would be helpful to understand the impact on the building's significance given that an opening already exists between the two buildings.
14. Proposed internal changes within the front range of the house mainly appear to involve alterations to relatively modern interventions which would have a neutral impact on the building's special interest and significance. However, on the second floor an en-suite is proposed to be installed. In relation to this, there are insufficient details for me to understand how the partition and fixtures would be constructed around the projecting chimney breast or adequate details of the pipe runs and ventilation. These matters could not be controlled by conditions because the nature and scale of the works are unclear and such information may not successfully mitigate the impact on the building's special interest and significance.
15. Within the rear building range, a staircase is proposed to be removed. I saw on site that this steep, winding staircase appeared to be of some age, and I am aware of the suggested history of this building. Therefore, in the absence of

adequate details to be able to establish the age or significance of this staircase I must conclude that this element of the proposal would be harmful to the building's special interest and significance.

16. Considering all of the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and it would not preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset. Therefore, the expectations of the Act are not met. Paragraph 205 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 206 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of those assets and any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. I find the harm in the context of the significance of the heritage asset, in the language of the Framework, to be less than substantial in this instance. This commands considerable importance and weight and is not to be treated as a less than substantial objection to the proposal.
17. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.
18. The proposal would clearly be beneficial to the appellant's living conditions, providing a more liveable and functioning building with more bathroom facilities, improved circulation, and better light and connectivity to the garden. However, I regard these as private rather than public benefits. Moreover, the building's optimum viable use is likely to be the existing residential use, and I have been given no adequate evidence that this long-term use or its conservation is dependent on this proposal. The building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence. It is also likely that there may be alternative ways of achieving some of these benefits without the harm identified.
19. The proposal would allow the refurbishment and occupation of the upper floor and other remedial repairs for the benefit of the historic building fabric. However, there are few details of these works, and in any event, these works would be expected of any renovation of this building, and they do not therefore mitigate or lessen the harm I have found. As such, although worthwhile, I consider that little weight can be attributed to them as public benefits.
20. Given the above, I conclude that the public benefits would be of insufficient weight to outweigh the great weight to be given to the harm to the designated heritage asset. As such, the proposal would not comply with the Framework. In addition, there is no clear and convincing justification for the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Consequently, the proposal would not comply with NNJCS Policies 2 and 8, and ENLP Policies EN11 and EN12. These policies, amongst other things, seek to protect and enhance the significance of heritage assets. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

Other Matters

21. Whilst the Council makes no reference in the planning permission reason for refusal to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the CA,

as a statutory consideration, I am required to have regard to the CA when determining these appeals. From my observations at the site visit and the details available to me, I consider that the significance of the CA is mainly drawn from the predominantly rural character and range of traditional buildings that it contains, together with the use of materials, the pattern of development and the relationship of buildings to the spaces around them.

22. The Council's officer report states that the proposed extension would be well screened by surrounding buildings and structures and would have limited public visibility. I have no reason to disagree with this statement. I therefore consider that the proposal would have no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the CA and the expectations of the Act would be met in this regard.
23. Although not raised by the Council, I note an apparent discrepancy in the plans in relation to the large opening in the proposed family room at the rear. The proposed elevations appear to indicate that the window would remain unchanged, but the proposed floorplans show an alteration to form double doors. Also, I note that facsimile Collyweston slates are proposed for the roof of the extension, but I have seen no sufficient details as to why genuine Collyweston slates are not available or appropriate. As I have already found harm arising from this proposal it has not been necessary for me to seek clarification on these matters.

Conclusion

24. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

G Bayliss

INSPECTOR