



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

by I A Dyer BSc (Eng) FCIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/Y/23/3335094

Tudor Cottage, 43 Wangford Road, Reydon, Suffolk IP18 6PZ

- 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 Quinten Manby and Emma Ridgeon against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application reference is DC/23/2083/LBC.
 - The works proposed are to convert an existing attached woodstore into a utility/shower room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

2. As the proposal relates to a listed building consent I have had special regard to section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
3. In September 2023, subsequent to the refusal of the application which is the subject of this appeal, the Council granted listed building consent¹ "To convert an existing attached woodstore into a utility/shower room" at Tudor Cottage, 43 Wangford Road, Reydon. This scheme is the same in all respects to the proposal before me, save that it omits the rooflight and introduces an extractor fan from the shower with an air brick on the outside of the wall to discharge vapour. During my site visit I observed that the works to implement that permission had commenced.
4. On the basis that the acceptability of all other elements of the proposal has been established by the consented scheme, the main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal, with particular regard to the inclusion of a rooflight, would preserve a Grade II listed building known as "Tudor Cottage" (Ref: 1182317) (the LB), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. The LB is a one and a half storey former farmhouse dating from the mid/late-17th century with an 18th or 19th century façade and additions. The listing entry identifies the LB as having a timber frame at its core, although I have no definitive evidence before me as to whether or to what extent this remains. The brickwork which encases any remaining timber is colour-washed and of

¹ Council Ref: DC/23/3269/LBC

varying bonds and brick-types indicating changes to the building over time. The roof is of thatch, and this has been recently renewed. At some stage the LB appears to have been divided into two units. However, it is now a single dwelling.

6. The structure identified as a 'woodshed' is a single storey lean-to attached to a gable end of the house. It is brick built and has been colour-washed to match the rest of the LB. The 1839 tithe map indicates a structure with a similar footprint attached to the LB, but it appears to have been mostly rebuilt in the late 19th or early 20th century. Nonetheless the external appearance of the woodshed is a sympathetic addition which contributes to the aesthetic value of the listed building. Given the above, I find the special interest of the building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the architectural form and finish of this structure.
7. The proposal would convert the woodshed into a utility and shower room. An existing lavatory within the structure would be repaired and refurbished. Externally, aside from works to refurbish the existing doors, the only visible change would be the installation of a roof light and tile vents.
8. As modern additions, they would not be in keeping with the historic architectural form of the building and lead to an incongruent and alien addition. This incongruity would be emphasised by its presence given the disruption of the profile of the pantile roof by this flat, reflective structure. The jarring incongruity that would result from this modern structure would consequently harm the special interest.
9. The rooflight proposed would be of a 'heritage' design and I note the advice contained in the East Suffolk Council Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (2021) that "Victorian-style cast iron rooflights, which are small in size and sit flush with the roof surface, can be acceptable in some cases." However, as I have identified above, the rooflight would sit amongst pantiles and its incorporation would result in an awkward, inauthentic detail.
10. The appellants have identified that they have carried out other works on the LB, such as the thatching of a previously tiled dormer² and have sought to protect and enhance the fabric of the LB by so doing. I do not have full planning details of the history of these works. However, they would have been considered on their individual merits and I have carried out a similar exercise in my consideration of the proposal before me. Further, the acceptability of previous works is no justification for further works, should those be harmful to the special features of the heritage asset.
11. The design of the additional tile vents could be controlled to limit their prominence, and I note that the Council has followed such an approach in association within the extant permission.
12. Other works proposed are internal. These would replace the existing bituminous roof felt, and internal insulation installed. The existing, exposed brickwork would be retained, but sealed. The existing concrete floor would be insulated and tiled. These works, like the tile vents, form part of the consented scheme.

² Council Ref: DC/17/2166/LBC

13. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would not harm the listed building because it would not be more widely visible and there have been no objections to the proposed works from neighbours. 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 or whether neighbours find the proposals acceptable.
14. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.
15. Paragraph 205 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development 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 the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification.
16. Given the scope of the works and the limited effect that this would have on how the building would be experienced as a whole, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, 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. In this instance, the continued use of the building is not dependent on this proposal as the present residential use would not cease in its absence.
17. The appellants contend that the proposals would have a positive impact on the heritage asset by increasing its suitability for modern family life. The inclusion of a rooflight would provide natural light and ventilation within the lean-to. However, enhancement of facilities within the property would be a private, rather than a public, benefit and consequently beyond the scope of this test.
18. Given the above and in the absence of any public benefits that have been brought to my attention that would outweigh the harm that would be caused, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 206 of the Framework.

Conclusion

19. Given the above and considering all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

I A Dyer

INSPECTOR