



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2024

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D0515/Y/24/3344675
167 South Brink, Wisbech PE14 0RZ

- 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 Darren Clements against the decision of Fenland District Council.
 - The application Ref: F/YR24/0007/F dated 5 January 2024 was refused by notice dated 26 March 2024.
 - The application is to erect 5x planters with 2.8m high (max height) trellis to the front of existing dwelling (part retrospective).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to erect 5x planters with 2.8m high (max height) trellis to the front of existing dwelling in accordance with reference number F/YR24/0007/F in accordance with the following condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: J23115 PL02 and J23115 PLO01A.

Procedural Matters

2. The description in the heading above differs from that used by the Appellant in their original application form and is the one used by the Council in their determination of this appeal. In Part E of the Appeal form it is indicated that the description used has not changed and is the same as that used by the Council. As such I have used this description as it more accurately reflects the nature of development proposed.
3. During my site visit I had the opportunity to visit the neighbouring property at 'The Wheel House' and observed the interior space to which this appeal relates. The Appellant had the opportunity to accompany me into the neighbouring property but chose not to.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon the significance of a Grade II Listed Building and the living conditions of neighbours.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is part of a complex of historic buildings that were previously operated as pumping stations. The principal building on the site is

- the Grade II Listed Waldersley Pumping Station which dates to around 1832 and was originally powered by steam. The building now known as 'The Wheel House' seemingly formed part of this structure and consists of a three storey brick block with adjoining engine house which, although effectively of around two storeys in height consists of a single height space within. It appears that this part of the converted building now forms a living room associated with the conversion of the structure to a dwelling and is lit by three large windows to three elevations. The conversion appears subject to approval obtained in 2004.
6. The appeal site is an adjoining building and is a later pumping house structure that dates to around the 1930's or 1940's that sits on a slightly lower level. The structure is also brick but exhibits large floor to ceiling windows that reflect the more Modernist style of the time. To the front of this building there is parking and a patio area and the end gable window to the adjoining 'The Wheel House' looks directly onto this space.
 7. To the rear of the appeal property a small decked area leads down towards the water course that appeared to run under this building. As such, this area appeared as a piece of industrial water infrastructure with only limited areas to use as amenity space for residents.
 8. The proposal before me seeks part retrospective permission for the erection of raised timber planters with trellis above to enable more privacy to be obtained in the appellants front patio area. Two of the planters have been installed retrospectively and the intention is to extend the row, along the same alignment along the slope of land that creates a subtle change of level between the appeal site and the adjacent Listed Building.
 9. In considering whether to grant planning permission for any development Sections 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me 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. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) also states that when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset, 'great weight' should be given to the asset's conservation.
 10. I consider that the significance of the Listed Building is largely obtained through its aesthetic, historic and evidential values that are obtained through both its architectural style, spaces within and the interesting history of the site, and its subsequent evolution, related to the pumping of water around the surrounding fenland areas.
 11. As mentioned above, the principal space within 'The Wheel House' appeared to be a tall, double height space. This area appeared to be used as an area of principal living space within the dwelling conversion. This space was illuminated by two tall arched windows within the front and rear of the space that sit directly opposite each other. To the end wall is a third sizeable window which may have once been a doorway¹. It is this window that now looks directly onto the rear of the trellis screen.

¹ List Description mentions the wheel house as containing a doorway.

12. Like the Council's Conservation Officer I do not find harm to the significance of the Listed Buildings through this proposal subject to the scheme being maintained at a consistent height. Due to the slight level difference between the two properties and the relatively tasteful modern design of the trellis, the effect of the proposal upon the Listed Building would be negligible, and any impact would be lessened further once foliage is allowed to grow.
13. In terms of the proposed scheme and its impact upon the living conditions of neighbours, I saw on my site visit that, although the trellis was within a relatively close distance to the side end window of 'The Wheel House', the room to which this window serves is also illuminated by two other very large windows that certainly allowed lots of morning sunlight into the space. Despite therefore that the trellis would rise some height over this third window, there would still be views of sky over this trellis. As such the space would still obtain natural light from three windows and any sense of enclosure would be limited.
14. It is also worthy of note that this proposal would also not only enhance the privacy of those living at the appeal site, but it would also enable more privacy to be obtained by those occupying the Listed Building itself which I consider would be a benefit of this scheme.
15. Following my assessment above I am therefore unable to see how this trellis structure would cause such significant effect upon the internal habitation of the living space of 'The Wheel House' so as to bring it into conflict with the Local Plan. Accordingly, I find that the scheme before me would comply with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

Other Matter

16. An objector to the scheme raised a point of concern with regards potential for rot to their side gable window through this scheme. Although I saw on my visit that the existing part of this trellis is within around 1.3m of this window, I consider that there would be sufficient space for airflow and summer sunlight that would make any increased risk of rot negligible.

Conditions

17. The Council's questionnaire has not included any other conditions other than the standard plans condition. Although the Conservation Officer suggested two other conditions to control the colour and consistent height of the structures, I consider that the height would need to be in accordance with the approved plans and that the colour would not greatly affect the appearance of the planters. As such I have not included these two conditions as they are not wholly relevant.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I allow the appeal subject to the conditions as outlined in the Schedule below.

A Graham

INSPECTOR