



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 29 October 2024

by H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/24/3346057

Blackford Cottage, 13 Main Street, Sudborough, Northants NN14 3BX

- 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 Miss Georgina Bolton against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00071/FUL.
 - The development proposed is two-storey rear extension, ground floor rear conservatory, and re-tile existing roof.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/M2840/Y/24/3346059

Blackford Cottage, 13 Main Street, Sudborough, Northants NN14 3BX

- 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 Miss Georgina Bolton against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00089/LBC.
 - The works proposed are two-storey rear extension, ground floor rear conservatory, and re-tile existing roof.
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Decisions

1. **Appeal A** is dismissed.
2. **Appeal B** is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal relates to a listed building which is within a conservation area, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.

Main Issues

5. A main issue in Appeal A and the main issue in Appeal B is:
 - whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
6. An additional main issue in Appeal A is:
 - the effect of the proposal on protected species.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

7. The appeal property, Blackford Cottage, is a Grade II listed¹ building that forms part of a terraced row. It dates from around the late 17th Century to early 18th Century and is located on Main Street in the village of Sudborough. It has a linear plan form of modest proportions, typical of other cottages within the village. There are two modern single storey flat roofed extensions to its rear.
8. The cottage is part of a linear row of similar styled and aged properties, each cottage being a Grade II listed building and positively contributing to the street scene of the main village road. The evidence indicates that the cottage was historically built for the Drayton Estate.
9. The cottage is a single storey terraced dwelling with attic roof living space. It is constructed of square coursed limestone set under a steep dual pitched roof finished with concrete interlocking tiles. The front elevation has a symmetrical design which incorporates a central entrance with a window casement either side that are set under wood lintels. It has three casement windows under Lincolnshire dormers to attic level, which break the eaves line.
10. The symmetry and architectural detail on the front elevation emphasises the status of the building within the village. In contrast, the rear elevation has a plainer appearance with a functional arrangement of fenestration to suit room uses. The rear elevation windows comprise a mix of simple flush casements with horizontal glazing bars, with some set under timber lintels. It also has an external rear door giving access to the lounge and there is a modern external door to the existing kitchen extension. In this respect, the status differentiation between the polite front elevation and the plain, more utilitarian rear elevation of the building is evident. Thus, overall, it remains an attractive historic residence typical of local vernacular building styles.
11. Given the above, I find that the special interest and significance of this heritage asset largely derives from its historic and architectural interests. These are drawn from its illustration of a late 17th to early 18th Century estate built terraced cottage, as well as the historic fabric and features that survive from the physical origins of the historic building. As part of this and pertinent to the appeals, the legibility of the historic architectural form and features of, and distinction between, the primary front and secondary rear elevations is an important contributor.

Proposal and effects

12. The proposed extension would have a similar width to that of the existing extensions. While its rearward depth would be similar to the existing kitchen extension, it would extend out to a greater depth than the existing dining room extension resulting in a larger overall footprint. The height of the proposed two-storey pitched roof extension would also be taller than the existing flat roofed single-storey extensions. By virtue of its considerable depth, scale and bulk, this enlargement would appear as a prominent addition to the historic fabric.

¹ List Entry Number: 1265883 – 13 Main Street, Grade II

13. As such, it would not be either physically or visually subsidiary to the listed building. Whilst it would be located to the rear it would still dominate the proportions and plan form of the historic vernacular cottage, which has a simple linear arrangement. This imbalance in height and proportions would disrupt the visual harmony and character of the listed building.
14. The proposal would use traditional materials, such as limestone for the walling to match the main elevation. Nevertheless, such a large extension would unacceptably dominate the modest proportions and plan form of the listed cottage and hence harm its significance as a listed building.
15. Additionally, the proposed glazed conservatory would appear contrived and at odds with the listed building's rear elevation. Even though the glazed conservatory might reveal elements of the historic structure, the reflective nature of the glazing would unacceptably harm the special interest of the building.
16. Therefore, the proposal's scale and massing, along with its extensive glazing, would create a conspicuous development, visually competing with the listed building and eroding its architectural integrity.
17. I also find that the information regarding how the proposed glazed conservatory would be attached to the host dwelling is lacking in detail. There is also insufficient information regarding the new doorway opening in the building's rear elevation to serve the proposed bedroom at first floor level. Therefore, I cannot be certain that the proposal would not permanently damage the building's historic fabric.
18. I acknowledge that the proposal would replace the existing modern flat roofed extensions. Nevertheless, the scale of these existing single-storey extensions would be significantly smaller than the proposal before me.
19. While the materials used for the proposal, such as roofing tiles, could be reasonably secured through the imposition of planning conditions, this would not justify the harm identified above.
20. Drawing the above together, I find that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In doing so, it would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Public benefits and balance

21. With reference to paragraphs 207 and 208 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset assessed above would be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 208 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
22. In this case, economic benefits would be delivered through the manufacturing and construction phase and the general investment into the property. Social benefits would be generated by an improvement to the local housing stock. I also acknowledge that the proposal would replace the existing flat roofed

extensions and the modern concrete roof tiles, and would use thermal efficient materials. These outcomes would be moderated by the extent of the scheme, but still weigh in favour of the appeals. Nevertheless, the proposed extension to allow for additional accommodation for family use, would primarily be a private benefit to the occupants of the property.

23. I am not persuaded that similar benefits could not be achieved by a proposal which would be less harmful to the significance of this designated heritage asset. Additionally, no compelling evidence is before me which confirms that the property would not be useable or viable as a dwelling or that its future would be at risk if the appeals were to fail and the development and works as proposed were not implemented. In these respects, the identified harm to the significance of the listed building has not been clearly and convincingly justified.
24. On balance, in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, I find that this would not be outweighed by the limited public benefits arising from the proposal.
25. I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.
26. It would also conflict with Core Policies 2 and 8(d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (adopted 2016) (Core Strategy), and Policy EN12 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 2011-2031 (adopted 2023). Collectively, these policies amongst other things, seek to ensure developments protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets, including their settings, and respond positively to local character and distinctiveness.
27. In reaching my decisions, I have had regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment, dated January 2023, and the appellant's submitted documents, including their statement of case. However, notwithstanding this evidence, I have found that harm would result from the proposal for the reasons stated.

Protected Species

28. A Preliminary Roost Assessment, produced by Cherryfield Ecology, dated February 2023, was submitted with the planning application. This recommended that a full roost characterisation survey should be undertaken between May and September to determine species, population and entry/exit points used for the appeal building. The appellant has provided a Bat Survey, dated August 2023, in support of the proposed development. The survey states that the appeal building has been assessed and no bats were roosting within the building at the time of the survey, and bats do not appear to have been present for some time. The survey also confirmed that the parts of the roof where bats have been present in the past would remain unaffected by the proposal. Following this survey, both parties agree that the proposed development is unlikely to result in the disturbance of bats and would not result in the loss of bat roosting sites. Based on the evidence before me, I have no substantive basis to consider differently.

29. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would not result in adverse effects on protected species. As such, the proposal would be acceptable in this regard. It would therefore accord with Core Policy 4 of the Core Strategy, which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that developments protect existing biodiversity, including priority habitats and species of biodiversity importance. It would also comply with paragraph 180 of the Framework which seeks to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Other Matters

30. The appeal site is located within the Sudborough Conservation Area (CA). Mindful of the statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Act, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. The CA, which includes Main Street, is characterised by its rural setting and its historic linear village formation. The Heritage Impact Assessment (January 2023) indicates that the buildings are mainly constructed from limestone, with Collyweston stone slate, thatch, or clay pantile roofs. The special interest and significance of the CA mainly stems from the varying ages and architectural styles of its buildings that reflect the evolution of the village.
31. The appeal listed building largely retains its overall external historic character and detailing and therefore makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
32. Given the limited scale of the proposal and its siting to the rear of the property, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and would not harm its significance as a designated heritage asset. I note the Council raised no concerns in this respect either.
33. The appeal site is also located near to other listed buildings, including Numbers 10, 11 and 12 Main Street, 14, 15 and 17 Main Street, which are Grade II listed. From the information before me the special interest and significance of these assets primarily stem from, singularly or in combination, their historic and/or architectural interests. However, they are also derived to a greater or lesser extent, from their respective village settings.
34. Given the location and extent of the proposal, the settings of these listed buildings would be preserved and the contribution they make to the assets' significance would not be harmed. This would meet the requirements of section 66(1) of the Act; the provisions of the Framework regarding the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment; and the policies referred to above. I note the Council raise no concerns in this respect either.
35. The appellant's Heritage Impact Assessment (January 2023) has drawn my attention to evidence of a possible previous lean-to structure on the rear elevation of the host building. While I accept that the presence of previous rear projections/structures may have been present historically, they do not justify the proposal before me.
36. It is suggested that neighbouring properties that are listed buildings have been extended rearwards over time. During my site visit I observed that some rear extensions were present on nearby properties. Nevertheless, each case must be decided on its own merits, and I am not fully aware of all the circumstances

relating to each of these other extensions. For the appeals before me, the proposal would not be appropriate for the reasons given above.

37. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on any neighbouring amenities. I also acknowledge that there were no objections to the proposal from Historic England. Nevertheless, these would be neutral considerations and do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
38. The appellant has raised concerns over the handling of the application by the Council in respect of the assertion that the Conservation Officer submitted comments late at application stage. However, this is a matter between the main parties and is not relevant to my determination of these appeals, which is based upon the evidence before me.

Conclusion

39. **Appeal A:** The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
40. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR