



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 November 2024

by G Bayliss BA (Hons) MA MA MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 December 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/24/3345157

12 High Street, Easton On The Hill, North Northamptonshire PE9 3LR

- 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 and Mrs Williams against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00073/FUL.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/M2840/Y/24/3345158

12 High Street, Easton On The Hill, North Northamptonshire PE9 3LR

- 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 and Mrs Williams against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00074/LBC.
 - The works proposed are single storey rear extension.
-

Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. 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.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural or historic interest of a Grade II listed building, and on the character or appearance of the Easton on The Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The list description for 12 High Street (Ref.1225438) mentions, amongst other things, that the building dates from the 17th century with later alterations, and is constructed from squared, coursed limestone with a Collyweston slate roof. It mentions that it is single storey with an attic and has a 3-unit plan. It also describes the building's architectural detailing including the design and arrangement of windows, doors and chimneys. The building is aligned east to west and has a predominantly linear plan form.

5. Since the listing, a two storey wing has been added to the eastern gable of the building, with narrow gables facing the front and rear elevations. To the rear, the extension incorporates a projecting bay window with a lean-to tiled roof which wraps around on to the historic building to form an open, covered passage to access the rear door.
6. Owing to the height and elevated eaves of this two storey extension it has a degree of dominance alongside the historic building. However, its relatively traditional form and linear alignment, complimentary materials and detailing does not divert attention away from the building's historic form and architectural features to any great extent.
7. From the evidence before me, including the list description, and my own observations, I consider that the special interest and significance of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is predominantly derived from its considerable age, its linear plan form, historic fabric and its architectural features.
8. The significance of the building can be experienced and appreciated from High Street where it forms part of a relatively tight cluster of historic buildings. To the rear, the building is set in a long, linear garden which is bounded by other buildings and walls which limit public views. From this garden vantage point, the rear elevation of the building can be clearly viewed, and its significance can be appreciated.
9. The Easton on The Hill Conservation Area (the Conservation Area) is focussed on properties flanking the historic routes within the settlement and is set within an agricultural landscape. The significance of the Conservation Area is mainly drawn from the predominantly rural character and range of traditional buildings that it contains, together with its use of materials, pattern of development and the relationship of the buildings to the spaces around them. The appeal building is prominently viewed along High Street and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
10. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
11. The proposal would involve a single storey rear extension projecting into the garden from the bay window of the recently constructed addition. The walls would be largely of coursed, rubble limestone and it would have a central flat, membraned roof, enclosed on three sides by a mock Collyweston, pitched, tiled roof. The roof would extend out beyond the walling to incorporate a covered walkway along the two garden-facing elevations. Those elevations would incorporate two large, glazed openings with sliding doors.
12. Although the proposed extension would not harm the historic fabric of the building, it would be a large addition, particularly when viewed alongside the existing two storey extension. The combined floor area of the existing and

proposed extensions would be less than the original dwelling but their cumulative size and scale would visually compete with that of the more diminutive historic structure. Therefore, the extensions would not appear subordinate to the historic structure. In addition, the proposed flat-roofed extension of substantial length, projecting at right-angles to the listed building would divert attention from the building's historic linear plan form. The extension would also be of a very different form and appearance to the host building which has a traditionally pitched roof. The mock roof would appear contrived and would not adequately mitigate the non-traditional form of the flat roof, especially when viewed from further away in the garden. The oversailing roof to form the walkway would add to the size and dominance of the proposed extension. The extension would therefore appear as a large and discordant element which would overwhelm the listed building and fail to harmonise with its distinctive vernacular form and detail. Whilst the design would make the extension appear distinct, in my view, it would exacerbate the inappropriateness of the proposed addition.

13. The size of the glazed doors would contrast strongly with the fewer, smaller openings of the listed building, and would draw the eye and look out of place. These large areas of glazing would allow views of the interior of the building and the activity within, and this would add to the distraction from being able to appreciate the building's significance from the rear garden. This would be more so if that activity were to spill out onto the paved area outside. As such the proposal in these respects would materially harm an important part of the special interest and significance of the listed building.
14. Although the extension would be largely hidden from public view, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether public views are available. Equally, the significance of a listed building is not just focussed on frontages and, in the case before me, the rear elevation contributes to the building's significance.
15. As a result of the screening of the rear garden by the surrounding structures I was not aware of any significant public views within the Conservation Area that would be harmed by the proposal. Nor has my attention been drawn to any. As such, I find no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
16. Considering all of the above, whilst I find that the proposal would cause no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, it would fail to preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building. 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 an asset 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. 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.

17. The additional accommodation provided by the extension would clearly be beneficial to the appellants' living conditions, creating a family space and linking with the garden. I regard this as a private rather than a public benefit. Moreover, I have been given no evidence that the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling or its maintenance is dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence. As such, I consider that little weight can be given to these matters as public benefits.
18. Given the above, I conclude that the public benefits identified 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.
19. Consequently, the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Harm would therefore be caused to its significance. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the Framework. It would conflict with Policies 2 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2016) and Policy EN12 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (2021). These policies, amongst other things, seek to protect and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

Other Matters

20. I have considered the recent, 'modern' styled, flat-roofed extension nearby at No.4 High Street which is a listed building and is within the Conservation Area. I do not have the full details of the significance of this listed building and the background to the extension, but I saw on site that it is smaller in size to the proposal before me and does not represent such a marked contrast with the plan form. Based on the evidence before me, I am unable to be assured that the circumstances of this development replicate the appeal scheme in this regard. Whilst, in some circumstances, a modern extension can be appropriate on a listed building, differentiating old and new, the appeal proposal is not appropriate for the reasons stated.
21. A lack of objections, including from neighbours and the Parish Council, does not justify allowing a proposal which overrides my findings on the main issue. I have also taken account of the appellant's concerns about the handling of their proposal during the pre-application and planning application stage. These matters, however, are for the Council and do not alter my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

G Bayliss

INSPECTOR