



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2024

by A Hartley, LLB(Hons), Solicitor, MBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E9505/D/24/3346992

6 Bureside, Skinners Lane, Wroxham, Norfolk NR12 8SJ

- 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 Rachel Parker against the decision of the Broads Authority.
 - The application Ref is BA/2024/0061/HOUSEH.
 - The proposed development is for the replacement of single glazed windows and doors with glazed UPVC.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The effect of the proposal on the character or appearance of the host dwelling and the Wroxham Conservation Area (WCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an impressive large detached late Victorian house characteristic of the larger Broads' riverside houses in the area, set in large grounds by the riverside. It is sited within the WCA and is referred to in the Wroxham Conservation Area Appraisal (WCAA) as '*one of the grandest late Victorian houses in the village*'. The property has been altered and extended in a manner in keeping with the overall character of the building. It uses a limited palette of materials, including soft red brick and clay plain tiles, with timber in the window and door joinery and on the mock timber framing. From my observations on site I find that the traditional materials used in the host dwelling, as well as its historic architecture and setting, contribute positively to the distinctiveness of the WCA. The appeal property has been treated by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
4. The appeal proposal would replace the majority of the host dwelling's timber framed windows and two doors with UPVC. Even with the use of an off white colour and more improved heritage design styles, UPVC is a modern material that unlike timber frames, would not soften in appearance through weathering. The proposal would introduce modern materials that would appear as incongruous architectural features within the historic fabric of the host dwelling. Consequently, I find that this inappropriate use of modern materials would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

5. The WCAA highlights the importance of timber window joinery in the area and states that '*the inappropriate use of modern materials and details can also cause harm to the character of the area.*' There are examples of UPVC in the area, and the appellant's evidence refers to advances in the manufacture of UPVC windows since the WCAA was written. However, the principle remains that existing architecture that contributes positively to the historic and architectural significance of the WCA should be preserved or enhanced. The use of modern UPVC materials in this property would not be appropriate to its existing historic architecture.
6. There are glimpsed views of the appeal property from Skinner's Lane due to tree coverage, however it is visible from the river, set prominently on higher ground. I find that the proposal causes harm to the distinctive architectural and historic significance of the WCA through the use of inappropriate modern materials, particularly within a dwelling that is recognised as a NDHA in the WCAA and clearly makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the WCA.
7. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the WCA in accordance with the statutory duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In accordance with paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) I have attached great weight to the harm caused to the character of the WCA by the proposal.
8. I find that the level of harm to the WCA is less than substantial in terms of the Framework.
9. In accordance with paragraph 164 of the Framework, greater energy efficiency amounts to a public benefit of significant weight.
10. Having regard to paragraph 208 of the Framework, I find that the level of public benefit in this case is limited. Even when affording it significant weight it would not outweigh the identified harm. I therefore conclude that the appeal proposal would cause unjustified harm to the WCA.
11. In terms of paragraph 209 of the Framework, applying a balanced judgment, I find that the identified detrimental effect on the architectural and historic significance of the NDHA is of a scale that causes unacceptable harm to its significance.
12. Consequently, the appeal proposal would conflict with policies SP5, DM11 and DM43 Part f) of the Local Plan for the Broads (2019) as it fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, causes unjustified harm to a NDHA and fails to provide high quality materials appropriate to their context.

Other Matters

13. My attention has been drawn to other buildings within the WCA with UPVC windows. I do not consider these make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the WCA. In any event, the circumstances of the window replacements in those buildings are not before me.
14. The poor state of repair of existing windows, their previous replacement in the 1930's/1960's with alternative timber framed windows, the use of 100% recycled UPVC supplied by a local company, its use in some listed buildings,

and the potential inability to retro-fit double glazing, collectively do not justify the identified harm that would be caused to this appeal property (a NDHA) and the WCA by the use of UPVC materials.

15. The desire to maintain and enhance the appeal property to a more modern standard is also noted. However, it is considered that alternative replacement timber framed windows exist that would improve the property without resulting in the identified harm that would be caused by the proposal.
16. Whether all elements of the proposal require planning permission is not a matter for determination in this appeal. I have dealt with the appeal proposal before me.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations including the Framework that would justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Hartley

INSPECTOR