



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 14 March 2025

by A James BSc (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 April 2025

Appeal A: APP/Z2260/W/24/3356824

25 Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8JD

- 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 Keith and Louise Knapp of Water Tight Kent Property Investments Ltd against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application reference is F/TH/24/1094.
 - The development proposed is internal and external alterations to the right hand side of the former hotel at no. 25/26 into a self contained hotel with en-suite bedrooms and the creation of a light well to the front basement as well as conversion of the former detached utility areas at the rear basement into further guest accommodation.
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Appeal B: APP/Z2260/Y/24/3356821

25 Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8JD

- 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 Keith and Louise Knapp of Water Tight Kent Property Investments Ltd against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application reference is L/TH/24/1095.
 - The works proposed relate to internal and external alterations to the right hand side of the former hotel at no. 25/26 into a self contained hotel with en-suite bedrooms and the creation of a light well to the front basement as well as conversion of the former detached utility areas at the rear basement into further guest accommodation.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. As the appeal site lies within a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. Since the Council issued its decision notices, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been revised, with the latest version published on 12 December 2024 and updated on 7 February 2025. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to these appeals remain broadly the same. As a result, I have not sought further submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my approach.

5. Following the Council's determination of the appeal scheme, the appellants submitted a revised scheme, which omitted the dormer window and en-suite bathroom pods. The Council granted consent on 19 February 2025 for the 'replacement of front elevation basement windows with 1 no. timber single glazed sash and 1 no. French doors, the installation of enclosed toilet/WC cubicles to bedrooms together with the installation of new walls and alterations to doorways'¹.
6. The Council's reasons for refusal relate solely to the dormer window and the en-suite bathroom pods. Given the consented scheme, my site visit and the evidence before me, I find no reason to reach a contrary conclusion to the Council on the other works.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are whether the proposal would:
 - preserve a Grade II listed building, known as '15-29, Wellington Crescent' (Ref: 1086075) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and,
 - preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Ramsgate Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Listed building

8. The appeal relates to a part three storey and part four storey terrace, with basement, which dates back to the early 19th century. The terrace is constructed of stock brick, which is part rendered and has a slate roof. The terrace has a rusticated base with a Doric colonnade at ground floor level, with veranda above. It features traditional sash windows and has French windows on the first floor, which have traceried rectangular fanlights.
9. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that the listed building's special interest insofar as is relevant to these appeals is derived from its historic and architectural interest, as an illustration of early 19th century, Regency architecture. The building's surviving historic fabric, its historic plan form, presence of traditional fenestration and doors and its symmetrical form contribute towards its special interest.
10. The proposal seeks to introduce a new flat roof dormer on the front elevation, which the appellants advise would have heritage detailing. The front elevation of the building is highly prominent from the public realm, including the seafront. I find that the proposed dormer by reason of its size, design and siting would appear as a prominent feature on the roof slope and would harmfully interrupt the relatively unaltered roof slope of the terrace.
11. While I observed two other dormers within the front roof slope of the terrace, these do not make a positive contribution to the special interest of the listed building. The existing dormers are the exception, rather than the norm and they do not justify a further erosion of the roof slope. The Council also advises that these dormers are

¹ Application refs: F/TH/24/1383 and L/TH/24/1384

historic. As a result, they would have been assessed under a different policy context. Consequently, I give the existing dormers limited weight in my decision.

12. I note from the evidence before me that consent has been granted for a replacement slate roof to the appeal property². The appellants advise that substantial roof works are required, including the repair of rotten rafters. However, there is limited information before me on the condition of the roof structure and the impact that the proposed dormer would have on historic fabric, in particular the rafters. While some of the rafters may need to be repaired, this does not justify the loss of historic fabric.
13. The appellants advise that the dormer offers additional bedroom space, which would increase the viability of the business. However, there is no compelling evidence before me that the business would not be viable in the absence of these works.
14. I appreciate that when providing pre-application advice, the Council did not object to the provision of a new dormer and advised that any dormer should be as discreet as possible. Nevertheless, this was not a formal view of the Council and I therefore give this limited weight in my decision. Furthermore, the proposed dormer would be far larger in size than one of the existing dormers.
15. The proposal seeks to provide new pods that would incorporate en-suite bathroom facilities. The proposed pods would not extend up to the ceiling. As a result, they would not obstruct the historic cornices. Given the design and materials of the proposed pods, they would be clearly read as a modern addition to the building.
16. The pods proposed on the ground floor would be sited adjacent to historic doors. While I appreciate that these doors would be retained and the pods would be reversible, the proposal would partially obscure the historic doors. It is also not clear from the evidence before me whether these pods would be fixed to the historic fabric. Many of the rooms contain historic features, including decorative skirting boards. The proposed pods have the potential to interfere with these historic features.
17. The front room at first floor level has three pairs of French doors that open onto the veranda. The subdivision of this principal room would harmfully erode the sense of grandeur, symmetry and openness that this room currently exhibits. Furthermore, the proposal would harmfully erode the plan form of this room and the legibility of the hierarchy of the building.
18. I appreciate that only 20th century doors are being removed or relocated. However, in many cases, the pods would be sited directly in front of the door to the bedroom, which would create a sense of enclosure and harmfully erode the plan form and the spacious nature that the rooms currently exhibit.
19. The consented scheme has demonstrated that the bathroom facilities can be accommodated within the rooms without the level of harm that I have identified. While I appreciate that having a bath within the bedroom would not suit all guests, guests would be aware of the situation at the time of booking and could opt to book a room with separate bathroom facilities. While the appellants raise concern that the consented WC pods do not have hand basins, there is no compelling

² Application ref: L/TH/24/0707

evidence before me, why a hand basin cannot be accommodated within a WC pod.

20. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Conservation Area

21. The appeal site lies within the Ramsgate CA. The CA covers a large area of the town, including the seafront and the harbour. There are a variety of architectural styles and periods in the locality. The historic and architectural interest of the CA insofar as is relevant to this appeal is derived from its evolution as a historic seaside resort. The high quality of the architecture within the CA, including the grand terrace properties and the attractive areas of public realm, particularly adjacent to the seafront make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
22. The listed building occupies a prominent position adjacent to the seafront and faces onto an area of public open space. The proposed dormer would be sited on the front roof slope of the building and would be visible from the public realm to the front of the terrace. The proposed dormer would harmfully erode the relatively unaltered roof slope of the terrace and would diminish the sense of symmetry that the listed building currently exhibits. As a result, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA, as a whole.

Heritage Balance

23. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. The proposal would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
24. Paragraph 212 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 213 advises that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have clear and convincing justification. I find the proposal would result in less than substantial harm; however, this should not be equated with a lesser planning objection and is still of considerable importance and weight.
25. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
26. The existing building is currently derelict and in a poor condition. The proposal would repair the building, retaining and restoring much of its historic fabric and would reinstate the building back into a hotel use. The proposal would help to meet a demand for high quality tourist accommodation within the district, as supported by Policy E07 of the Thanet District Council Local Plan July 2020 (the Local Plan). The proposed use would have economic benefits, through the employment of staff. Guests staying in the hotel would contribute towards the economic viability and vitality of the town. The proposal would result in investment into the property and provide employment for local craftsmen or women, which would have a small economic benefit.

27. However, there is no compelling evidence before me that the same benefits cannot be achieved through the consented scheme, which does not result in the harm that I have identified. As a result, I give the public benefits of the scheme limited weight in my decision.
28. Overall, I give the public benefits limited weight in my decision. Consequently, in attributing great weight to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage asset, I find that there would be insufficient public benefits arising from the proposal to outweigh this harm.
29. Given the above, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. The proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the historic environment policies of the Framework. The proposal would conflict with Policies HE02, HE03, SP36 and QD02 of the Local Plan. These policies among other things require that proposals: accord with the criteria set out in the Framework in respect to heritage assets; preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA; and that the character, scale and plan form of the original building are respected.

Other Matters

30. The appeal property historically formed part of a hotel, which incorporated 26 Wellington Crescent (No 26). Planning and listed building consent applications were granted by the Council at No 26 to change the use of the building to flats on 20 February 2025³. The consented scheme included internal and external alterations. The appellants advise that the consented scheme at No 26 has resulted in the loss of historic fabric and changes to the plan form, including the loss of a spine wall. The appellants also advise that the consented bathrooms are a similar size to the en-suites within the appeal scheme but feature full height partitions. Nevertheless, full details of the circumstances of the other scheme are not before me. Furthermore, the other scheme did not include the provision of a dormer window, neither did the doors to the rooms open directly onto the new bathroom walls/partitions. As a result, it is materially different than the appeal scheme. Accordingly, I give it limited weight in my decision.

Conclusion

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

A James

INSPECTOR

³ Application refs: F/TH/24/0913 & L/TH/24/0914