



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2025

by **S Rawle BA (Hons) Dip TP Solicitor**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/D/24/3356193

Sunny Nook Vicarage Road, Great Hockham, Norfolk IP24 1PE

- 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 Andrew Harris of Sirrah Limited against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref is 3PL/2024/0402/HOU.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension, removal of existing outbuilding and replaced with a two-storey rear extension to main dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have amended the description of development from that on the application form to that on the Council's decision notice to remove some of the detailed description which are not acts of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area and whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hockham Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the Hockham Conservation Area (HCA). I must consider this appeal in light of the statutory duty placed upon me under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). This requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
5. The HCA includes the traditional core of the village with The Green at its centre, which is an attractive green open space that comprises some benches. There is an abundance of period properties of different styles including thatched cottages, terraced houses and detached properties, but there are also examples of more modern development which have generally been sensitively designed to ensure they are compatible with the more traditional buildings within the village.
6. The significance of the HCA derives from the enduring historic pattern of development set around a central green and the interest in the built form with attractive period properties generally arranged in a linear form along the roads, which provide both aesthetic and historical value.

7. The appeal site is located along Vicarage Road which is a residential road with a mix of house styles, types and periods. The HCA boundary has been tightly drawn to include only a few properties along this road including the appeal site and a row of similar modest detached and semi-detached properties to the west of the appeal site which are set back on their plots creating a sense of spaciousness. Due to gaps between properties I was able to observe that any rear projections within the same row were in proportion to the overall modest scale of these properties.
8. In addition, immediately to the east of the appeal site is Cherry Tree House, a more substantial detached property which has buildings behind the main building, although there is a clear separation, and the visible buildings are clearly subservient to the main house. This is similar to the appeal site as although there is a substantial outbuilding located within the rear garden this is set some distance behind the rear elevation of the existing dwelling and in terms of its bulk and scale it is clearly subservient to it. The appeal site and these nearby properties on either side are compatible with the character and appearance of the wider area.
9. The proposal would introduce a particularly substantial extension. In terms of the front façade, I agree with the Council's historic buildings officer that an upward extension of the existing single storey extension would not harm the character and appearance of the host building or the character and appearance of the wider area, including the HCA. The same can be said for the introduction of a front entrance door along with the porch canopy.
10. However, the same cannot be said for the extent and design of the rear extension. Notwithstanding that the existing outbuilding would be removed and the footprint of the rear extension would be practically in line with the existing outbuilding, the depth, scale and massing would unacceptably overwhelm the host building. Such an arrangement would introduce an incongruous feature that would not appear sufficiently subservient to the host building. Moreover, it would introduce alien features including flat roofed elements between gable projections and a large predominantly glass rear gable end which would not be compatible with the modest appearance of the existing dwelling.
11. I accept that public views of the rear elements would be limited due to existing vegetation and the position of the proposed extension. However, as accepted by the appellant the rear extension would be partially visible from the streetscene. To my mind, the introduction of such a large extension that would be out of scale with the host building would appear discordant and inharmonious at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of both the host building and the wider area.
12. Consequently, the proposal would neither preserve or conserve the character or appearance of the HCA. Given the nature of the proposal, I consider the degree of harm to the significance of the conservation area in this case would be to a moderate level of less than substantial. The result is that the duty under the Act would not be met, and this is a matter of considerable importance and weight.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation, and this is irrespective of the level of harm. Consequently, I afford this issue great weight in the determination of the appeal which I will weigh against the public benefits of the proposal later in the decision.

14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would result in less than substantial harm to the HCA which is a designated heritage asset. As a result, the proposal would conflict with Policies COM01, GEN02 and ENV07 of the Breckland Local Plan, September 2023 (BLP) which among other things seeks to ensure that new development should be designed to the highest possible standards, should respect and be sensitive to the character of the surrounding area and the significance of designated heritage assets should be conserved or wherever possible enhanced.

Other Matters

15. I accept that the proposal would not result in any harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents, would result in an appropriately sized dwelling to serve the needs of the appellant's family and result in a more sustainable building in terms of energy consumption and wildlife with the inclusion of suitable insulation and swift boxes. However, the public benefits of the proposal are limited and do not outweigh the harm the proposal would have on the significance of the HCA.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Consequently, the appeal should be dismissed.

S Rawle

INSPECTOR