



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/Y/25/3371714

7 White Street, Topsham, Devon EX3 0AA

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs K Letten against the decision of Exeter City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0394/LBC.
 - The works proposed are a proposed single storey rear extension incorporating outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for a proposed single storey rear extension incorporating outbuilding at 7 White Street, Topsham, Devon EX3 0AA in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 25/0394/LBC and the plans submitted with it subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) Prior to any work above ground level, details of any external materials, window frames and render colour(s) of the extension hereby consented shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall then be undertaken using the approved details only, and any render shall be applied and painted in the approved manner prior to first use of the extension hereby consented.

Procedural matters

2. I have considered the scheme against Drawing 24/16/01B entitled 'Proposed Single Storey Extension' dated August 24.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are the effect of the works on the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II listed building, whether they would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Topsham Conservation Area, and whether they would harm the significance of either of these designated heritage assets.
4. The decision notice also included a reason for refusal concerning the alleged overbearing effect of the works on the neighbours' amenity. Such an issue though is not to be considered under listed building consent and so is not before me.

Reasons

5. The appellants' property is the last in a row of relatively simple houses from the late 17th or early 18th Centuries, which together form a Grade II listed building. The

houses are each 2 storeys high with an attic floor, and have been subject to various alterations over the years. Despite this, when seen from the front there is still a certain uniformity, through matters such as detailing and window pattern, that unites the terrace and highlights its age. To my mind the terrace therefore demonstrates the nature and type of simpler housing that would be expected from this period in this port town. Its significance is, as a consequence, partly historic and partly architectural, while its special architectural and historic interest lies to some degree in its detailing and form.

6. Next to this row is another terrace of cottages (the adjacent row). This has a brick frontage and, despite being of some age, I understand it is not listed. The 2 terraces are separated by a gap, with the gable of No 7 being about some 6m from the side wall of the end property in that adjacent row. Set back about 10m or so from the frontage, and roughly in the middle of this gap, is a rendered outbuilding with a low pitched roof. Although it straddles the boundary between the properties it is accessed from No 7 and, under section 1(5) of the Act, I have treated it as forming part of the listed building.
7. No 7 has already been extended to the rear by the addition of a sizeable conservatory with a mono-pitched roof. This has significantly increased the overall footprint of the building though I understand it is positioned roughly on the site of a former house that stood here. The proposal is to add a heavily glazed new addition onto one of the rear corners of that conservatory, to link through to the outbuilding. The outbuilding would then be increased in height, given a flat roof to match the new addition to the existing conservatory, and used as a shower room.
8. The proposal is of a markedly different design to the older part of the house, and, with the existing extension in between, it would be a visually distinct and separate element. However, its scale and design mean that, whether taken by itself or even considered with the existing conservatory, it would not challenge the original element to the front. Furthermore, from the rear, the terrace in which No 7 sits has already been much altered, with large extensions apparent along the row, including at least one with a flat roof. While the form of the outbuilding would be changing, I consider it makes a limited contribution to the significance of the designated asset. Taking these factors together, in this context I consider the proposed works would not be of a size, scale or design that would harm the significance of the listed building, or undermine its special architectural or historic interest.
9. From the front, the Council contended the gap between No 7 and the adjacent row played an important role in separating these 2 distinct terraces, and as such any changes to the living space of the houses at either end should be achieved without breaking outside of the line of their historic gables. I fully accept the importance of this gap, as the separation it creates means that the individuality of each terrace is distinct and not compromised. However, White Street is very narrow, with the terrace containing No 7 sitting immediately next to the carriageway. As a result, given how far back the development would be on the site, from much of the lane it could have no bearing on the contribution made by this gap.
10. Indeed, from the front the works would only be visible on the carriageway when directly passing the gap. From here though the gap's openness is already affected by the porch on the side of No 7 and the adjacent pedestrian gate, as well as the wider double gates serving the neighbouring cottage and the intervening boundary

treatment between the 2 properties. Moreover, the outbuilding and an adjacent garage are also apparent, sitting well back from the lane, with views through to relatively modern housing beyond. As a result, the impact of the gap is already constrained to some degree, and yet, despite this, even from here the 2 terraces remain clear and distinct as a result of their markedly differing designs, and the overall size of the separation.

11. The works would extend beyond the side gable of No 7, but they would sit behind the rear elevation of not only the original building but also the existing rear conservatory. Similarly, the outbuilding would be increased in scale but it would maintain a subservience and, as stated, it stands well back from the road and is also behind and away from the rear elevations of the older parts of the houses to either side. Therefore, in this context, the role of the gap would be unaffected, and the character of the listed building would be unchallenged.
12. As a result of these factors, I conclude that the works would not harm the significance of this listed building.
13. Turning to the effect on the conservation area, the significance of this lies to some extent in it representing a small historic port settlement that has grown up in an organic and informal manner over the centuries, and the nature and form of its buildings and their layout reflect this and contribute to the conservation area's character and appearance. The age, detailing and arrangement of No 7 and the row of which it is a part mean they make a positive contribution to this significance. For the same reasons that I consider the works would not cause harm to the listed building, I also find they would not undermine the charm of this lane, and would not fail to preserve the character or appearance of this conservation area, or harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.
14. The decision made reference to the effects on the settings of nearby listed buildings. Whilst the other houses in the row are listed, that is as a consequence of them together being a single listed building that includes No 7, and the effects of the works on that building have been assessed in my reasoning above. Otherwise I was made aware of no other listed buildings that could be adversely affected by the scheme, and given my findings, if any such buildings are present, I have no basis to consider their significance would be harmed.

Conditions

15. In order to safeguard the historic significance of the locality the materials should be agreed, and for the avoidance of doubt a commencement condition should be imposed. However, given the size of the scheme and the fact the appeal is for listed building consent only, I am not satisfied that it is necessary to specify the approved drawings in a condition, or that it is appropriate to seek a construction management plan to protect neighbouring amenity.

Conclusions

16. Accordingly I conclude the proposal would not fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building, would not fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Topsham Conservation Area, and would not harm the significance of either of these designated heritage assets. Therefore, insofar as they are material considerations to this appeal for listed building consent, the scheme would not conflict with *Exeter City Core Strategy*

Policy CP17, Policies C1, C2 and DG1 of the *Exeter Local Plan*, and the *Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations* SPD, all of which seek good design that is compatible with its locality and safeguards the historic environment.

17. Accordingly I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR