



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025 by E Nutman BA (Hons)

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/25/3364844

The Coach House, Park Lane, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6HL

- 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 Messrs Jones against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
- The application Ref is DC/24/2894/FUL.
- The development proposed is extensive and holistic renovation to the entire property, including: environmental upgrades to all retained building fabric, a new rear extension, first floor extensions, conversion of loft space, internal layout changes, re-facing of all facades, new dormer windows, alterations to the vehicular entrance, new perimeter wall and additional outbuilding to the garden.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an extensive and holistic renovation to the entire property, including: environmental upgrades to all retained building fabric, a new rear extension, first floor extensions, conversion of loft space, internal layout changes, re-facing of all facades, new dormer windows, alterations to the vehicular entrance, new perimeter wall and additional outbuilding to the garden at The Coach House, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6HL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/24/2894/FUL, and subject to the conditions set out in the schedule below.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:
 - i) whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Southwold Conservation Area (SCA) and the settings of nearby listed buildings; and
 - ii) the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The SCA includes the bulk of Southwold's historic core. The appeal site sits within the Marine Villas Character Area of the SCA. The significance of this part of the SCA largely derives from the numerous elegant early nineteenth century 'marine villas'. Park Lane is described in The Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal &

Management Plan (SCAAMP) (2024) as being particularly memorable. Houses to the south side of Park Lane where the appeal site is situated vary in age and status and there is a high density of Grade II listed properties. A significant feature is the number of public greens, including Skilman's Hill which backs on to the appeal site, which the SCAAMP identifies create a sense of spaciousness within this character area.

5. To one side of the appeal site is the late C18, Grade II listed house at 20 Park Lane, associated with James Magg, diarist (1797 – 1890). Opposite the site on Park Lane are the Grade II listed houses at 9 – 23 Park Lane, with 21 - 23 associated with Thomas Gardner (1690 – 1769), an historian of Southwold and Dunwich. The significance of these listed houses also derives from their origins, dating between the C17 to the early C19, the high quality of their materials and their period detailing. 22 Park Lane, which is part of what was once known as 'Park Villa', also adjoins the site is identified as a 'positive unlisted structure' in the SCAAMP.
6. The setting of Park Lane's listed buildings is largely defined by the variety of period architecture and the largely consistent alignment of buildings mainly sited along the street edge. There is variation to building heights and roof pitches to the dwellings along Park Lane, albeit most of the roofs are orientated to slope towards the street. The buildings also include a mixture of façade and roof treatment, including red brick, painted render, unknapped flint and gault brick and pantile or slate to roofs. Multiple dwellings along Park Lane have accommodation at roof level with dormers to front roof slopes a regular feature along the street.
7. As the property name suggests, the appeal site was previously occupied by a coach house serving 'Park Villa' prior to the construction of the existing structure during the 1950's. The property is a detached dwelling comparable height to the buildings either side. Like its predecessor, it is set back further back from the street frontage in comparison to neighbouring buildings. It also benefits from generous garden space and on-site parking to the front and rear of the site; the latter of which can be accessed via a public right of way. The rear of the dwelling is partially visible in views over the boundary treatments from Skilman's Hill. A gault brick wall has long formed the front boundary. However, the evidence suggests that openings within the wall have changed over the years with a wide central opening that formerly served site since reduced to form the current pedestrian access.
8. Overall, The Coach House and the existing site features described sit comfortably amongst their surroundings, making a neutral contribution to the settings of the SCA and its listed buildings.
9. Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) require me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA and to preserving the settings of listed buildings.
10. The massing sketches at section 8.4 of the appellant's Design and Access Statement demonstrate that the extended dwelling would have a similar scale to the existing with a modest increase in mass. It would remain set back from the front boundary and set away from the side elevations of the neighbouring buildings to either side. Moreover, the asymmetrical pitched roof form would be retained. As a result, there would be a suitable spaciousness between buildings, and the scale

and form of the building would continue to sit comfortably amongst surrounding buildings on Park Lane.

11. Furthermore, the design incorporates sympathetic detailing including in terms of the modestly scaled dormers which would suitably allude to the proportions of existing windows and roof forms seen along the street. The subdued tones of the pale gault brickwork and the unknapped flintwork would be respective of the local vernacular. The vertical white stained timber cladding to the front elevation would evoke the appearance of a traditional coach house door. The front wall is proposed to be retained where possible and the new openings created will include a wide gated entrance point reminiscent of the historical coach entrance point.
12. Owing to its single storey scale, large, glazed elements set within timber reveals and gault brickwork, the rear extension would have a contemporary but lightweight appearance that would complement the design of its host. The outbuilding would further reinforce the high quality and holistic approach to materials on the site, also incorporating gault brick walls as well as a sedum roof. Together with its low, flat roofed profile, sunken position and screening offered by the site boundary treatments, it would have a discreet presence. The rear garden would remain substantially open and soft landscaped, further assisting assimilation of the proposals into their surroundings. In addition, the dark colour of the photovoltaic array indicated to the rear roof slope would suitably assimilate with the host dwelling's black pantile roof.
13. Overall, the tasteful design and sympathetic materials incorporated would ensure that the development positively responds to the local vernacular. It would sit comfortably within the Marine Villas Character Area SCA and the settings of its listed buildings, including in views from, the street, from neighbouring properties and from Skilman's Hill. Moreover, the elements that reference the site's historic use have the potential to better reveal the SCA's significance.
14. I conclude, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the SCA and the settings of nearby listed buildings. Accordingly, the proposal accords with Policy SWD6 of the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan (2022) (SNP) and Policies WLP8.29, WLP8.37 and WLP8.39 of the East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan (2019) (LP) which require development proposals to demonstrate high quality design which complements local character and distinctiveness and to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings.
15. The proposal also responds to paragraph 135 of the and 212 of the NPPF as they require that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change as well as ensuring great weight is given to a heritage asset's conservation.
16. Whilst not included within the reason for refusal, Policy SWD12 of the SNP is referred to within the committee meeting minutes. The size of the remaining garden will be consistent with the predominant pattern of garden spaces within the area following the proposed outbuilding and rear extension. There is also no demonstrable evidence to indicate the proposal would not meet the other criteria in this policy.

Living Conditions

17. The nearest ground floor side elevation window serving 22 Park Lane serves a living space and currently faces towards the shared boundary wall. One of No 22's first floor side elevation windows is also closely aligned with the side elevation of The Coach House. The nearest extension at first-floor level will not encroach towards No 22 beyond the existing boundary wall. I visited No 22 and saw the potential relationship. Given the intervening space between the boundary and these neighbouring windows, together with the asymmetrical side profile of the development's upper floor and roof, occupiers of No 22 will continue to benefit from a suitable outlook and appreciation of the space between and either side of the development.
18. The proposal will also result in the dwelling sitting closer to neighbouring property 20 Park Lane (No 20). No 20 has a first floor window on its rear elevation which is situated close to the side boundary with the appeal site. The appeal dwelling is already substantively set back from this window. Due to the established relationship in terms of their relative alignment, the retained space between them, and the wider aspect from this neighbouring property over its garden, suitable outlook will be maintained for occupiers of No 20.
19. In relation to its effect upon properties opposite from the appeal dwelling, such as No 19 Park Lane, the intervening road provides a suitable degree of separation. This, combined with the sympathetic scale and set back position of the dwelling in comparison to the other buildings along this side of the road, will ensure that the extended dwelling would not be overbearing when experienced from those neighbouring properties.
20. I conclude the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to outlook. In that regard, the proposal accords with Policy WLP8.29 of the LP which, amongst other matters, requires development to protect the amenity of neighbouring uses.

Other Matters

21. The site is located within the Suffolk and Essex Coasts and Heaths National Landscape (NL). Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that regard be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). I am also conscious of my duty under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. These purposes also include increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the National Landscape.
22. The effect of the appeal proposal on the landscape is not a matter in dispute between the main parties. Nevertheless, the National Planning Policy Framework also requires that great weight be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the NL. Given its domestic scale, and that the development would sit comfortably amongst the existing built form on Park Lane, I am also satisfied that the wider landscape and the scenic beauty of the NL would be conserved.

23. From undertaking my site visit, I observed that due to the intervening distance retained between the appeal dwelling and neighbouring properties, together with the relative orientation of buildings, the proposal would be unlikely to result in any material reduction in the levels of daylight and sunlight received by neighbouring dwellings. I have not been provided with any compelling evidence that suggests otherwise. The relative angles and distances between the proposed windows, neighbouring windows and gardens would also be such that acceptable levels of privacy would be retained for neighbouring occupiers. There is also nothing to suggest that the proposed development would result in levels of noise likely to harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
24. Whilst concerns have been raised regarding the vehicular access to the rear, I am aware that this access already exists and access itself does not form part of the appeal proposal.
25. There is nothing to indicate that the outbuilding would not be used in conjunction with the host dwelling. Furthermore, use of the outbuilding as a separate dwelling or holiday let, would require separate planning permission. For this reason also, the Council's suggested condition to prevent use of the outbuilding being used as a separate dwelling is not necessary.
26. There is no substantive evidence to suggest the development of this existing house would lead to any material effects on carbon emissions, vehicular traffic, highway safety or wildlife. Light omitted from the extended dwelling would be seen in the context of the domestic setting that the site sits within. Any private covenants would be a separate matter for the appellant to address if so required.

Conditions

27. In addition to the standard three-year implementation period condition, it is necessary, in the interests of certainty, to define the plans with which the development should be carried out in accordance with.
28. In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings, it is necessary that precise details/samples of the materials to be used in any external surfaces of the development are submitted to and approved in writing prior to any development beyond slab level taking place.
29. In the interests of highway safety and in line with the Council's suggestions, conditions requiring a construction plan and for the visibility splay, and for the area indicated on the plans for the purposes of manoeuvring, parking and cycling to be provided are also included.

Conclusion and Recommendation

30. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

E Nutman

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

31. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: P001, P100 - REV C, P110 - REV B, P111 - REV B, P112 - REV B, P115 - REV A, P120 - REV A, P121 - REV B, P122 - REV B, P150 - REV C, P151 - REV B, P152 - REV A, P160.
- 3) No development shall take place above slab level until details/ samples of the materials to be used in the construction of external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall only be carried out with the approved materials.
- 4) Before the altered vehicular entrance is first used, visibility splays shall be provided as shown on Drawing No P170 with an X dimension of 2.4 metres and a Y dimension of 5.4 & 5.2 metres respectively [tangential to the nearside edge of the carriageway] and thereafter retained in the specified form. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 2 Class A of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no obstruction to visibility shall be erected, constructed, planted or permitted to grow over 0.6 metres high within the areas of the visibility splays.
- 5) Following commencement of the development, use of the areas within the site shown on Drawing No P100 Rev C for the purposes of manoeuvring and parking of vehicles and cycle storage in connection with the extended dwelling shall not commenced until those areas have been provided in accordance with this drawing. Thereafter those areas shall be retained and used for no other purposes.
- 6) No part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until a construction plan, detailing how public access is going to be safely managed (including construction vehicle parking) along the public right of way during construction, has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.