



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 February 2026

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th August 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/U2750/W/25/3376315

Croft Spa Hotel, Northallerton Road, Croft on Tees, North Yorkshire DL2 2ST

- 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 S Bailey of Modnarway2 Limited against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Reference is: ZD25/00135/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described as: Erection of wicker enclosure and new opening to create a bridal suite private outdoor area and new opening from Honeymoon Suite to the enclosed garden area .
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Appeal B Ref: APP/U2750/Y/25/3376314

Croft Spa Hotel, Northallerton Road, Croft on Tees, North Yorkshire DL2 2ST

- 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 Mr S Bailey of Modnarway2 Limited against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Reference is: ZD25/00136/LBC.
 - The works proposed are described as: Erection of wicker enclosure and new opening to create a bridal suite private outdoor area and new opening from Honeymoon Suite to the enclosed garden area.
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Decision

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The works that form the subject of these appeals have already been carried out and I was able to see them when I visited the site. Although the development was described as “retrospective” on the planning application form and also on the decision notices issued by the Council, Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the TCPA) describes development as the carrying out of building operations, or the making of material changes of use, as opposed to their retention or continuation. Section 73A of the TCPA makes allowance for the submission of a planning application for development which has been carried out before the date of the application. I have therefore omitted the word ‘retrospective’ from the description of the proposed development in respect of the appeal against the refusal of planning permission. Section 8(3) of the Planning (Listed Buildings

and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) includes similar provisions to Section 73A of the TCPA, allowing listed building consent to be sought for works that have already been carried out. I have also amended the description of the works in respect of the listed building consent appeal to remove the term 'retrospective'.

4. Both appeals relate to the same proposal and the applications for listed building consent and planning permission were refused for identical reasons. I have considered each appeal on its own merits. However, to avoid duplication in this decision, I have dealt with the appeals together except where otherwise stated.
5. As the proposal is in 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).

Main Issues

6. The main issues in these appeals are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, The Croft Hotel [List Entry No. 1179487], and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and the extent to which it would preserve, or enhance, the character or appearance of the Croft Conservation Area

Reasons

7. The Croft Hotel, (formerly known as The Croft Spa Hotel) is a large purpose built hotel, originally constructed in 1835 and later extended by the addition of a ballroom range around 1860. The building has six bay coach house to the opposite end of the building from the ballroom. The evidence indicates that, historically, there was a larger range of attached outbuildings to the rear of the hotel, forming two courtyards, that has subsequently been demolished. It also indicates that there was previously a swimming pool to the rear of the ballroom which was later infilled and is now beneath part of the hotel car park. The building was designed by Ignatius Bonomi, a well-known local architect, for Sir William Chaytor, the owner of the local estate. It was built to serve the mineral water spas located to the south of the village. The hotel is built in a Palladian style and the central block and ballroom are rendered, under a slate roof. The coach house is in brickwork with a pantile roof, although it was previously also rendered. A carriage arch passes through the coach house where it joins the main central block.
8. The appeal building is a purpose built hotel constructed to serve the mineral water spas to the south of the village. It has architectural value derived from its design and that it reflects the architectural tastes of the times when it was originally built and subsequently extended. It also provides evidence of the building techniques and materials used at those times, which is manifested in the historic layering observable at the building. It has evidential value, illustrating a hotel building being altered over time to suit the changing needs of the guests, changes in the methods of transport used to access it, and further adaptation following the closure of the spas it was originally built to service. It has historic interest from its association with the spas and also from its design by a well known local architect working in County Durham and Yorkshire. In addition, there is an aesthetic value arising from both the external appearance of the building and its spatial relationship with the nearby Grade I listed Church of St Peter and the Grade I Croft Bridge over the River Tees.

9. The Croft Conservation Area covers much of the village, including the open paddocks between South Parade and Richmond Road and the grounds to Croft Hall and Monk End Hall. The evidence indicates that the village was initially an agricultural settlement associated with a manor house. The village expanded from the later part of the seventeenth century as it gained popularity as a spa with the development of lodging houses and facilities to cater for visitors to the spa including the appeal building. This increased during the Victorian period, particularly after the arrival of the railway, although less so than in the neighbouring settlement of Hurford. From the evidence, and from what I saw when I visited the site, the significance of the conservation area, in so far as it is relevant to these appeals, arises from its architectural interest in terms of the historic manor house and church, and the style and type of buildings constructed to support the spas. It has historic evidential value illustrating the evolution of the village from an agricultural settlement to a more visitor focussed settlement. In addition, the area has an aesthetic value derived from the arrangement of buildings and spaces.
10. The appeal proposal comprises an enclosed area to the rear of the building adjacent to a projecting rear wing. It is located on an area that was previously part of an external patio area floored with flagstones. It consists of 2 metre high, woven wicker, fence panels attached to a timber frame which is attached to the ground using metal post shoes bolted to the flagstones. A timber framed monopitch roof finished with wood shingles covers part of the area. The drawings and supporting information also indicate that a new opening has been made through the wall of the building to provide access to the outdoor space.
11. The rear elevation of the building is distinctly different from the front in that it is comprised of a mix of materials including smooth render, roughcast, painted and unpainted brickwork, and painted and exposed red sandstone, which show the historic layering of a building that has been altered over time to adapt to the changing requirements of the hotel.
12. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the proposal sheds little light on the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the works. It is, therefore, not clear how the design and choice of materials for the enclosure were arrived at, or in what way it has been designed to take into account the historic nature of the building.
13. It is clear that the rear of the building has undergone changes and adaptations as the nature of the hotel business has evolved, as additional facilities were added, and transport modes changed, leading to a secondary entrance being formed on the rear. Nevertheless, these adaptations have been constructed in materials that are consistent with, or complementary to the principal building, such as render finishes or red brick that blends in with the red sandstone. The appeal proposal does not use materials found elsewhere on the building.
14. The materials used for the construction of the enclosure are distinctly contemporary in nature and appearance, particularly the woven wicker used for the screens. This materiality appears incongruous against the traditional materials used on the building. In addition, whilst the structure is solidly built, the details are not as well executed. The tops of the supporting posts project above the top of the wicker screens, lending it an unfinished appearance. The partial roof also appears as a visual afterthought that unbalances the design of the enclosure. In

combination, these factors result in the enclosure not integrating well with the structure of the main building. This is harmful to the listed building and diminishes its aesthetic value.

15. The position of the enclosure obscures views of the former carriage arch through the attached coach house. Although this has been infilled with doors and glazing panels, is nonetheless still legible as an architectural feature and provides visual evidence of the historic function of that part of the building. This diminishes the ability to understand and appreciate the historic functions of this part of the building.
16. There is nothing in the evidence that would suggest that there was a previous opening where the new opening has been made through the wall of the building into the enclosure. This results in both a loss of historic building fabric and also reduces the legibility of the historic floorplan of the building. The loss of historic building fabric, is of itself, harmful. From what I saw when I visited the site, the floorplan of the building has previously been altered. Nonetheless, the proposal results in a further erosion of the historic floorplan, which adds to the harm to the significance of the building.
17. The rear of the building does house a number of small enclosures, such as bin stores, and a functional metal fire escape stair from the first floor of one of the rear wings, with the latter being the most visually intrusive due to its height. Nevertheless, these are for the most part relatively small and discreet structures which do not obscure an historic features of the building. The land to the rear of the building is largely laid out as a car park for the hotel. The existing enclosures are located immediately adjacent to this car park giving them a closer visual relationship with this functional element of the site. The fire escape stair is an unsightly addition to the building. However, this has a practical purpose in terms of secondary means of escape in case of fire and compliance with the fire regulations. Consequently, there is a clear and convincing justification for any harm caused by this.
18. However, in respect of the appeal proposal, the effects set out above cumulatively add up to harm to the architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
19. In terms of the conservation area, the proposal has to be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area as a whole. The appeal proposal has only a very localised effect in a part of the conservation area which is, at best, semi-public. It is not clear whether Spa Courtyard is an adopted highway or a private road. Although there are waiting restrictions in the form of single yellow lines on part of it, and it provides access to a number of dwellings within converted former outbuildings of the hotel, beyond a certain point it becomes primarily a car park for the hotel.
20. Whilst the appeal scheme has a small adverse effect on the appearance of that part of the conservation area in which it is located, the proposal is small in scale, and the effect is limited to the very near vicinity of the building within a part of the conservation area which is only semi-public. There is nothing in the evidence that would suggest that this compromises the ability to discern or understand the significance of the area that I have previously identified. Consequently, I find that the proposal has a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the Croft Conservation Area.

21. Although I have found that the proposal has a neutral effect on the conservation area, for the reasons set out above, I find that it fails to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of these appeals.
22. Paragraph 212 of 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. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. Given that the works are relatively small in scale and effect a secondary elevation of the building, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but, nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight.
23. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial because it would secure the viable long-term use of a heritage asset by providing enhanced bridal facilities essential for its competitiveness as a wedding venue. It is suggested that income from the wedding venue underpins year-round viability of the hotel, overnight guests generate spending within the local area, and that the hotel provides employment for local people across hospitality, events, maintenance and housekeeping.
24. There is no substantiated evidence that gives any indication that the business would not be viable in the absence of the enclosed area, or that it was at risk of failing before the construction of the enclosure. Nor is there any substantive evidence that would indicate that the provision of the enclosed area has resulted in increased employment or spending in the local economy. Consequently, I can give little weight to these purported benefits.
25. The appellant also states that the works are reversible, which mitigates the harm. From what I saw when I visited the site, the external enclosure could be fairly readily removed in the future by dismantling the timber frame. The doorway opening could be re-instated, although once historic fabric has been lost, it remains lost. The appellant has not suggested that the works are in any way temporary or that they would, in fact, be removed in the future. As the harm caused will persist for as long as the works are in place, I give little weight to this point.
26. There may be some modest benefits arising from the works, however, these are not sufficient to overcome the harm that has resulted to the listed building, and do not provide a clear and convincing justification for it.
27. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal fails to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 210 of the Framework. It does not comply with Policies CP10, CP12, and CP13 of the Richmondshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 which, when taken together, support tourist related activities that do not have a detrimental impact on the local environment; seek to ensure that development does not have a detrimental effect on designated heritage assets; and expect a

high standard of design which has regard to its context and the historic environment, insofar as relevant to the proposal.

Other Matters

28. I have noted that there have been representations from interested parties in respect of noise and disturbance arising from the use of the enclosed area during weddings. I saw that there are residential properties immediately adjoining the hotel but that there is an existing outdoor seating area adjacent to these houses and that both are adjacent to the car park of the hotel. These will result in a degree of noise and disturbance that is unrelated to the appeal proposal.
29. From the content of the representations, many of the issues raised appear to stem from management issues in relation to the external areas. I have noted that the Council's Environmental Health Officer has not raised an objection and noise and disturbance was not cited as a reason for refusal by Council. The Council suggest in its Officer's Report that a management plan could be imposed by condition if planning permission were to be granted. Whilst no wording of such a condition has been provided, I consider that it would be possible to suitably manage the use of the enclosed area to mitigate any additional noise. Nonetheless, this does not overcome the harm to the listed building that I have identified or indicate that planning permission should be granted.

Conclusion

30. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR