



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2025

by **OS Woodward MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/Y/24/3355524

Norwood Farm House, Norwood Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0YF

- 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 Mrs Victoria Gilson against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20240514.
 - The works proposed are to replace the existing UPVC windows and doors with timber replacements, replace plastic guttering with cast iron guttering and replace existing outside plug socket with electric car charging port.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the replacement windows and doors. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the guttering and plug socket, and listed building consent is granted to replace plastic guttering with cast iron guttering and replace existing outside plug socket with electric car charging port at Norwood Farm House, Norwood Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0YF, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20240514, dated 7 June 2024, subject to the conditions set out below:
 - 1) The guttering works authorised by this consent shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) Upon completion of the works authorised by this consent, any damage caused to the building in the course of carrying out the works shall be made good within 6 months.
 - 3) No works shall take place until details of the design of the guttering including plans/elevations/drawings at scale 1:10 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. Because the appeal relates to works to a listed building including a refusal to grant listed building consent, I have had special regard to Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was released in December 2024 and further amended in February 2025. The changes were not material to the main issue for the appeal so I have therefore based my Decision on the revised document without needing to consult the main parties for comment.
4. I observed on site that the car charging port has already been installed. Section 8(3) of the Act provides for 'retrospective' listed building consent but this is only

effective from the date of consent rather than any prior point in time. The appeal is therefore partly for the retention of the car charging port.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is therefore whether the works would preserve the Grade II listed building 'Norwood Farmhouse'¹ or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Significance

6. The building is a modestly sized, detached house of two storeys with attic space and associated dormer windows. It is from the 17th Century and made of brick. The primary significance of the building derives from its intrinsic architectural quality, high degree of retained historic fabric and that it is relatively unaltered with regard to extensions or other significant interventions.
7. With regard to its fenestration, the existing windows below the attic level are timber framed, single glazed sash and also a narrow timber framed, single-glazed casement at 1st floor level. Photographic evidence confirms that these windows are not original because the originals were box sash windows, as pre-dated the 1774 London Building Act, and which had larger timber frames. They are therefore also historically inaccurate. They are, nevertheless, historic windows, and by being timber framed, single glazed 6 over 6 sash are still broadly in accordance with the aesthetic and age of the property. The narrow casement window is still timber framed and single glazed and likely replaces an original casement window in this location because of its narrowness. Overall, these windows are neutral contributors to the significance of the building.
8. The windows to attic level are uPVC, double glazed units, with applied rather than integral glazing bars and relatively thick outer frames. The material, detailed design, and the way that the light refracts through the double glazing are all features which are not appropriate for a 17th Century building, do not relate well to the single glazed, timber framed windows to lower levels, either original or existing, and harm the aesthetics of the building. For similar reasons, the uPVC, double glazed French doors to the rear are also harmful. The uPVC windows and doors therefore erode the significance of the building.

Assessment

9. The proposed works include the replacement of the existing uPVC windows and French doors with timber slim lite double glazed fenestration. The glazing bars would be integral to the construction of the window, and each pane of glass would be separate. However, they would be double glazed. Even though slim lite, this would still affect the reflection of light through the windows. Full details of the appearance of the frames and glazing bars have not been provided, but it is likely that the chamfer to the glazing bars and the prominence of the frame would be lesser than with a single glazed construction. This level of detail could not be subject to condition because I do not have confidence that suitable design detail could be achieved within the restrictions imposed by the proposed use of double glazing.

¹ List entry number 1039912

10. I acknowledge that the proposed windows and French doors would be an improvement on the existing uPVC windows and French doors because of the use of timber frames and structurally integral glazing bars. They would better marry with the existing windows and doors to the ground and first floor and be a more historically appropriate material and design for the building. However, the existing uPVC fenestration is unauthorised and should not be considered as the baseline for assessment of the proposal. Rather, the baseline should be the previous, single-glazed timber framed windows and doors. In comparison to those windows and doors, the proposed double-glazing would be harmful, for the reasons set out in the paragraph above. It is also harmful in comparison to the existing, single glazed windows to the lower floors.
11. The external electrical car charging port is slightly larger than the pre-existing plug socket and has therefore caused some damage to the building through loss of historic fabric in the wall. However, the loss of fabric has been very limited. The location to the rear of the side elevation and its position in the same location as the pre-existing plug socket has meant that any harm to the appearance is also very limited. Nevertheless, there has been some, albeit very limited, harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Conclusion

12. As set out above, the proposed windows and French doors and the car charging port fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act, Paragraph 210 of the Framework and development plan policies insofar as relevant. I place the level of harm as less than substantial.

Heritage Balance

13. In accordance with Paragraph 212 of the Framework, I place great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets. Although less than substantial, I place considerable importance and weight on the harm that I have identified to the listed building. As set out at Paragraph 215 of the Framework, where there is less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
14. The proposed replacement of existing plastic guttering on the rear elevation of the building with cast iron guttering would be more in-keeping with the original guttering of the building. I agree with the Council that this would be an enhancement to the significance of the building.
15. The proposal is to replace uPVC double glazing with slim lite timber double glazing. No substantiated evidence has been provided of the effect this would have on energy efficiency. Equally, no substantiated evidence has been provided that the changes would either improve or worsen the EPC rating of the property. Because it would be replacing double glazing with double glazing, it is likely that its effect would be fairly neutral, and this weighs as such in terms of public benefits.
16. The car charging port makes it more likely that the occupants of the property would use an electric car, by making it more convenient to re-charge. This is a public benefit of moderate weight.

17. The existing double glazed uPVC units are in relatively good condition and are relatively energy efficient. There is no reason to believe, and no substantiated evidence has been provided, that the proposed changes are required to secure the ongoing beneficial use of the property as a house.
18. Therefore, the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset that I have identified clearly outweighs the limited public benefits. However, the harm to significance caused by the car charging port considered in isolation is extremely limited. The public benefits of the enhancement to the significance of the building through the proposed guttering and from the increased ease of re-charging electric cars would outweigh this harm, even whilst applying considerable importance and weight to the harm identified.

Conditions

19. The Council has suggested three conditions. The time limit condition is a standard condition and applies to the guttering works which have not yet been undertaken. However, because this is a listed building consent, unlike a planning permission there is no provision for an application for a minor material amendment. Therefore, a condition requiring the works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is not necessary.
20. The third condition relates to the detailed design of the proposed fenestration, which is not part of the works I am allowing and is not, therefore, necessary. Nor is the car charging port, which has already been undertaken. However, details of the proposed guttering are required to ensure that the amount of harm to historic fabric is minimised and made good where possible, and that the detailed design of the works is acceptable. I have therefore added conditions in this regard. I acknowledge that an alternative approach could be to request that the guttering match existing cast iron guttering to parts of the building. However, the detailing of the proposed guttering is important to the significance of the building and necessitates the submission of further materials, rather than simply a requirement to match existing.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above, I find the guttering and car charging port to be acceptable. They are clearly severable both physically and functionally from the proposed replacement windows and doors. Therefore, I issue a split decision in this case and grant listed building consent for the guttering and the car charging port. However, for the reasons set out above, the proposed replacement fenestration should be dismissed.

O S Woodward
INSPECTOR