



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 19/01391/FUL
ADDRESS: Kennet House, Sydney Road, Bath
PROPOSAL: Erection of three storey dwelling
CASE OFFICER: Christine Moorfield
DATE: 30 April 2019
COMMENT: OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Having researched the Government guidelines there has to be serious consideration about whether any dwelling could be considered appropriate for this site. The Government definition of brownfield sites excludes “*Land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments, which, although it may feature paths, pavilions and other buildings, has not been previously developed*”, and the NPPF specifically excludes residential gardens as previously developed land or potential windfall sites. This application therefore is a “garden grabbing” proposal: the fact that an owner of the Kennet House property failed to sell on all of the gardens with the house does not make the land not sold any less of a garden, and one that characterises the neighbouring properties in the area at that.

The legislation defining listed buildings makes it clear that the grounds or gardens associated with them are listed with the property even if the listing text does not mention the gardens, and the fact that the onward sale of Kennet House was with only part of the garden leaving the remainder of the garden in separate ownership, does not delist the part thus separated off. Building on it should therefore require listed building consent.

The proposed development would also have to fit into the context of the surrounding buildings. However these are very special surroundings made up of key heritage assets and landscape setting. This is the third successive design for this site and we again find it to be unsuccessful.

We therefore hold an ‘in principle’ objection to development in this location.

LOCATION

We remain concerned at the proposed location. Currently the Grade II* Cleveland House sits untainted, with an uninterrupted background of green vegetation when looking east.

The proposed location of the new house, whilst not being shown to obscure Cleveland House, it certainly dominates and draws your eye away from it. It would have a great impact on the Grade II listed Kennet House, virtually obscuring it, and likewise it would be all the residents of Kennet House would see when looking out towards the road. It is also taller than Kennet House and the Building Heights Strategy is supposed to rule out new developments which dominate nearby listed buildings.

DESIGN/MATERIALS

The design approach for this application is completely different to anything else in the location. Whilst we do not dislike the design when taken in isolation, it is inappropriate for this location. It is akin to dropping a lighthouse into the otherwise elegant landscape.

The use of Bath stone is supported but we oppose the use of oak boarding. As has been seen so many times before it is not long before it falls into a state of disrepair. Also the roof should be slated or lead and not a grey seamed metal (material not actually defined).

Whilst recognising the current poor condition of the boundary hedges, we are concerned at the replacement with a hard boundary wall. That already erected on part of the entrance to Kennet House is stark and unsympathetic. To continue that on the other side will simply serve to exacerbate this.

SUMMARY

The works, by virtue of the inferior materials and oddities in the design is considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of the adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 ‘Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Policies DW1, CP6, D1, and HE1 of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be refused.

The Government guidance appears to reject any development on a garden plot, and revised drawings will not overcome that reason for refusal.