

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2016

by K E Down MA (Oxon) MSc MRTPI MSB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 03 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/16/3156853

4 Glebe Cottages, Germain Street, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1LY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Harris against the decision of Chiltern District Council.
 - The application Ref CH/2016/0338/FA, dated 24 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two storey side extension replacing existing single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension replacing existing single storey extension at 4 Glebe Cottages, Germain Street, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1LY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CH/2016/0338/FA, dated 24 February 2016, subject to the following 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 approved plans: 3376.L1, 3376.TP1, 3376.TP2, 3376.TP3, 3376.TP4, 3376.TP5 and 3376.TP6.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as specified on approved drawing number 3376.TP3

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the Chesham Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is an 18th century, three storey brick and flint cottage under a steep tiled roof. The top floor is contained within the roof space. The cottage forms part of an attractive terrace of four dwellings which together form a complete composition with pleasing symmetry. The four Glebe Cottages are located at the end of a short row of modest dwellings accessed via a lane
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leading from Germain Street. No 4, the last cottage, is set on a wide plot which accommodates a wide single storey side extension, a side garden and a generous parking area.

4. The site lies within the Chesham Conservation Area (CA) which is characterised in the vicinity of the site by modest traditional dwellings set behind small front gardens or fronting onto the footway. There is a junior school opposite Glebe Cottages which has a different character, being a noticeably larger building. It lies outside the CA.
5. The proposed two storey extension would occupy the footprint of the existing single storey extension and would be the same width, maintaining the significant gap to the side. It would be deeper but still set well back from the front elevation of the original cottage and so would not upset the symmetry of the original terrace. It would have a steeply pitched roof, in keeping with the original dwelling. There would be one well-proportioned front dormer and a number of roof lights set into the roof slopes and a window in the end gable.
6. The appellant points out that a very similar extension at the appeal dwelling has now been approved by the Council. The approved scheme has the same footprint, fenestration and materials as the appeal proposal but has a lower eaves and ridge height.
7. Although the Council raised concerns regarding the proposed materials for the appeal scheme, and in particular the proposed cladding of black stained featheredge boarding, the same materials have been approved on the revised scheme. I noticed a similar treatment on a number of buildings nearby, including a single storey extension to another cottage in the lane and within the CA and the gable end of the modern two storey dwelling beyond the parking area serving the appeal site. I am therefore satisfied that this finish would be in keeping with the CA. and appropriate in its context. Moreover, it would not compete with or detract from the attractive patterns of the brick and flint. It would therefore complement the materials used in the original dwelling.
8. The key difference between the appeal scheme and the approved scheme is the height of the eaves and ridge which are lower in the latter. However, the ridge height of the appeal scheme would be well below that of the existing cottage, ensuring it appeared subservient to the original building. Furthermore, the eaves height would relate well to the original building, matching the cill height of the first floor window in the original front elevation and, to the rear, tying in with the roof of the existing rear conservatory. To the front there would be a lower eave over a simple porch which would match the eaves height of the existing porch and provide architectural interest. Overall the extension would relate well to the original dwelling in its proportions, clearly responding to the strong vertical emphasis seen in the original front elevation, whilst being sympathetic in scale and design. This, together with the set back from the front elevation, would ensure a subordinate character which, whilst clearly seen, would not be incongruous in the street scene.
9. It is concluded on the main issue that the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the Chesham CA. It would therefore comply with Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, 2011, and Policies GC1, CA1, H13 and

H15 of the Chiltern District Local Plan, adopted 1997, including alterations adopted in 2001 and consolidated in 2007 and 2011. Taken together, and amongst other things, these policies require extensions to dwellings in CAs to have a high standard of design that respects the character of the host dwelling, the surrounding area and features of local distinctiveness in terms of pattern of development, scale, height, siting, detailing and materials, such that it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the CA and has no adverse effect on the street scene or the locality. It would also comply with the Residential Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document, 2013. In consequence there would be no need to consider the proposal against paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) since "less than substantial harm" would not arise to the designated heritage asset.

10. The Council criticises the lack of a submitted Heritage Assessment. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF makes clear that, in determining planning applications, the level of detail required should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset. I consider that the evidence before me, submitted with the appeal, is sufficient for this to be achieved.

Conditions and conclusions

11. In addition to the statutory commencement condition, the Council suggests two conditions; one requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans which is necessary in order to provide certainty; and the other requiring materials to be used to match those used in the existing building. Whilst I agree that a condition regarding materials is necessary in order to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the CA, the proposed materials complement, rather than match, those in the existing building. I have therefore adjusted the proposed wording to reflect this.
12. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the lack of any objection from the Chesham Town Council, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR