

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 October 2016

by Roger Catchpole DipHort BSc(hons) PhD MCIEEM

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

Decision date: 21 October 2016

Appeal A: APP/P1940/W/16/3153679

Holly Tree Cottage, The Green, Sarratt, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 6BH

- 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 Tim Dunn against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref: 16/0269/FUL, dated 8 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a front porch.
-

Appeal B: APP/P1940/Y/16/3153682

Holly Tree Cottage, The Green, Sarratt, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 6BH

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Tim Dunn against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref: 16/0268/LBC, dated 8 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2016.
 - The works proposed are a front porch.
-

Decision

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused for a front porch.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council has found that the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of The Green, Sarratt Conservation Area. Nonetheless, I have had special regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. In this respect, as the proposal would not lead to the introduction of a feature that would undermine its significance, I am satisfied that it would preserve those interests.
 4. The Council has found that the proposal would not lead to inappropriate development in the Green Belt or have a significant effect on its openness. Nonetheless, I have had regard to paragraphs 79 and 89-90 of the National
-

Planning Policy Framework 2012 (the Framework). Bearing in mind the size of the front porch I find that it would not lead to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Nor would it have a material effect on openness. Consequently, I am satisfied that no harm to the Green Belt would result from the proposal.

5. As the proposal affects a Listed Building I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether or not the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, Holly Tree Farmhouse and Holly Tree Cottage, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

7. The appeal property is situated on the western side of a substantial village green in the village of Sarratt. The proposal would remove an open canopy porch and construct an enclosed porch with a pitched roof. This would be built from brick with a clay-tiled roof. It would project approximately 1.4 m from the front elevation.
8. Holly Tree Farmhouse and Holly Tree Cottage were listed in 1978 and date from the 17th century. The original timber frame farmhouse was re-fronted and extended in the mid to late 18th century which is when the cottage was added to its south-eastern gable. They form two separate dwellings and are constructed from brick with plain, clay tile roofs. Whilst the pitch of the front roof elevation is consistent between the two, this is not the case for either the ridge or dentilled eaves of the cottage. The former being significantly lower and subservient to the farmhouse whilst the latter is slightly higher.
9. Various 20th century extensions have been added to the side and rear of the appeal property. The 18th century frontage of the cottage comprises a simply-proportioned vernacular design indicative of its modest functional role as an adjunct structure to the main farmhouse. Consequently, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the simple vernacular architecture and proportions of the front elevation of the cottage and how it relates to the façade of the listed building as a whole.
10. I observed from the plans and my site visit that the proposed porch would lead to a highly disproportionate and over-dominant addition to the simple façade of the cottage. It would give rise to a cluttered appearance that would significantly detract from the higher status of the adjoining dwelling. This effect would be exacerbated by the higher ground on which the cottage is situated and erode its subservient nature. Unlike the, albeit recent, porch on the adjoining dwelling, the proposed structure would cover a significant proportion of the original façade and thus its historic fabric.
11. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.

12. Paragraph 132 of 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. It goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets. Given the size of the proposed porch, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
13. Under such circumstances, paragraph 134 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 access to the cottage would no longer be directly into the living room. However, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
14. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would compliment the porch on the adjoining property. Notwithstanding the harm that I have already identified, I find that this would not be the case given the much closer proximity of the ridge of the proposed porch to the cottage eaves. This would lead to an unbalanced appearance that would lack sympathy with the modern elements of this listed building.
15. Given the above and in the absence of any defined public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 134 of the Framework. This would also conflict with policies CP1 and CP12 of the Three Rivers District Core Strategy 2011 and policy DM3 of the Three Rivers DMP Local Development Document 2013 that seek, among other things, to protect the historic environment from inappropriate development, conserve and enhance heritage assets and preserve listed buildings. As a result the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Roger Catchpole

INSPECTOR