The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 December 2016

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 15.12.16

Appeal Refs: APP/J1915/W/16/3157588 & APP/ J1915/Y/16/3157591 Crowsfoot Cottage, 8 Green Lane, Herts SG11 2QG

- The appeals are made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission and under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
- The appeals are made by Mr Victor Hughes against the decisions of East Hertfordshire District Council.
- The applications Refs 3/16/0903/FP and 3/16/0903/HH, dated 14 April 2016, were refused by notices dated 8 June 2016.
- The development proposed is a single storey front extension, first storey side extension, demolition of existing rear conservatory and replacement with rear single storey extension.

Decisions

1. The appeals are allowed and planning permission and listed building consent are granted for a single storey front extension, first storey side extension, demolition of existing rear conservatory and replacement with rear single storey extension at Crowsfoot Cottage, 8 Green Lane, Herts SG11 2QG in accordance with the terms of the applications, Refs 3/16/0903/FP and 3/16/0903/HH, dated 14 April 2016, and the plans submitted with them, subject to the following conditions:

Planning permission:

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) The external materials to be used on the extension hereby permitted shall match those existing.

3) Notwithstanding the details shown on the application drawings, the roof pitch of the rear first floor extension shall match that of the main building.

4) Except where subject to other conditions, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2016/112/02, /03, /04, /05, /06.

Listed building consent:

1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.

2) The external materials to be used on the extension hereby permitted shall match those existing.

3) Notwithstanding the details shown on the application drawings, the roof pitch of the rear first floor extension shall match that of the main building.

4) No works whatsoever are to be carried out to historic fabric in the form of the transverse timber beam over the new door to bedroom 1.

5) Except where subject to other conditions, the works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2016/112/02, /03, /04, /05, /06.

Main Issues

2. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of the proposed alterations and extensions on the architectural character and historic interest of the building, which is listed at Grade II.

Reasons

3. The development plan for the area includes saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review of April 2007 (LP). Policy ENV1 is a general policy requiring a high standard of design and environmental quality. With regard to extensions to dwellings, ENV5 permits extensions providing the character, appearance and amenities of the dwelling would not be significantly detrimentally affected. ENV6 sets out criteria which would apply to all extensions. The reasons for refusal also refer to Section 12 of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

4. The effect on the Braughing Conservation Area is not a reason for refusal, but the Council refer in their representations to the BH series of policies which seek to protect built heritage. It is important to note that in making decisions, the LBCA draws attention in s66 to the duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they may possess. As required by s72(1) of the LBCA, special attention must also be given, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

5. The appeal property consists of a cottage originating from the late 16th century. It has been substantially altered in the intervening years including being divided into 2 semi-detached dwellings. More recent changes dating from the late 20th century include significant extensions to both dwellings. In the case of No. 8, these involved ground floor extensions of generally subordinate character but of unremarkable quality and materials. The proposal would involve internal reworking of the accommodation to provide a larger kitchen at the rear and 3 upper floor bedrooms in place of the 2 at present.

6. Seen from the front and rear, the character of both dwellings as 'small cottages' has been largely lost due to the significant earlier extensions. The proposal to bring forward the ground floor of the side extension towards the front is not objected to by the Council. In my opinion, the introduction of a new recessed upper floor above this would not significantly further diminish the architectural quality or historic interest of the building. The original form of the

gable would be clearly distinguishable, the ridge would be significantly lower[1], and the new small en-suite bathroom window would be of an appropriate size to match those existing.

7. At the rear, the first floor bedroom extension would certainly be noticeable and would considerably increase the volume of the building, but it would be generally subservient and in scale with the original dwelling. The gable would be modest at about 3 metres wide and providing the roof pitch matches the existing roof, would not appear over dominant. The alterations to the conservatory are acceptable to the Council and the overall appearance of the dwelling would, in my view, improve.

8. In conclusion, the proposed development represents a further evolution in the residential occupation of a much altered listed cottage without diminishing further its special architectural character or historic interest. The development would enable the replacement of unsympathetic 20th century alterations with more appropriate and energy efficient spaces without detracting from the original fabric. The works would comply with the design quality aims of LP policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 and would not conflict with the heritage protection aims of the NPPF or the BH policies in the LP. The character and appearance of the Braughing Conservation Area would be preserved.

Conditions

9. To ensure that the architectural and historic interest of the building is protected, conditions are imposed to ensure that the external materials and the roof pitch match existing. The existing timber tie beam over the door to bedroom 1 is original and no alterations are to be made to it. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, the approved application drawings are listed.

Conclusion

10. For all the above reasons, the appeals should be allowed.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR

[1] In this connection I note that the ridge line on the roof plan on drawing 2016/112/06 is incorrect. The scheme has been considered on the basis of the section on the same drawing.