

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 January 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 January 2017

Appeal A: APP/C1570/W/16/3157005

The Saracens Head, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1AG

- 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 T Doyle against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/16/0930/FUL, dated 29 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension to later addition to building to create accommodation of six bedrooms with associated landscaping works.
-

Appeal B: APP/C1570/Y/16/3157009

The Saracens Head, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1AG

- 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 T Doyle against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/16/0931/LB, dated 29 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2016.
 - The works proposed are a two storey side extension to later addition to building to create accommodation of six bedrooms with associated landscaping works.
-

Decisions

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension to later addition to building to create accommodation of six bedrooms with associated landscaping works at The Saracens Head, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1AG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref UTT/16/0930/FUL, dated 29 March 2016, subject to the conditions set out at the end of my decisions.
2. Appeal B is allowed and listed building consent is granted for two storey side extension to later addition to building to create accommodation of six bedrooms with associated landscaping works at The Saracens Head, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1AG in accordance with the terms of the application Ref UTT/16/0931/LB dated 29 March 2016, subject to the conditions set out at the end of my decisions.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed extension would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed buildings.
-

Reasons

4. The Saracens Head is a substantial Grade II listed property, located at the heart of the attractive market town of Great Dunmow. The Inn is set on the High Street/Stortford Road and is opposite the junction of this road with North Street. The 7 bay timber framed and plastered façade has an off centre broken pedimented doorcase with doric pilasters and an empty tympanum. Immediately adjacent to the west lies the Grade II listed 1 and 3 Stortford Road, which effectively forms part of the same building, hosting a health centre/gym connected to the hotel. On the east edge of this property is a carriage arch allowing access to the rear of the buildings. The overall property has been substantially altered throughout the years, with various extensions and alterations as the hotel has evolved and grown.
5. In plan form the two listed buildings combined essentially form a 'T' shape, with the façades creating the crossbar of the T. The stem of the T is made up of various 2 storey extensions which serve as bedrooms to the hotel, the majority of which are stated to have been constructed in the 1990s.
6. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) says when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The Framework also makes it clear that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of a heritage asset, or development within its setting. The significance of Saracens House and Nos 1-3 Stortford Road derive in simple external terms from their architectural quality and detailing, and their prominent and historical setting at the centre of the town.
7. Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan¹ states that development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building, special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
8. The proposed two storey extension would be sited in a gap between the 1990s previous rear extension and the boundary wall between Nos 1 & 3 and No 5 Stortford Road, and would be sited on some patio area which appears little used. The proposal would be attached to the western side of the 1990s extension, which is rendered in a cream colour in this area. The roofscape is varied and there is a regular pattern to the modern windows. The design of this element of the 1990s extension is less distinguished than the public facing eastern façade which has more variety and a higher quality material range.
9. In design terms the proposed extension would mirror and merge the higher quality treatment of the eastern side, with a brick plinth, rendered ground floor and painted weatherboarding above. Plain tiles would be used and the hipped roofline would be lower and subordinate to the existing, with the overall scale of the development in keeping with the existing building. Whilst the proposal would come closer to an older cottage building adjunct to the rear of Nos 1 & 3, this would not be significantly closer than the previous extension to the east

¹ Uttlesford Local Plan, 20 January 2005

and would not cause harm to this element of the heritage asset, with a lower section of the proposal located closest to this part of the building.

10. Public views of the area where the proposed extension are extremely limited. To the rear of the site lies the hotel car park with access gained from Chequers Lane. This area is characterised by car parking set to the rear of the High Street, with some well-designed and varied modern residential development on the south side of the street. There is however, a large range of fairly obtrusive street furniture, including two very noticeable mobile telecommunications masts. There are various mature coniferous trees along the western boundary of the hotel, and these, along with the existing hipped rear gable of the previous extension masks most views of the appeal site from this area. Where some fleeting views may be possible, these would match the existing hotel development and would not appear out of place. For these reasons, whilst I note that the Council raise concerns over the cumulative impact of the previous southern extensions on the historic core of the building, I do not consider that the proposal would noticeably add to the effect of these from Chequers Lane.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed buildings. In doing so the proposal would also preserve the character and appearance of the Great Dunmow Conservation Area to which the buildings make an important contribution. The proposal would comply with the Framework and Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

12. The proposal would be sited closer to the boundary wall with No 5 Stortford Road and hence would have the potential to have an effect on the living conditions of the occupants of this property, which has been extended in the past to the south. The western elevation of the proposed extension would include three rooflights on the roof planes to provide natural light to the upper floor bedrooms, with the ground floor rooms having small windows to the north or south. Two narrow windows to en-suite rooms would face No 5, which could be obscure glazed. Therefore whilst the proposal would undoubtedly bring the building closer to the boundary wall with No 5, the positioning of the windows is such that very limited overlooking of this property or its rear garden would occur from the proposal. The lower height of the proposal compared to the existing extension and the retained distance between the properties would minimise any overbearing effect and considering the limited number of windows proposed on the west elevation I do not consider that significant levels of light pollution would ensue from the proposal itself.
13. Concern is also raised over any effect of the proposal upon the boundary wall, in this respect I note that the proposal remains clear of the wall and that the plans note that the wall would remain intact throughout the course of works, with any damage to be reinstated to the satisfaction of the adjoining owner.
14. The Council are of the view that certain elements of the appellant's statement should not be considered as additional justification was inserted at the appeal stage than was available to themselves during the application process. This primarily concerns paragraph 4.07 of the appellant's case which concerns public benefits of the proposal. However, in this case I have not found the proposal to cause harm, meaning that paragraphs 133- 134 of the Framework are not engaged.

Conditions

15. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to compliance with plans and time for implementation on both decisions, in the interests of the proper planning of the area and for the avoidance of doubt. Given the nature of the host building and surrounding area I have also imposed conditions relating to the agreement of materials, windows, door sections, and joinery details as suggested by the Council, although I have slightly altered the conditions in the interests of precision and to include references to obscure glazed en-suite windows in the interests of the privacy of adjoining neighbours.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should be allowed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

Appeal A

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: 5078 01, 5078 02, 5078 07, 5078 08, 5078 09, 5078 10.
3. Samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any work commences on site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.
4. No development shall take place until detailed plans illustrating the window and door detailing and sections through the windows (of a scale no less than 1:20) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details shall also include proposals for obscure glazing of the western facing en-suite windows. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans and maintained thereafter.
5. All joinery to be used in the proposal will be natural timber and the external boarding will be natural timber featheredge boarding.

Appeal B

1. The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 5078 01, 5078 02, 5078 07, 5078 08, 5078 09, 5078 10.
3. Samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any work commences on site. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.
4. No works shall take place until detailed plans illustrating the window and door detailing and sections through the windows (of a scale no less than 1:20) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details shall also include proposals for obscure glazing of the western facing en-suite windows. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans and maintained thereafter.
5. All joinery to be used in the proposal will be natural timber and the external boarding will be natural timber featheredge boarding.