



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2017

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/17/3168303

Maple Manor, 32 Woodhatch Road, Redhill RH1 5JH

- 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 Steve Kiss against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02341/HHOLD, dated 7 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Issue

2. The grounds of appeal were accompanied by a stone condition report prepared by Shepherd & Grantham stonemasons ltd dated 27 January 2017 and which therefore post dated the Council's decision. Given that situation, the Council was afforded the opportunity to comment upon the report and in turn the appellant was given a further opportunity to respond to the comments made by the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, I have taken all representations into account in arriving at my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character of the locally listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located at the western end of a private drive leading off Woodhatch Road. It forms part of Maple Manor which the Council advises is a locally listed building converted into 3 separate dwellings in the 1970s. No 32 comprises one of these and is a charming property being constructed of brick and stone and with attractive architectural detailing including cast iron windows. The site and surrounding countryside are located within the Green Belt.
5. The appellant considers that by constructing the new extension in stone, using partly reclaimed materials and high standards of craftsmanship, the character of the building would be maintained, particularly as the building line of the adjoining property, No 34 is already set forward. Furthermore, because of the erosion and weathering in the existing eastern façade, it is likely that it would have to be replaced in any event.

6. The Council advises that the property dates from the 1850s and is one of a limited number of such mid Victorian examples within the District. In that respect, I note that the appellant agrees that *'due to this originality of form and style, it is considered that the significance of the building in terms of its character is relatively high'*.
7. I have no doubts that the quality of workmanship of any extension could respect the character of the building, and indeed I took note of the quality of new works and reuse of old windows that had been employed on the narrow brick infill extension on the western side of the building. However, what is now proposed is an extension which would fundamentally change the form of the original building by extending the eastern elevation forwards across its entire extent and with a new north facing gable and new porch. Whilst this would in effect be a replica elevation with a new stone façade and with matching detail, it would alter and detract from the previous form and historical understanding of the building and I do not agree that its character would be retained as a result. Similarly, the fact that the building line of No 34 already projects forward of No 32's eastern elevation, is part of the character of the existing building complex and it follows that by significantly altering that, it would change the character of the building. A combination of these factors leads me to find that the character of the building would be harmed.
8. The Council's approach to locally listed buildings is primarily set out in Policy Pc10 of its Local Plan 2005 (LP). Whilst the appellant argues that it would be consistent with the Policy in terms of reflecting scale, design, materials and colour, the policy also seeks to resist removal of features of character, which in this case I regard the form of the eastern elevation as existing, to be.
9. In terms of loss of historic fabric and the appellant's suggestion that this would be lost in any case, reliance for that is mainly from the stone condition report referred to earlier. Whilst I note the specialist experience of the stonemason company, the report does not explicitly make a case for total replacement of the façade as opposed to the issue of whether it could reasonably be repaired. I also attach considerable weight to the views of the Council's longstanding Conservation officer, who clearly has extensive experience of dealing with buildings of greensand stone within the District. In particular I note his comment that such erosion is normal for this type of stone and would not justify total or extensive refacing in the manner suggested by the appellant. That accords with my own experience of dealing with stone buildings over many years.
10. Looking at the nature of erosion, there was clearly evidence of that in the main eastern façade and both corners of the north facing stone gable had been repaired with new stone. Clearly weathering has also not been helped by inappropriate cement mortar repairs on parts of the elevation in the past. However, the remaining façade does not appear to be in such a state so as to require total replacement and in my view could be gradually repaired over time as and when required. Furthermore, it does not follow that the replaced and clearly eroded stones from the gable corners would necessarily be the same for the main façade which I note is also fairly sheltered from prevailing winds. The plinth appears to be in poorer condition but as the Council notes, it is not unusual to replace such features where local greensand is concerned. I noted some evidence of movement in the south west corner of the northern wall of the porch, together with some repairs to the dressed arch. However there was little other

obvious signs of any significant movement or subsidence which would require the total replacement of the porch as opposed to repair/maintenance.

11. Summing up the above, I am not convinced from the evidence before me and from my own observations, that the whole of the eastern façade requires replacement in the short term, as opposed to the form of repair/maintenance which has already been carried out to the northern stone gable. In my view those works have successfully retained the ageing and historic character of that gable. In that regard therefore, I do not consider such issues carry significant weight in terms of justification for the proposed extension. I take the point that the building is not a statutory listed building and therefore such works might be capable of being carried out under permitted development. That would be a matter for further discussion between the Council and the appellant. However, even if that was the case, it would not overcome the harm to the existing character and historical context of the building which I have referred to above.

Other Issues

12. I noted the somewhat unsympathetic extension to the adjoining property at No 34. However the Council advises that it was originally constructed as a flat roof extension in the 1960s prior to the building being locally listed. That is not a good reason therefore to justify another extension which would add further harm to the character of the original building.
13. The Council does not consider that the extension would result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling from a Green Belt policy point of view and I see no reason to take a different view.

Conclusions

14. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework refers to the effect of an application on the significance of a non designated heritage asset which should be taken into account in determining the application, and that a balanced judgement needs to be made on the scale of any harm or loss to the significance of the asset. Drawing all of my findings above together, I conclude that the proposed extension would result in the loss of a principal elevation of the building together with total loss of historic fabric and making it difficult to appreciate its original form and context. For the reasons given above, I am not persuaded that the state of erosion is of such a magnitude that it requires total replacement as opposed to ongoing repair/maintenance as would be expected for a building of this age. There would therefore be significant harm to the asset.
15. In the light of the above, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS1, CS4, and CS10 of the Council's Core Strategy 2014 and Policies Pc10, Ho9, Ho13 and Ho24 of the LP in that it would not be sustainable, and would not respect the character of the existing locally listed building, the area or the historic environment.
16. Accordingly, for the above reasons and conflict with policy, the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Bennett INSPECTOR