
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 31 march 2017

Appeal Refs: APP/E2205/W/17/3168237 & APP/E2205/Y/16/3164687 12, The Street, Great Chart, Ashford, Kent TN23 3AH

- 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 Scott Carpenter against the decisions of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Refs 16/00748/AS and 16/00761/AS, dated 19 May 2016, were refused by notices dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition and clearance of existing conservatory and store and construction of new garden room.
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Preliminary matter

1. Drawing no. 02A showing the rear and side elevations was not available at the site visit, but has subsequently been taken into account in consideration of the appeal.

Decisions

2. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in both appeals are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the architectural character and historic interest of the building which is a listed building at Grade II; and
 - Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Chart Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a modest listed cottage with a 19th century front, one of a terrace of varied cottages at the east end of the village. The dwellings have all been altered or extended at the rear in differing styles over the years. Some have annexes extending into the long narrow gardens and some have extensions and detached sheds and washhouses. The appeal property has a poor quality extension of relatively recent age consisting of a glazed conservatory or draft lobby linking the dwelling to a large external store. The intention is to replace both on almost the same footprint with a modern extension containing new living accommodation with a pitched roof.
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5. The heritage interest of the house stems from its age and the traditional Kentish materials used which together with adjoining and neighbouring properties, form a cohesive group of fairly utilitarian cottages of heritage interest. The varied forms of alteration at the rear reflect adaptations during differing ownerships and evolving uses over many years. Together they present an attractive and eclectic mixture of forms and materials which adds to the historic interest of the group. As such there is capacity for some continuing change provided that the proportion, design and materials used are subservient and sympathetic to the host dwellings and the group as a whole.
6. The proposed extension would not be over-large seen alongside neighbouring structures of various kinds, but it would be starkly modern in design and appearance. The close neighbouring properties have a mixture of older and/or more sympathetic extensions and the new work proposed here would draw undue attention and as a result would appear distinctly out of keeping.
7. There are several shortcomings in the proposal that together indicate that the effect on the listed building and conservation area would be harmful. The artificial fibre cement 'slate' roof is not used locally and would appear inharmonious and out of character; natural slate only arrived in Kent in quantity in the 19th century with extensive rail networks and is most often seen on urban commercial premises or specimen houses very unlike the appeal property. It is suggested that the use of artificial slate would emphasise the contemporary origins of the extension. Whilst it can be appropriate to emphasise more recent construction by using contemporary materials, where the extension dominates an already very modest house, the result is that the character of the whole can be subsumed.
8. The use of a steeply pitched roof abutting the house results in an uncomfortable interface with the existing rear elevation. The junction also necessitates a small triangular replacement window in the original wall which would appear contrived. Whilst the existing rectangular window is almost certainly not original, the proposed replacement would appear quite out of keeping. It is unclear why a new extension needs to interfere with the original elevation to the extent proposed.
9. Instead of 'conservation' style roof lights, the chosen roof windows would project well above the roof plain and would be conspicuous by way of size and operation. The high level gable window which would be apparent looking at the rear, would have asymmetrically located mullions which would be uncomfortable to the eye without any particular justification. Black UPVC windows and patio doors would appear distinctly alien in this environment of closely situated historic cottages.
10. I appreciate that the appellant is willing to accept some changes and alterations by condition and that some aspects of detail design can also be conditioned, but the extent and number of potential difficulties identified suggest that the revisions needed would necessitate a completely new design which would appear very different. Moreover, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that it is the applicant's responsibility, where heritage assets are involved, to explain why a proposal takes the form that it does with reference to the original asset: in other words '*to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets*'

importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary’.¹

11. The removal of the existing rear extension and store is a positive aspect of the scheme but the proposed replacement building would be uncomfortably conspicuous and unsympathetic by reason of its proportions, design and materials. Having regard to the statutory duties under the LBCA, it would harm the special interest of the listed building and would not preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area. It would conflict with the design quality and heritage protection aims of policy EN16 of the Ashford Local Plan of 2000 and policies CS1 and CS9 of the Ashford Local Development Framework Core Strategy of 2008. The disadvantages would outweigh any public benefits of the proposal and it would conflict with the heritage conservation objectives of the NPPF.
12. For all the above reasons, the appeals should be dismissed.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraph 128