
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 March 2017

by Nick Fagan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/Y/16/3160678

**The Old Manor House, 159 High Street, Old Woking, Woking, Surrey
GU22 9JN**

- 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 Mark Hurel against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2016/0535, dated 28 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2016.
 - The works proposed are the erection of a rear lean-to extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused for the erection of a rear lean-to extension.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed works on the special interest of this Grade II* listed building.

Reasons

3. It is a statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in considering whether to grant listed building consent.¹ This duty must be afforded considerable weight.
4. As Historic England says², the Old Manor House is a good example of a mid to late 17th century house with later 18th century additions. The architectural qualities of the building's external elevations make an important contribution to its special interest and significance as a listed building. This includes the rear elevation, which is dominated by the striking 18th century gable that follows the form of the gambrel roof behind, below which are two centrally placed windows at first and second floor levels and a door at ground level with two plat bands providing some horizontal division between the ground and first floors.
5. The proposal is to construct an aluminium lean-to extension or conservatory along most of the width of this eastern part of the building, extending from its north east corner to the later single storey rear projection. As shown on the proposed floor plan (3380/004/B Rev B) rather than the block plan, which is incorrect, the extension would measure 3m deep, projecting 1.28m beyond the

¹ Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

² In its letter to the Council of 13 July 2016

- existing rear projection, and 7.4m wide. The existing door opening would be used to access it from the house.
6. I acknowledge the appellant's desire to put this area to more beneficial use and create a room that would have more natural daylight given the paucity of openings at ground floor level on this part of the rear elevation. I also understand why the eastern wall of the existing rear projection would make an obvious end stop for the new lean-to. To erect the extension in line with the end walls of the gable would leave a small gap between it and the rear projection, which would look rather odd and unresolved.
 7. Historic England also points out that the lean-to does not respect the division of the rear elevation which is subtly divided into four bays: three under the gable and a further bay to one side. These 'bays' are delineated by vertical lines in the brickwork at ground and first floor levels but do not appear at the second floor gable level. As such a conservatory extending across the width of this part of the building as proposed would not, in my opinion, significantly diminish the architectural significance of the rear elevation as a whole, especially as its shallow sloping roof would be below the brick plat bands that separate the ground and first floors of this part of the building.
 8. For the reasons given above I am not convinced, on balance, that a lean-to conservatory of this width would be unacceptable, despite the views of Historic England. Nor am I of the view that its design must take the heavier form of a more traditional orangery as Historic England also suggest, albeit this may well be an acceptable solution.
 9. However, I am concerned about the proposed extension's materials. The aluminium sections appear from the proposed elevation drawing and visual montage to be fairly thick and chunky in appearance and this would contrast unfavourably with the slim glazing bars of the timber windows in the rear elevation. Whilst I understand that it may be possible in this day and age to provide slimmer profiles for the supporting elements of such conservatories it appears that this has not been done in this case, or at least I have no evidence of it. In the absence of such I agree with the Council's Conservation Officer that such aluminium members would mar the appearance of the building's important rear elevation. It may well be that a lightweight timber structure with slimmer profiles could be more acceptable.
 10. The site lies within the Old Woking Conservation Area but because it would not be visible from any public viewpoint and is essentially a proportionate addition in principle to the size of the building it would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. But for the reason set out above I conclude that the lean-to extension/conservatory as proposed would significantly harm the special interest of this Grade II* listed building.
 11. It would fail to comply with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that great weight should be given to conserving a designated heritage asset's significance. Whilst such harm may be less than substantial in terms of NPPF paragraph 134 there are no significant public benefits that outweigh such harm: whilst the proposed conservatory would make the house more comfortable its lack does not prevent the dwelling from being successfully used, as it is today. The efficient thermal performance of the structure is also insufficient to outweigh such harm. 'Less than substantial

harm' as defined in NPPF paragraph 134 does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection.

12. The works would also fail to comply with Policies CS20 and CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy and Policy DM20 of the Woking Development Management DPD, which essentially repeat the statutory test and national policy, and are relevant considerations in determining listed building applications and appeals.

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should fail.

Nick Fagan

INSPECTOR