
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/Y/16/3163703

Goodfellows Farm, Church Lane, Reed, Herts SG8 8AR

- 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 & Mrs Anna and Chris Winter against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01244/LB, dated 12 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2016.
 - The works proposed are: 1) construction of single storey rear extension to enable creation of family room, 2) provision of new external door to utility room in place of original window, 3) insertion of new window to eastern flank of approved extension at ground floor level, 4) increase in size of opening in rear wall of existing kitchen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. The village of Reed has a distinctive shape, with linear development largely located along a roughly square shaped network of lanes. The Reed Conservation Area (RCA) covers much of the village, being based around the network of lanes and the open space that these contain. Goodfellows Farm is a Grade II listed 18th century home, situated on Church Lane, just to the south of Reed Green. The property is sited gable on to the Lane, with its main façade facing to the south in front of a courtyard/parking area. The rendered clunch property has a tiled roof with noticeable hip to a right return, off which a single storey extension is located, parallel to Church Lane. From the front the 3 bay façade has a prominent gabled tiled porch.
 4. Although extended and altered over the years, I consider that the architectural quality, the distinctive hip return to the roof and integrity of the original 18th century linear core of the building are important parts of the buildings' special interest and significance
 5. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses. Section 72(1) of the Act states that special attention must be paid to the
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desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Policy 28 of the Local Plan¹ states that extensions should be sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, windows details and materials.

6. A previous consent was granted in 2013 to increase the height of the existing single storey rear extension to 2 storeys, and construct an additional single storey extension off this 2 storey element. This would create a stepped design of 3 pitched roof elements to the building, with the 2 storey design being lower than the original building roof pitch and eaves, and the single storey roof being lower again.
7. I have limited evidence on this previous consent but it appears that critically this consent has recently expired. The proposed works before me seek to construct the extension previously granted consent, but also construct a flat roofed extension in part of the 'L' shape that the extensions would create. However, the development description for this appeal only relates to the single storey elements of the scheme.
8. I do not consider that the proposed family room would harm the character of the listed building. The essential character and pattern of the layout of the original cottage would be maintained, and the proposal in its form in a largely flat roof design with glazed doors and small octagonal roof lantern, materials, and footprint would appear as a modern extension to the vernacular cottage, separate in both its form and design to the original building. The splayed corner would create an area of interest to help the footprint of the proposal remain subordinate, and the property would retain its character of an extended 18th century farmhouse. I also note that the Council recognise that the widening of the kitchen wall to access the family room would only involve the removal of blockwork as opposed to historic fabric.
9. However, this does not resolve the issue of the expired consent, which the appellant acknowledges would not enable the scheme to be implemented. The proposal if allowed would provide permission for the single storey element of the scheme, leaving the previously consented but now expired 2 storey extension unresolved. The previous 2 storey extension with its stepped roof design allows each phase/area of the proposed extensions to be subordinate to the higher elements. However, in the absence of this the proposal would result in an overly long and wide single storey extension to the building, whose excessive single storey proportions would detract from the original cottage, adversely affecting its significance. The side of the extension would also be fully visible from the RCA, neither preserving nor enhancing its appearance.
10. With reference to paragraphs 131- 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, I consider that the proposal as it stands would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the RCA. In such circumstances this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. I can appreciate that the proposal would provide the home with more space for a family home. Putting aside the issue of whether such matters would constitute public benefits, the property appears in good condition at present and appears fully in residential use. As a result the public benefits identified would be insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused.

¹ North Hertfordshire District Council District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations. Originally adopted April 1996.

11. I therefore conclude that given the expiration of the previous consent the proposed works as presented would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building, and would be contrary to the Framework and Policy 28 of the Local Plan. For the same reasons nor would the proposed works preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Reed Conservation Area, to which the property makes an important contribution.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR