



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/17/3169811

Little Kent End, Kent End, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 6PF

- 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 Mrs Selene Cripps against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/09748/FUL, dated 6 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the formation of pitched gable roof to existing two-storey flat roof and erection of first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the formation of pitched gable roof to existing two-storey flat roof and erection of first floor extension at Little Kent End, Kent End, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 6PF in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/09748/FUL, dated 6 October 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Preliminary matters

2. The property is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area (CA). Reference has been made to the Council's Conservation Area Statement (CAS), published in 1998, and to the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area Statement (2015), produced as an update to the earlier CAS as part of the emerging Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan. Both documents have proved useful in describing the history and the various elements of the CA contributing to the significance of the heritage asset. The appellant has also produced what amounts to a Heritage Statement, and this too has proved useful in my assessment.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and whether the character or appearance of the CA would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

4. The appellant's heritage consultant describes the appeal property in the following terms:

'Little Kent End is a 2½ storey house built in Cotswold limestone with a gabled stone tile roof. The house has a central doorway under a modern timber porch and two windows to each of the three floors, the attic storey having hipped dormers. There are stacks to

both gable ends. In the east gable in particular there is clear evidence that the present house has been raised in height from a probably 1½ storey building, a feature shared with Fox Cottage a little further east along the footpath that runs along the south side of both houses. The house appears to have been a two unit plan, whether the entrance led directly into one of the rooms or an entrance lobby and stair compartment is uncertain as the ground floor of the main part of the house is now one single room...

Originally it is probable that there was a lean-to against the rear elevation of the house but if so, this was replaced by a two-storey flat-roofed extension built in coursed rubble stone circa 1982. Recent additions have been made to the rear under permitted development rights including a single storey Cotswold stone extension attached to the north elevation of the earlier extension and spanning the full width of the house which currently has a very shallow pitched roof, and a single storey garden room with a natural slate roof and timber-framed glazing to the walls. The garden room is attached to the single storey rear extension with a short glazed linking structure. To the west side of the house a single storey porch structure in Cotswold stone and timber-frame with a stone tile roof was under construction at the time of the visit to the property in January 2017.'

5. The porch mentioned in the final sentence has by now been completed. I have no reason to doubt that this description represents an accurate portrayal of the appeal property's evolution and current appearance. Nothing in the Council's description of the property or in the planning history listed in the officer report suggest otherwise.
6. The appeal property, fronted by a public footpath, stands alongside other buildings of a disparate age and style. By reason of various extensions and additions it is by now a sizeable property standing within a generously sized curtilage on the northern extremity of the settlement, beyond which are open fields. It has an attractive and well-proportioned front elevation which presents a very pleasant face to the south to those using the nearby street and public footpath.
7. The rear of the property is more secluded in the public realm, and presents a complete contrast to the front. The two flat roofed extensions, on two levels, exude a harsh and discordant angularity, and I can therefore well understand the reasons why the appellant would wish to introduce change.
8. In this regard a substantial extension is proposed, which would cover the flat roofed areas. It would be comprised of a main roof structure of two parallel ridges, with a slight break in levels, running at right angles to the host property's main ridge. Two gables, facing the rear garden would be formed, with another in the west elevation above the newly completed porch. The space between the two twin gables would be in-filled, using a flat roof, although the outward appearance along most of the sides of the extension would be that of a steeply pitching roof.
9. Whilst the Council acknowledges the unattractiveness of the existing flat roofed arrangement at the rear of the property, it opposes the proposals largely since
'...it is considered that the proposed extensions would add significant bulk and mass to the host dwelling to the detriment of its modest character. The extensions by virtue of their height, mass and bulk, do not appear as subservient additions to the property, and appear to overwhelm it. The unusual roof form, with varied fenestration creates a cluttered appearance, particularly on the western elevation, which has a proliferation of windows of various types in addition to projecting gable ends. Given its large mass and

scale, glimpsed views of the western elevation would be gained from the street scene and given its position on the corner of Back Street, the proposal would be visible when travelling both north and eastwards. Moreover, there are two public rights of way running in close proximity to the site (AKEY39 and AKEY24), one of which runs through the application site in front of the host dwelling. The extensions would therefore be clearly visible from this position.'

10. Consequently, the Council considers the proposals would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the CA.
11. Although a matter of subjective judgement, to my mind, the appeal property is no longer, by reason of the extensions and alterations carried out over time, of a '*modest character*'. Moreover, some of the historical modifications made, especially the flat roofed extensions at the rear, have detracted from its original character.
12. Whilst the extension proposed is far from insubstantial, no little skill has been displayed in the design, and the use of gables in particular reflects their usage on older properties in this and other parts of the CA. A far larger dwelling than currently exists would be formed, but entirely consonant with its sizable curtilage. The front elevation of the property, that which is most appreciated in the public realm and which contributes most to the street scene, would remain unchanged.
13. I walked along Back Street to the west and along public footpaths AKEY39 and AKEY24. Along the latter to the east, the development would largely be masked by extant development and by well-established planting, hedges and other vegetation. From the footpaths to the south, glimpses of the development would be seen in the gaps between buildings, but that seen would not prove particularly noticeable and would not distract the eye or detract from the property's attractive front elevation.
14. The development would be most noticeable when approaching from the west along a relatively short stretch of Back Street. Extant views towards the site from Back Street are affected and spoilt to an extent by the presence of the flat-roofed garages of utilitarian appearance in the foreground, on the junction of Back Street and Kent End, and from some viewpoints, by the starkness of the flat roofed extensions to the host property.
15. Taking account of the rather limited publically accessible vantage points where the development would be seen, to my mind, irrespective of the scale of the extension, its complementary design is such that it would serve as a visual improvement to the character and appearance of the host property. I do not share the Council's view on the nature and design of the fenestration that would face Back Street; in my opinion the fenestration is proportionate and appropriately symmetrical. I thus consider that the proposed development would sit acceptably and harmoniously within its wider visual and spatial context without causing harm.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would enhance the appearance of the host property and would not harm the character or appearance of the CA. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those provisions of policies 57 & 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy designed to ensure a high quality of design in new

development, including extensions, and ensuring the conservation of the historic environment, including designated heritage assets.

Conditions

17. The Council's suggested condition on materials shall be imposed in the interests of visual amenity. It is also necessary, in the interests of certainty that the development is built in accordance with the approved plans.
18. In the interests of maintaining neighbouring privacy, the Council's suggesting condition in respect of obscured glazing is also imposed, albeit in a slightly modified form.

Other matters

19. I have already dealt with some of the points raised by two local residents, who also expressed concern as to the effect of the development on their living conditions. I note that the Council's officers dealt with this aspect in some detail in the report on the application. Officers concluded that neighbouring amenities would not be harmed by the proposal. I share that view, for the same reasons as those expressed in the officer report.
20. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, including the references to the *National Planning Policy Framework* and the views of the Parish Council, who did not object, but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: 120106-01 Rev A; 120116-401 Rev A; 120116-402 Rev A; 120116-403 Rev A; 120116-404 Rev A & 120116-405 Rev A.
4. Before the development hereby permitted is first brought into use the windows in the eastern elevation at first floor level shall be obscurely glazed, and such glazing once inserted shall be retained in perpetuity.