



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2017

by J Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/17/3179737

Glinton Cottage, Carmen Street, Great Chesterford CB10 1NR

- 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 & Mrs Diggins against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/17/0157/HHF, dated 23 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is new two storey extension and demolition of existing outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description in the heading above is taken from the application form. Both the decision notice and the appeal form refer to the demolition of the existing single-storey side extension. I have considered the demolition of the single-storey side extension in determining this appeal.
3. At the time of my site visit, Glinton Cottage was subject to construction works. Work had not commenced on the demolition of the single-storey side extension or the outbuilding. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Great Chesterford Conservation Area and the setting of the listed building at Clematis Cottage.

Reasons

5. Located within the Great Chesterford Conservation Area, Glinton Cottage is a late 19th/early 20th century two-storey plastered detached house. Unlike many of the surrounding buildings on Carmen Street which are either built hard up against the street or set back behind a small front garden, Glinton Cottage is set back from the street behind a tall beech hedge, shrubs, trees, and a large garden. The house itself is located directly adjacent to the rear boundary of the appeal site. Both neighbouring Bartle House and Clematis Cottage are set further forward towards the street than Glinton Cottage. Bartle House is a modern two-storey detached house with a staggered layout, while grade II

listed Clematis Cottage is a relatively modest and symmetrical 19th century slate-roofed and rendered two-storey house. Though not statutorily listed, Ginton Cottage echoes a number of the features of its listed neighbour, ranging from the simple symmetry and balance of the front elevations, to their similar scale and proportions, and painted timber windows in 2 main ranges.

6. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing single-storey side extension and the outbuilding situated to the side of Ginton Cottage adjacent to the boundary with Bartle House, and the erection of a two-storey side extension to provide additional living accommodation. The proposed extension would have a contemporary appearance, with vertical Western Red Cedar boarding and a number of differently sized timber windows and doors.
7. Although I appreciate that the appellants consider that the Council's concerns about the design of the proposed extension and its potential effect on the Conservation Area and listed building are subjective and somewhat overstated, design is invariably a subjective matter and there is a need to balance innovation against any potential negative effect on the character and appearance of an area and upon listed buildings. Furthermore, I have a statutory duty, under Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to consider the effect of the proposed development on the listed building at Clematis Cottage and its setting, and the Conservation Area. While I note the appellants' use of Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3 – Setting and Views* (Undated), the appeal site lies within a designated heritage asset in the form of the Conservation Area as well as being situated adjacent to a further designated heritage asset at Clematis Cottage.
8. The Council considers that Ginton Cottage could be viewed as making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. I do not disagree with this assertion. Despite being set back from the street, the house and its garden can be viewed from public vantage points within the Conservation Area, both from the end of the access driveway into the appeal site next to Clematis Cottage, and adjacent to Bartle House from Carmen Street. Although the proposed extension would avoid the loss of much of the existing garden and would replace the floorspace lost through demolition, the proposed extension would substantially increase the overall floorspace of the house. This would in turn give rise to the extension being of a significant scale relative to the original house.
9. The appellants have made reference to an unimplemented 2002 planning permission for a two-storey side extension to Ginton Cottage. While I note that the approved two-storey side extension would have been of a similar floorspace to the proposed development, the unimplemented permission is no longer extant, was not granted under the same national and local planning policy as is currently in place, and differs substantially in design and layout from the proposed development. I can therefore give little weight to this as a consideration.
10. Despite the efforts made by the appellants to mitigate the effect of the proposed extension on the host dwelling, the listed building and the Conservation Area and acknowledging the reference to Historic England's *A Guidance for Owners of Listed Homes* (2016), the proposed extension would significantly increase the bulk and scale of Ginton Cottage when viewed from

the aforementioned public vantage points on Carmen Street. In my view, the proposed extension with its asymmetric front gable at a right angle to the main house would be substantial in its own right and would fail to be subservient or subordinate to the host dwelling due to its overall bulk and height relative to Glington Cottage. When the size of the proposed extension is considered with its proposed design and materials, these factors further increase the discordant and incongruous nature of the proposed development.

11. While I recognise the appellants' intention to create a contemporary extension which would be both sensitive and complementary to Glington Cottage and its context, I do not consider that the proposed extension would be sufficiently sensitive to the nature of the host dwelling, the listed building and the Conservation Area. The proposed extension would initially extend the existing ridgeline of the roof using the traditional slate, but then would turn into a single long pitched roof to the side elevation facing the boundary with Bartle House. This proposed roof form is significantly more asymmetric than any other roofs serving side elevations in the immediate area. While noting that the proposed extension would slope away from the boundary with Bartle House and recognising the appellant's intention to reduce the mass of the proposed extension at a higher level, the resulting asymmetric roof and front gable would significantly imbalance the simple symmetry of the host dwelling's principal elevation as evidenced by both the submitted plans and the photomontage. This would cause significant alterations to Glington Cottage's character, reducing its similarity to the adjacent listed building at Clematis Cottage and increasing its prominence within the streetscene in the Conservation Area.
12. Though the proposed windows and doors for the proposed extension would be timber painted to a complementary colour to both the proposed boarding and the existing render, the overall impression is one of disorder on the front and rear elevations. Notwithstanding the appellants' intention of avoiding development which is pastiche in design and recognising the range of window types within the immediate area, the confused mixture of proposed windows and doors are of different heights and widths to those of the existing house and are positioned in some instances above the original eaves level of Glington Cottage. Although the proposed rooflights are also relatively large, their uniformity of size and positioning on the proposed asymmetric roof renders them less jarring and prominent than the proposed windows at first floor level. Given the size, shape, positioning of the proposed windows and doors, and the lack of glazing bars to some of the proposed windows, I find that the appearance of the proposed extension would jar with the existing house. The resultant ensemble lacks architectural subtlety and would detrimentally affect the house, the adjacent listed building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
13. The palette of materials within the Conservation Area is varied, with houses constructed of brick, flintwork, painted render and timber cladding. While many of the buildings immediately surrounding the appeal site are rendered, there are other materials used within the streetscene. I note the examples of buildings provided by the appellants, although I have not been provided with the locations of these properties or their relevant planning histories, and can only therefore give them very limited weight. Although the concept of using Western Red Cedar is not in itself unacceptable and I recognise that the colour of the timber would weather to grey, I consider that the extent of the use of

the proposed boarding to envelope the roof and the walls of the proposed extension would render it harmful in this instance.

14. I note that the Council considers that the proposed development would not have significant adverse effects on protected species or habitats, or archaeology; and that the parking serving the appeal property can be accommodated within the area in front of the house. I also agree with both main parties that the proposed extension would not result in significant effects on daylight or outlook for the occupiers of Bartle House. Having noted the other windows proposed to serve the proposed master bedroom and ensuite, I concur with the Council's view that any rooflights in the side elevation facing Bartle House should be obscure-glazed and fixed closed to ensure that the privacy of the occupiers of Bartle House would be respected.
15. In conclusion, the proposed development would not preserve the setting of the listed building at Clematis Cottage and the character and appearance of the Great Chesterford Conservation Area. Consequently, it would contravene policies S3, GEN2, ENV1, ENV2 and H8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005). Policy S3 requires development to be compatible with the settlement's character, while policy GEN2 has a similar requirement relating to the compatibility with surrounding buildings. Policies ENV1 and ENV2 address the need for development to preserve or enhance the essential character of conservation areas and the preservation of the setting and special character of listed buildings. Policy H8 states, amongst other things, that the scale, design and external materials of extensions should respect the original building.
16. The harm to significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area would amount to "less than substantial harm", but would still be important given the effect on the setting of Clematis Cottage and the character and appearance of the Great Chesterford Conservation Area. In line with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), such harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the development. I note the appellants' comments with regard to the need for additional living space to meet the family's changing needs over time, the intention for the property to have a "Lifetime Homes" ethos, the family's wish to remain in Great Chesterford, and the improved insulation and connection of the house with its garden. While I have some sympathy for this requirement, I have little evidence that the house provided sub-standard accommodation prior to the current building works commencing. The house's enlargement would therefore provide a largely personal benefit and I attribute only very limited weight to the public benefits the proposal would make to the wider housing stock. This would be insufficient to outweigh the harm identified to the significance of the Conservation Area and the setting of a listed building. I therefore conclude the proposal would fail to comply with national policy outlined in the Framework, which seeks to sustain the significance of heritage assets.

Conclusion

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

J Gilbert

INSPECTOR