
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 2 July 2019

by H Porter BA(Hons) MScDip IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2019

Appeal A Ref: APP/N1730/W/18/3216408

Mead House, Longwater Road, Eversley Cross, Hampshire RG27 0NW

- 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 Blackham against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01591/HOU, dated 10 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/N1730/W/18/3216406

Mead House, Longwater Road, Eversley Cross, Hampshire RG27 0NW

- 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 Blackham against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01592/LBC, dated 10 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2018.
 - The works proposed are first floor extension.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed. Appeal B is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeals concern the same site and the same scheme. Although the remit of planning permission (Appeal A) and listed building consent (Appeal B) regimes are different, to reduce repetition, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision letter.

Main Issues – both appeals

3. The main issues are whether the proposed works and development would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Mead House or any features of special architectural interest that it possesses; and whether the character and appearance of the Eversley Cross Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

4. Mead House forms one side of a Grade II listed building (known as Mead House Rosedene) situated at the heart of the small and picturesque settlement of Eversley Cross. The building is timber-framed with red brick infill, has a clay-tiled roof and white-painted timber casement windows on its front elevation. A

single-storey, red-brick element that has been subject to various phases of extension and alteration in the late 20th and early 21st centuries extends beyond the building's north gable end.

5. The statutory list description identifies Mead House and its attached neighbour, Rosedene, as dating from the 18th century. However, my own observations and the information provided would indicate that the original structure is likely of 16th or 17th century origin. Although much altered over time, the appeal building still retains the appearance of a property from that period with, for example, its modest scale, materials and exposed timber framing within its interior and on the north gable elevation. The single-storey element that extends from the north gable wall has been in situ since at least the early 20th century, above which is possible to read the original extent of the building's original form. Indeed, the historic extent of the original structure is still clearly apparent above the single-storey side projection. The surviving historic fabric and features, and legibility of the building's original plan all combine to create a physical narrative of how it has been modified over time. These factors contribute to the significance and special interest of the listed building.
6. The Eversley Cross Conservation Area (CA) designation covers the historic core of development set around Cross Green. Amongst other things, the small scale, traditional form, materials and detailing of local buildings underpin the special architectural and historic interest of the CA. Mead House and Rosedene are strongly characterised by their modest proportions, material palette and simple form that express the typical traditional vernacular attributes common to area. The listed building makes an integral and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole, and thereby to its special interest and significance as a designated heritage asset.
7. The proposal is to extend at first-floor level over the single-storey element, to create an additional bedroom, access to which would be via a reoriented staircase. In combination with the more recent additions to the rear and side of the single-storey element, the appeal proposal would extend the appeal building considerably. There would be a significant increase in the extent of built development at first floor level, which would substantially elongate the line of the original building by virtually half again. Consequently, the proposal would add substantially more bulk to the cottage and erode the sense of undeveloped space around it. The proposal would overwhelm the host dwelling and detract from its characteristic simplicity and modest scale.
8. There would be no meaningful architectural differentiation between the historic structure and the new works. The timber framed gable end would be internalised; and there would be very little distinction between the ridge heights, height of chimney stacks, materials or overall form of the main dwelling and the proposed extension. Consequently, it would appear as a homogenised whole, rather than either a subservient or obviously contemporary addition.
9. Fundamentally, the integrity of the building's original plan-form, modest characteristics and traditional features would be harmfully impacted by the proposed extension. Causing harm to its significance and special interest, the proposal would fail to preserve the listed building. The harmful effect of the proposals on the appeal building would also weaken the aesthetic and historic contribution it makes to CA as a whole, the character and appearance of which

would not be preserved. It follows that the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset would be also be harmed by the appeal proposals.

10. Conflict therefore arises with Saved Policies RUR24, CON 5, CON 13, CON 17 of the Hart District Council Local Plan (Replacement) 1996 – 2006 insofar as these seek to avoid extensions that are disproportionate to the original dwelling; to conserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas; and to avoid extensions to listed buildings that would materially change the scale of the building; and to ensure the design is appropriate to the character and setting.
11. Given the scale and nature of the works proposed, the degree of harm to the listed building and CA as designated heritage assets would be less than substantial. The proposals would not be necessary to secure the optimum viable use of the building, which is already in use as a single dwelling, is in sound condition, and has undergone recent extension to facilitate a well-appointed living environment. The impetus behind the proposal is to provide a more workable plan to accommodate the needs and wishes of the appellants and their family. While I recognise the added convenience additional living space might bring, this does not equate to any wider public benefit. Without any compelling evidence to indicate that internalising the historic timbers on the north gable is the most appropriate or least harmful way to ensure the conservation, this carries very little weight as a public benefit.
12. The sum of any wider public benefits, which would include short-term economic benefits associated with the construction phases, are insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the listed building and CA as designated heritage assets. Conflict also arises with the historic environment policies within the National Planning Policy Framework, Revised February 2019.

Conclusions – both appeals

13. Even though the overall harm to the designated heritage assets would be less than substantial, it would not be outweighed by wider public benefits. The proposals would run contrary to the clear expectations in Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 and the overarching statutory duties to preserve listed buildings and conservation areas must be given considerable importance and weight.
14. For the reasons set out above, and having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR