
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 June 2019

by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/19/3221821

Stable House, 50 West Street, Hertford SG13 8EZ

- 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 Adrian Mitchell and Mrs Mary Sykes against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/18/2701/HH, dated 10 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is removal of conservatory and replacement with single storey rear extension.
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Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/Y/19/3221831

Stable House, 50 West Street, Hertford SG13 8EZ

- 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 Adrian Mitchell and Mrs Mary Sykes against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/18/2702/LBC, dated 10 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2019.
 - The works proposed are removal of conservatory and replacement with single storey rear extension.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). In addition, when considering whether to grant listed building consent I have had special regard to the provisions of section 16(2) of the Act.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, Stable House 50 West Street, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and, the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hertford Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal building was first listed in 1996 and comprises a former stable, coach house and gardener's cottage built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They are timber framed and weather-boarded with part pebble-dash and part brick, and incorporate Flemish bond and an old tiled roof. They are former outbuildings associated with Westfield House and were converted and extended in 1996 to form the current house.
5. The frontage of the property is staggered with the converted stable part of the property being situated closest to West Street. The yellow stock brick and white boarded part of the property which is set back further from the road and attached to the stable block was added to the original stable in the late 1800s as a coach house with hay loft over. A single storey horse stall was also added to the original stable and had a separate stable door. It is understood that a two storey extension was also added to the rear of the coach house and hay loft in order to provide a larger garage and a studio above. As part of the 1996 conversion the tack room and workshop/garage were removed. A conservatory was added to the rear of the coach house and side of the 1926 extension property in 1999. The conservatory is rectangular in plan form with a complex roof design to allow for the historic roof and associated features of the existing house. The conservatory is mostly glazed with a brick base to match the host property. Its external walls align through with the rear and side walls of the main building. As such, although it does have a rather complex roof form it sits relatively comfortably in the context of the original building.
6. The special interest of this building lies in its historic association with Westfield House and its character as a series of former ancillary buildings and structures. I recognise that it has been extensively altered and extended over time and the house is an eclectic mix of different architectural forms and features. The property has been altered sympathetically with the alterations forming an integral part of the history of the building.
7. The site is situated in the Hertford Conservation Area. This part of the Conservation Area is dominated by listed buildings including those of a domestic scale and the appeal property. The building is also situated within an Area of Archaeological Significance and partly in Flood Zones 2, 3 and 3b.
8. The proposal is to demolish the existing conservatory and to replace it with a single storey rear extension of white weather boarding and yellow multi stock brickwork. The proposal would be added to the less historically significant later built form of the listed building to the rear of the property. The width of the extension at approximately 4.5 metres would protrude approximately 0.8 metres beyond the existing side elevation of the property. The depth of approximately 4.4 metres would extend approximately 0.6 metres beyond the existing rear wall of the property.
9. The protrusion beyond the side and rear elevations demonstrates that the proposal does not respect the building lines and insufficient regard has been given to the footprint of the existing listed building. As such, it does not complement the form and layout of the listed building. To extend an historic building in this way is not good practice as it would not defer to the host property as a subservient addition, but rather it would, by reason of its design and protrusion beyond the existing side and rear elevations, appear as a visually prominent and obtrusive addition to the historic fabric. This is an

important factor in determining whether or not the extension is harmful to the listed building.

10. I am aware that previous extensions have not aligned with older parts of the property, but I shall determine the appeals on their own merits having regard to the particular circumstances that currently exist, the development plan and other guidance. The most recent extensions to the building, including the footprint of the existing conservatory, were designed to fit into the gap to the north east corner of the property, paying careful attention to the integrity of the original structure. There is little evidence to support the case that the replacement single storey rear extension has been designed to preserve the Grade II listed building and its special interest. Instead it appears to have been designed with the main purpose of providing additional living accommodation for the occupants.
11. I have also taken account of the appellants' comments that the proposal would make the building more interesting, but this does not outweigh the concern I have with respect to the harmful effect on the listed building as a consequence of the proposed form and layout of the proposal.
12. The materials to be used on the external surfaces and fenestration would be sympathetic to the host building and the amended roof form proposed is also acceptable. Nonetheless, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Paragraph 193 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. It goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
13. Section 72 of the Act requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Due to the position of the extension at the rear of the property and within a garden setting it is unlikely that the extension would be prominent from public or private views other than those experienced within the immediate surroundings of the property's garden. However, given the harm to the historic and architectural interest of the building and the poor relationship of the proposal to the footprint of the listed building, in particular, it cannot reasonably be argued that the works would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As such, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
14. Under such circumstances, paragraph 196 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would improve the living accommodation for the occupants, including providing additional accommodation and secure the replacement of an existing sub-standard conservatory with a new extension. In particular, the proposal would provide a year-round dining space for the occupants. However, it is clear to me that the proposal would have only very limited public benefit.
15. Given the above and in the absence of any significant public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building. As such, it fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 192 of the Framework and conflicts with Policies HA1 and HA7 of the District Plan. Among other objectives these seek to sustain and enhance the

significance of listed buildings and extensions to listed buildings will only be permitted where there would be no adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the exterior.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

A A Phillips

INSPECTOR